

Parkside Complex Needs School, supported by Parkside Community Trust Norwich

College Road, Norwich, NR2 3JA

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership and management of the school are exceptional. The excellent learning opportunities provided enable pupils to achieve their very best.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in all subjects, including English and mathematics, because teaching is outstanding. Teachers set work at just the right level for each individual pupil.
- Pupils make excellent progress in developing their communication skills. Just occasionally, staff miss opportunities to further develop their reading skills.
- The school helps pupils to learn to do things by themselves and become independent in carrying out ordinary day-to-day activities like going to the shops. Pupils love taking on such responsibilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are respectful and very thoughtful in the ways they work together. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary.
- Excellent links with the local community and partnerships with other schools and parents benefit pupils' education significantly. The parent of one pupil commented, 'He is achieving more than I ever thought possible.'
- The new sixth form unit is outstanding. Students are proud of everything they achieve and are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their life.
- Governors, trustees and the local authority are meticulous in checking on how well the school is doing.
- School leaders check rigorously on how well staff and pupils are working. They take swift action to tackle any areas of teaching and learning that need improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, almost all of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to other lessons and looked at pupils' work and heard them read.
- The inspection team held meetings with pupils, governors, trustees, local authority advisers and the school's staff, including senior leaders and the specialist speech and language team.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as other testimonies from parents and questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's planning for improvement and the data it keeps on pupils' current progress, as well as the school's safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This special school for pupils with complex needs is based on two sites approximately three miles apart in Norwich. Almost all pupils are based at the College Road site, whilst the new provision for Year 12 students, which can accommodate up to 10 students, is based in newly developed accommodation on the site of a local mainstream school, The Hewett School.
- The school is a specialist special school (communication and interaction) and provides support to neighbouring schools and the communities linked to these. It has trust status, supported by the Parkside Community Trust. Trust partners include NHS Norfolk, Asperger East Anglia, Barnardos, the City College, The Hewett School and the local authority.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs, usually for learning difficulties and linked speech, language or communication needs. The large majority have one or more additional needs such as behavioural, social and emotional needs, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder or medical needs.
- A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium. The proportion in the care of the local authority is high. The very large majority of pupils are White British with very few from other ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs a range of clubs, including breakfast and after-school clubs, residential opportunities and a summer school to provide extended opportunities for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure every member of staff always encourages pupils to sound out and combine letters to help them to read and spell words correctly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils, including the few who speak English as an additional language, make exceptional progress in their communication and language because these skills are so well taught in all subjects and staff are exceptionally well trained to do this. For example, pupils successfully focused on writing longer sentences in a religious education lesson because doing so was as much a part of this lesson as developing their subject knowledge.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exceptional. Pupils have many opportunities to work together and to work towards becoming independent, such as using public transport on their own.
- Support for pupils' next steps, whether in academic subjects or their personal development, underpins everything the school does. Targets set for pupils challenge them to achieve even more, and consequently they do. This gives pupils tremendous pride. Their self-confidence grows and they become increasingly independent.
- Pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics as soon as they enter the school because of the emphasis it places on developing these key skills. The many opportunities they have to apply literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects mean that pupils are closing the gap with pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Some, for example, take GCSE or the higher entry-level courses in Key Stage 4 despite their extremely low levels of skill on entry to the school.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills improve considerably, and they use computers confidently to help them with this and to support their work in other subjects. They take an increasingly wide range of qualifications that are highly relevant to them, and achieve very well in subjects such as hair and beauty and land management.
- Parents and staff are already commenting on the remarkable progress sixth-form students have made in developing their independence and attitudes to work in just a few weeks. Highly relevant, well-thought-out programmes are preparing these students extremely well for their next placement and for their life within their local communities.
- Pupils who have the most complex special educational needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia, achieve as well as other groups. The school targets the additional money it receives, such as the pupil premium, exceptionally well to ensure that all pupils achieve outstandingly well. Those who are in the care of the local authority do just as well as others because staff constantly encourage and support them.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Almost all teachers are expert at getting the best out of pupils and stimulating them to listen, think and try their best. Pupils say their teachers give them 'really fun' things to do and they know that their teachers think hard about how they can explain things and interest them.
- Teaching is supported by a detailed understanding of pupils' current levels and what they need to learn next. The school leaders check carefully that the information collected about pupils' current progress is used effectively by teachers to plan and adapt their lessons to each pupil's needs.
- Teachers' use of questions and of practical resources to help pupils to work things out for themselves is particularly strong. This means pupils have many opportunities to work together and independently, and to discuss their work with each other.

