

# Parkside House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Parkside House is an independent day special school, which is registered for 20 students aged from 11 to 16 years. The school, which opened in January 1988, is located in North Tyneside and currently has 17 students on its roll, all of whom are of White British heritage. The students come from six local authorities in the north east of England, with two in Key Stage 3 and the remainder in Key Stage 4. All students have a statement of special educational needs linked specifically to their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and/or other learning difficulties associated with autistic spectrum disorders. Four of the students are looked after children. Prior to starting at the school, the students have a history of severe disruption to their education caused, primarily, by poor attendance and challenging behaviour in their previous schools. The school aims to promote, 'a high quality of education for all its students by providing a range of traditional and alternative curricular experiences'. It further emphasises that the needs of each student are paramount within the provision made, and that all have the opportunity to gain some form of nationally recognised qualification. The school was last inspected in September 2008.

## Evaluation of the school

Parkside House School provides a good quality of education for its students. The overall quality of provision has been sustained since the previous inspection, and the school continues to meet its published aims very successfully. Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements. Good quality teaching, combined with a varied and well-planned curriculum make for a very positive work ethos, within which the students make good overall progress, especially in gaining some formal qualifications, improved attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school meets almost all the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good, and provides the students with a range of carefully selected subjects that cover all the required areas of learning. The overall balance and programming of separate subjects is good, with a suitable range of

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

opportunities for the students to develop key literacy, numeracy and computer skills, and to gain some traditional and vocational qualifications. The emphasis on developing these key skills is making a difference to the students' confidence to engage in reading, writing and speaking activities, although for many, their starting point at the school is very low because of a history of missed schooling. Although the vast majority of students say they enjoy the different subjects that they study, for most there is a preference towards those areas where there is a practical or 'hands on' element to the learning. The curriculum provides many such opportunities, although occasional over-directive teaching leads to a passivity of learning, which affects both the students' motivation to learn and rate of progress they make. The additional curricular opportunities provided for the students enhance their overall learning, and are also helping them to improve their personal progress in school; not least in more regular attendance and in making a significant reduction in behavioural incidents which affect their own and others' learning. There are excellent opportunities for the students to experience the 'world of work', which is enabling them to develop a greater appreciation of life outside of the school. These experiences are also helping the students to gain greater confidence in using their oral skills in unfamiliar and more challenging environments.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good overall. Teaching is well planned by most but not all teachers, but too often the planning focuses on what will be taught rather than on what the students will learn. Long-term planning at Key Stage 4 is securely based on accreditation syllabuses and at Key Stage 3 on nationally published schemes of work. Where teaching is most effective, teachers provide a range of suitably challenging activities which physically and/or intellectually engage and motivate the students. The additional effect from teaching of this quality is seen in the always at least good or better behaviour of students, a willingness to engage in discussion, express a personal viewpoint, listen carefully, and show an ability to work individually and independently of the teacher. The teachers have good subject knowledge which is used to greatest effect when it supports and facilitates individual and independent learning. There is regular recording of students' progress in all subjects taught, including a daily record of progress against identified aspects of each student's individual educational plan. As a result of this monitoring, the teachers know the students very well, although the extent to which they use prior learning to plan future lessons is variable across the school. The marking of students' work is consistent but is of variable quality across the school and not always sufficiently detailed in terms of the 'next steps in learning'. Where teachers do identify areas that the students could improve upon, this is often specific to separate pieces of completed work rather than forming targets for ongoing improvements in all future work. Overall, there is too little sharing of the key characteristics of effective teaching between staff across the school.

The students' progress by the time they leave the school is good in relation to their gaining formal accreditation and in the development of their personal attributes and abilities. It is particularly noteworthy in the improvements in their attendance and behaviour, and in their improvements in a range of key literacy, numeracy and computing skills. Although some of the standards achieved by the students are

modest when compared to the standards expected for their age, it nevertheless represents a positive picture of their progress from a very low starting point when they first joined the school.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students are satisfactory. The students' behaviour is good and exemplified by their careful listening in lessons, their ability to focus on the learning task, and in the manner in which they respond to staff in school. Although some students find it hard to engage in open discussion, the overwhelming majority respond positively to teachers in question and answer sessions. The vast majority of students show respect and tolerance towards others, including their peers. Almost all say they enjoy school, which is reflected in the excellent rates of attendance for a large majority of the students. There is, however, a small minority whose attendance is still far too low, which is having a negative effect on their success at school. A few students responding to the inspection questionnaire recognised that the behaviour of some is disruptive to their learning and enjoyment of school, and for one student an additional worry about their personal safety also. Overall, however, very good working relationships exist between the students and the staff.

The students are developing their self-esteem and personal confidence and, because they are also beginning to experience some personal successes in their education, the attendance, behaviour and attitudes of the overwhelming majority are significantly better than that seen in their previous schools. The students know clearly the difference between right and wrong, and although this is not always practised with the regularity sought by the school for some students, the overwhelming majority is able to work very successfully in school. Staff are skilled at using a range of social praise to encourage and motivate the students to do their best, which is helping them to develop a clearer sense of self-worth because their efforts are recognised and celebrated.

