

# Parkside Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114296
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	357515
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	751
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Kingston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hall Lane Estate Willington, Crook County Durham DL15 0QF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 28 teachers and 28 lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and analysed 180 questionnaires from parents and carers, 90 from students and 53 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of students, information the school had collected about the students' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the current attainment and progress are in Key Stage 3 and also in mathematics and English across the whole school.
- How strongly behaviour contributes to learning.
- The extent to which students are directed successfully to learn independently and assess for themselves how well they are doing.
- How effective the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are, especially those of subject leaders, in accelerating improvement in areas that are less strong.

## Information about the school

Parkside is a smaller-than-average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. Most students are of White British heritage and there are very few from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, but the proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school is a specialist school in sport. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status and the International Award for the development of students' understanding of other cultures.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Parkside is an outstanding school that has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Outcomes for students are outstanding because their achievement is good and many aspects of their personal development, including feeling safe, their understanding of a healthy lifestyle, contribution to the community and behaviour, are excellent. The vast majority of students, staff, parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. The following comments illustrate well how highly the students regard their school; 'It's enjoyable and I want to come back every day' and 'We have a sense of proudness here - everyone is so polite and nice to each other.'

Areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed very well. For example, governance is now good and the sport specialism impacts well in many areas, including the students' excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the community. Large numbers of students are Sports Leaders, promoting a healthy lifestyle for pupils in nearby primary schools. Achievement at Key Stage 3 has improved and is good. Progress in subjects where it had not been as good, such as in English and in mathematics, is improving rapidly due to very accurate self-evaluation, rigorous monitoring, and changes to the curriculum to ensure that courses are tailored much better to the needs of all students. The curriculum is outstanding, not only in this respect, but also in the wider enrichment experiences for students. The students, eagerly, told inspectors of a visit to a premier league football club where they learnt about team-building skills. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Students are known well as individuals and there is a strong focus on respect. This results in excellent relationships and behaviour which impact very well on learning.

The headteacher and her strong leadership team are central to the improved success of the school. Subject leadership is improving strongly. Embedding ambition and driving improvements, effectiveness of partnerships and the quality of opportunity for students are all outstanding. Self-evaluation is rigorous, resulting in significant improvements, although the school agrees that its monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have not always been focused clearly enough on learning or on the previous areas for development. Despite this, teaching has improved considerably and is good overall, although at present there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Outstanding practice is not shared effectively enough at present. In some lessons, there are not enough independent learning tasks or clear enough guidance for students to be able to tell if they are being successful in their learning. As a result, their attainment is not always as high or progress as fast as they might be. However, the many substantial improvements that have occurred since the previous inspection and the determined drive to be even better, based on extremely accurate self-evaluation, mean that the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise attainment and accelerate the rate of progress further, improve the quality of teaching and learning so that even more of the teaching is outstanding by:
  - sharing more effectively outstanding practice in teaching and learning
  - giving students more opportunities to be involved in independent learning tasks
  - always providing clear guidance in all lessons so that students can assess for themselves more easily how well they are learning
  - improving all marking to the standard of the best so that all students are clear in all subjects about how they can improve their work
  - observing lessons with a closer focus on learning and on the previous areas for development.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Inspection evidence confirms that learning and progress are good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Students leave in Year 11 with attainment that is average overall, but above average in some subjects such as science, physical education and many vocational subjects. From below-average attainment on entry to the school and clear enjoyment in lessons, this means that students' achievement is good. There is no significant difference in the progress of different groups of students. Expectations are high and students enjoy a challenge. This was exemplified well in a Year 10 travel and tourism lesson when students were asked to devise and explain methods to enhance passengers' experiences at airports. In most lessons, excellent behaviour makes a significant contribution to learning and students work very well together. This was seen to good effect in many lessons, including a Year 7 history lesson on Guy Fawkes and in a Year 11 science lesson where students worked in groups to explain how the structure of the different components of blood are related to their functions. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well, in line with their peers. Much of the credit for this is due to the excellent work of learning support assistants. Students in the Zone, where basic skills are learnt, were seen engaging well with a visitor with a background in the armed forces, learning about team building.

Students are very clear that they feel very safe in school and they have an acute awareness of issues such as e-safety. They have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy. They enjoy the many opportunities to take part in sporting activities and there are excellent partnerships with local sporting clubs, resulting in some students reaching high standards recognised in national awards. Students contribute very well to the local community in many ways. An example of this is their lunch for elderly people when they educate them on how to keep safe. There are many opportunities for students to take on responsibility in school and students have a strong voice through the school council. Students are particularly proud of roles in campaigning for a school uniform and in the design of their school badge, and also in their roles as advisors, in which they act as a 'listening service' for their peers. There are extensive enterprise activities for a wide range of students from Years 7 to 11. With their high attendance, good achievement in English, mathematics and in information and communication technology (ICT), students leave school with good skills and knowledge to pursue university courses, employment or

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training. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of international cultures is particularly good, because the school's promotion of community cohesion is good. However, their understanding of minority ethnic religions and cultures, reflecting those found in the United Kingdom as a whole, are less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The school, rightly, says that one of its strengths is the way it looks after its students. Members of staff work very effectively as a team, successfully creating an outstanding network of care, guidance and support for the students at Parkside. This permeates all years, even before students begin in Year 7. Well-established links with a very wide range of specialist agencies mean that advice and guidance are deployed diligently in guiding individuals and groups, especially those who are potentially vulnerable or at risk. The curriculum is tailored exceptionally well to meet the needs of all learners. Well-focused support and revision sessions in English and mathematics have been instrumental in raising attainment there. These include Year 11 students leading weekly coaching sessions for their peers in mathematics. The flexibility of the option choices in Years 10 and 11 allows for students of all abilities to specialise, whilst retaining breadth and balance in their choices. There is a wide range of very successful vocational subjects on offer. These link well to local industries and help to enhance students' interests and aspirations further.

