

# Inspection of an outstanding school: The Parkside School, Norwich

College Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3JA

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Inspection dates:

22–23 January 2020

## **Outcome**

The Parkside School, Norwich, continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love attending The Parkside School. They say that it is a great place to learn and that all staff help them and make them feel safe. The school is a community, where pupils care and look after one another. A pupil who had joined the school quite recently said, 'I like it better here because I have friends to play with.' Parents and carers describe the school as 'brilliant' and 'exemplary'.

Leaders expect the very best of pupils in lessons and at playtimes. They support pupils extremely well so that they meet these expectations. Pupils say that bullying is rare at The Parkside School. They know that if it does happen, they must tell an adult, who will sort out the problem.

Playtimes are happy times. Leaders carefully manage the use of the limited play space available so that everyone can enjoy time outside. Pupils like the silent disco, playing football and using the play equipment. There are lots of adults around who encourage pupils to join in games and help any pupil who needs it. Older pupils act as mentors for younger ones and take their responsibilities seriously. Some pupils like to stay inside in the nurture group for some playtimes. Here, older and younger pupils enjoy taking turns in games, chatting and drawing. Others enjoy lunchtime clubs such as computing club.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The whole curriculum is very carefully thought through. Leaders have identified the core knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn at each stage of their development. The curriculum is not, however, static. Within the curriculum plans for each subject, there is flexibility and responsiveness. This enables staff to meet pupils' individual needs and to personalise the curriculum. This ensures that all pupils get access to the same high-quality curriculum.

Two golden threads run through the whole curriculum from Year 3 to the sixth-form provision. The first is to develop pupils' communication and literacy skills. The second is to prepare pupils for the next stage of learning and for life beyond school.

The priority given to teaching phonics is evident in all classes. This has had a huge impact in ensuring that pupils develop their reading skills well. Reading is taught well because all staff know how to teach early reading with precision and skill. Staff also understand how to build pupils' comprehension skills within literacy and other lessons. For example, in lessons such as computing and food technology, staff emphasise the key vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember. This helps pupils when they encounter these words in their reading.

Staff link together curriculum content with pupils' personal development. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils learn about physical and mental health. They revisit this in lessons about food because staff work together to plan these links. The PE leader worked with an occupational therapist to develop the curriculum. This ensures that it helps pupils develop their sensory and motor skills in a way that is best for pupils' individual needs.

There is much more to The Parkside curriculum than what is taught in lessons. Pupils enjoy lots of different clubs and trips, for example for sports competitions, to museums and galleries and residential trips. The curriculum, including careers education for pupils at the sixth-form college, is highly personalised. Staff teach pupils the skills they need for life. They take time to find out each pupil's interests and then seek out work experience that will match these. This is extended to all pupils in the school. Pupils of all ages are eager to learn about the world of work. Staff regularly bring people into school to talk about their work. During the inspection, some pupils even decided to become Ofsted inspectors, and began asking staff about this.

The effectiveness of the school is evident in its response to the many changes it has had since the previous inspection. Well-established senior staff have left and made way for new leaders. The needs of pupils joining the school have become more complex. Leaders and governors have seized on all changes as opportunities for continued improvement. New leaders, many grown within the school, are very well supported in understanding and fulfilling their roles. All staff are highly motivated because leaders are mindful of work-life balance. One member of staff said: 'Yes, I work hard, but I am not doing tedious things. I am doing things that really help pupils.'

Leaders embrace their wider role in improving the provision in mainstream schools for pupils with SEND. They do this without losing sight of and fulfilling their key responsibility: to maintain the highest-quality education for pupils at The Parkside School.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone in the school is very aware of the vulnerabilities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Rigorous training ensures that staff know what to look for that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They know what action to

take and are confident this is followed up. Staff teach pupils about personal safety. This includes regular road safety, learning about online safety and safe relationships.

All checks on staff are carried out in line with best practice. Leaders record concerns about pupils and follow these up. Leaders work with external agencies to ensure that action is taken when needed to keep pupils safe.

## Background

When we have judged a special school, pupil referral unit or maintained nursery school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 9 October 2012.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121262
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110320
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	169
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	5
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stephen Hobbs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Holderness
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.parkside.norfolk.sch.uk/">www.parkside.norfolk.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Parkside School is a foundation special school for pupils with complex needs. All pupils have an educational, health and care plan.
- The school operates on two sites, one for the main school and the other for sixth-form pupils. Some pupils are taught in static classes by their class teacher and some are taught by different teachers for different subjects.
- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the senior leadership team. The current headteacher has been in post since 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We also met with some curriculum leaders, some class teachers and some teaching assistants. We spoke with some pupils from the classes visited, with pupils on the playground and around the

school and observed a school council meeting. We spoke with a representative from the local authority and with two governors.

- We carried out deep dives in reading, science, personal, social health and economic education (PSHE) and PE. This entailed visiting classes, looking at pupils' work and speaking with subject leaders and teachers. We also spoke with pupils about their learning.
- We scrutinised pupil records and files relating to safeguarding, staff recruitment and training relating to safeguarding. We scrutinised a range of other school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- We took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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