The range of formal and informal learning opportunities in the citizenship and personal, social and health education programmes is enabling the students to develop their understanding and appreciation of the law, public services and the wider community. However, the use of external visitors, such as the community police and fire service, is underdeveloped in relation to extending the range of learning opportunities within the school and supporting citizenship education.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of its students, including child protection, are good, with all regulations being met fully. The procedures for safeguarding the students are well known and consistently applied by the staff. The supervision of students in lessons and around the school site is good and is always achieved within a calm and well-controlled manner. Staff are very effective in using a range of de-escalation techniques, which is helping to reduce the

number of sanctions used. The students respond well to the support and guidance provided and, as a result, incidents of challenging behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively with a minimum of interruption. The senior designated teacher for child protection has received updated training, as have all the staff, and the headteacher is aware that further updated training is required in the very near future. The curriculum provides the students with regular opportunities to participate in some type of physical activity designed to improve awareness of, and involvement in a healthier lifestyle. The school also successfully promotes the general well-being of its students through its personal, social and health education programme. Off-site risk assessments are sufficiently clear to meet health and safety requirements. Fire safety checks comply with the regulations. The school meets fully its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The single central register contains all the information necessary to ensure that the required regulatory checks have been carried out on all staff who work with the students.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school meets all but one of the regulations; it currently does not have suitable provision for students who are ill. There are three detached buildings on the site: a general teaching area, a specialist building for design and technology and the main school, which was a former two-floor private dwelling. There are sufficient numbers of classrooms for general class teaching, and dedicated specialist areas for art and information and communication technology in the main building. All classrooms are of a suitable size for the age and number of students on roll. There is a kitchen, which serves hot lunches and which has met all requirements from the local environmental health department. The dining room is of a sufficient size to be used as a full school meeting room for all students and staff. The outdoor area, almost exclusively comprising of grass, provides ample opportunities for the students to engage in some form of recreation. The toilets and washbasin facilities are of a suitable standard for the age of the students. Overall, the buildings are in good condition and appear structurally sound.

### **Provision of information**

The school meets all but two of the regulations. The school brochure, which is detailed and contains a range of helpful information for parents and carers, does not make explicitly clear the contact details for the proprietor during term and holiday times. Rather than specify what school policies are available on request, the school provides all policies to parents and carers with the exception of those about exclusions and the promotion of health and safety of educational visits. Additional information, which includes newsletters, is regularly sent out and provides very helpful, updated information about the school generally and also about the ongoing successes of the students. With the exception of one parent or carer who would

want improved communication with the school about temporary exclusions, the overwhelming majority of others responding to the inspection questionnaire were very positive about the links with the school, including how well informed they are of their children's progress.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The procedures for handling complaints comply fully with the regulations.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- provide information to parents, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, which relate to the contact details for the proprietor during the term time and holidays (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- make available particulars of the school's exclusions policy and how it promotes pupils' health and safety on educational visits (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop strategies for the sharing of effective practice, especially in relation to lesson planning and preparation, and in the marking of students' work.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made).

- Further develop the citizenship curriculum to ensure a more coherent coverage of public services and the law, especially when using external visitors to enhance the quality of learning.



## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent day school		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including those on the autistic spectrum		
<b>Date school opened</b>	January 1998		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 7	Total: 17
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 7	Total: 17
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£27,102 – £38,869		
<b>Address of school</b>	Station Road Backworth Tyne & Wear NE27 0AB		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 216 1051		
<b>Email address</b>	parkside.house@btconnect.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Belinda Young		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr J Thompson, Mr K Thompson		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 April 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Parkside House School, Tyne & Wear, NE27 0AB**

I am writing this letter following my recent visit your school. I should like to thank you for the way you behaved throughout the two days I was in school, and for the way you were prepared to talk with me about life at school. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers.

I hope that you, your parents or carers enjoy reading the following, in which I summarise my main findings from the inspection.

- The quality of education at Parkside House School is good.
- From a starting point at the school where all of you have experienced severe disruption with your education, almost all of you make good progress in your learning and in your personal development - well done to you all.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning throughout the inspection were good.
- Almost all of you said you enjoy school, although a small number felt that the behaviour of some students could be better, particularly because it disrupts your learning and, occasionally, makes some of you feel a little unsafe.
- The staff support you well and the working relationships throughout the school are good.
- The curriculum provided for you is good, and includes many opportunities to gain some form of national award.
- I am asking the school to consider how it helps all teachers to improve their teaching, and also that it thinks about how it can make better links between those visitors to the school, such as the police and fire service, with your work on citizenship.

I hope that you continue to enjoy attending school and that you achieve all that you and your parents or carers would wish for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake  
Her Majesty's Inspector