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The increasing number of students going on to higher education each year is a testament to their improved aspirations. A bespoke programme for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to achieve well and to be fully involved in school life. The specialist school status ensures enhanced opportunities in sport and is having a considerable impact on improving achievement. A broad range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and participation rates are high. Students welcome the chance to sample some unusual activities, such as designing and making paper ducks, one of the many activities in Inspire Days, which they help to organise.

The quality of teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice. Teaching is characterised by interesting activities, good pace and good questioning that challenges students well. Literacy is linked into other lessons very effectively. This was exemplified in a Year 11 mathematics lesson when students were seen analysing different parts of a distance-time graph and devising scenarios that these journeys might represent. Assessment is used well to stimulate learning and raise attainment. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, when students explored the use of language for different audiences, the teacher checked the students' understanding frequently and gave advice on what could be improved. Very occasionally, in lessons where learning is less secure, teachers talk too much from the front of the class, giving students less opportunity to be involved in independent learning tasks and there is not clear enough guidance for them to know how well they are learning. Teachers' marking is usually clear and helpful, but it is inconsistent in quality. Students have challenging, individual targets in each subject and most know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. This is helped by the virtual learning environment on the school's website, where students can access their homework and information about how well they are doing.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has provided the school with a very clear vision and direction that has had a very significant and positive impact on its development. The needs of the students remain at the heart of everything the school does. The senior leadership works extremely well together and the whole staff shares a clear commitment to raising outcomes. Improvement since the previous inspection three years ago, when the overall effectiveness of the school was judged satisfactory, has been substantial. The aspirations of the staff and students have been raised considerably. Team spirit is robust and everyone's contribution is valued. The school, clearly, knows its strengths very well and what to do to improve academic achievement. Monitoring and evaluation are meticulous at all levels and any previous gaps in performance, such as those of the highest-attaining

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students have closed rapidly, reflected in the recent national Challenge Award. This, along with the cohesive and harmonious nature of the school community and the non-tolerance of any racism and discrimination, indicates that equality of opportunity is outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding are very comprehensive and the school is at the forefront of innovation in having a system whereby the students can report to the police online and get feedback on their concerns. Engagement with parents and carers is good and there are very effective lines of communication and evidence of acting on their views. The school is reaching out very well into the local community and planned links with other communities nationally and internationally are becoming increasingly well-established. The school has very effective partnerships with the local services that have impacted well on the high attendance and it is sharing expertise with other schools, for example, in the use of data to improve achievement. Members of the governing body are well-informed and both support and challenge the school very effectively in its drive towards further improvement.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

About one quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. They were very positive about all aspects of the school's work, particularly the extent to which the school keeps their children safe, informs them of their progress and how well the school is led and managed. These were aspects that the inspectors judged the school were doing exceptionally well. A few parents and carers did not agree that their children enjoyed school. Interviews with the students and the student questionnaires indicated that generally the students did enjoy school. A small minority of parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. The inspectors judged that this was something that generally the school was doing increasingly well. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour



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effectively. Inspectors followed up this concern, but found behaviour to be excellent overall and students reported that any misbehaviour was dealt with appropriately.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkside Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 751 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	28	102	57	22	12	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	77	43	96	53	5	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	40	98	54	8	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	34	102	57	15	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	36	104	58	10	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	28	100	56	22	12	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	26	108	60	17	9	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	69	38	93	52	8	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	36	100	56	11	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	47	69	38	17	9	6	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	24	98	54	17	9	7	4
The school is led and managed effectively	71	39	98	54	6	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	43	92	51	9	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**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.**



16 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Parkside Sports College, Crook, DL15 0QF**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you very much. We judged your school to be outstanding and we would like to share with you why we think this is so.

Students' outcomes are excellent and your academic achievement is good. A key to your success is the outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning the vast majority of you have. You tell us that you feel very safe in school and that you enjoy being there. We agree that the outstanding curriculum and the very high levels of care, guidance and support you receive are indeed helping you to develop personal and academic skills for your daily lives. We judged teaching as good overall, but we also saw some outstanding lessons during our visit when you were fully involved in learning independently and in assessing your own learning. You feel that your headteacher and the senior leadership team have a high profile around the school and are always trying to improve the school. We agree with you.

Although your school has improved greatly, we believe that it can improve further, particularly your academic achievement. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that more teaching and learning is outstanding by sharing more effectively the best practice in teaching. We have also asked her to make sure that marking is as good in all subjects as in the best and that when lessons are being observed by senior leaders, there is always a close focus on the quality of learning and on the previous area for development. You can help by asking your teachers to tell you how you can judge if you are learning well during your lessons.

We would like to wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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