- The school uses every lesson to promote pupils' communication and language skills very well. It is constantly skilling teachers up further, for example introducing further training in signing so that staff can meet the needs of the growing numbers of pupils who increasingly need this to support their learning and social development.
- Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to learning in lessons. Like teachers they develop excellent relationships with pupils and are skilled at giving pupils just enough help so that they still have to think for themselves.
- Teaching in the sixth form is similarly outstanding because of the way in which the learning is tailored to each individual student, and the very clear focus everyone has on what each student is working towards.
- Teaching has remained outstanding overall, despite the numbers of new staff this year because of excellent support systems for staff and the ways in which the leadership manage staff performance. This means new staff are adapting lessons very quickly to each pupil's needs.
- A very small number of staff occasionally miss opportunities to encourage pupils to use their strong knowledge of letter sounds to work out how to spell words, or what a new word might be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils say they love their school and their teachers are brilliant, and their behaviour reflects this. They are polite, respectful to each other and adults, and want to do their best.
- Those who have a history of behavioural needs on entry make remarkable progress in managing their own behaviour because of the high expectations everyone has of them, and because teachers are so skilled at motivating pupils and managing their behaviour positively.
- The excellent range of programmes to encourage pupils' personal, social and emotional development means that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.
- Pupils get on with each other extremely well; bullying is very rare indeed, but pupils do understand the different forms it can take and what to do if it should ever happen. The many opportunities they have to be with pupils from other schools and to work within their community help them to develop an understanding of everyone's differences and strengths.
- All parents agree that their children are kept safe. They are pleased with how happy their children are to come to school, and this is reflected in the high attendance of pupils and the very high attendance of those who do not have medical needs.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is exemplary. They settle quickly to their lessons, are keen to improve and are proud to be part of the larger school environment at The Hewett. Sixth-form students relish the opportunities to demonstrate their independence through cooking their own meals and monitoring their own progress towards their personal targets.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The exceptional vision of the headteacher and his deputy inspires both the school and its community to ensure every pupil receives the support they need to make outstanding progress, both personally and in academic subjects.
- The school is exceptional in the way that it gets the best out of everyone, staff and pupils alike.

Rigorous checking on how pupils are doing and how well lessons help each to learn ensures high standards. Staff have a very good understanding of pupils' progress, and new staff are brought up to speed extremely well so they quickly find out how well each individual pupil is doing and their next step in learning.

- The school's leaders know exactly what needs to be done to make it even better. The new sixth form is led extremely well, and reflects the visionary leadership of the whole school and the leaders' determination to make their ambitions for all pupils a practical reality. Performance in the sixth form is also exceptionally well managed.
- An extensive range of partnerships with other schools, businesses and community groups enable the school to provide a rich range of experiences for pupils through which they can practise and use their developing skills. These enthuse pupils and their families and ensure they are included in community life now and when they leave the school.
- Every pupil is a well-known member of the school community, and well-targeted support means that nobody is disadvantaged because of their background, learning needs or language needs.
- Pupils' safety is paramount and procedures are followed meticulously. Excellent working with other agencies and parents promote exceptionally effectively the safety, well-being and learning of all pupils, including those with the most complex needs.
- Additional monies that the school receives, such as through the pupil premium and its specialist school status, are used extremely well to promote pupils' learning and involvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has high ambitions for every pupil, and both governors and trustees are determined to play their part in making sure the school achieves their high expectations
 - is highly knowledgeable and informed about the school's work and quick to check on how well new initiatives are going and that they are making a difference
 - has excellent systems for holding leaders to account, including checking on how the management of performance is improving the school further
 - ensures that the range of skills and knowledge that governors and trustees bring to the school are used very well indeed to promote even more opportunities for pupils and the local community to work together, such as in the work with the Hewett School and in supporting transition into college
 - is very effectively supported by trustees and the local authority.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121262
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	403798

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Gamble
Headteacher	Barry Payne
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
Telephone number	01603 441126
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Email address	head@parkside.norfolk.sch.uk

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