

The Parks

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	359/6000
Unique Reference Number (URN)	137821
Inspection number	408671
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2012
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The Parks is a non-denominational independent school which caters for residential students. It is registered for up to six boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years of age with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently four students on roll; three of these students have a statement of special educational needs. The school is part of the 'Inspire' group which also provides residential accommodation. The school's aim is to 'provide youngsters with complex issues an education that is tailored to their needs in a small environment with high staff ratios'. The school opened in January 2012 and this was its first full inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is satisfactory and the school meets its aims. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. The satisfactory teaching and assessment arrangements contribute to students making satisfactory progress in their learning. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and behaviour is satisfactory. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of students is good. The school meets all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Students attending the school are likely to have a wide range of personal and academic difficulties. The school has therefore developed a curriculum that is based on the National Curriculum but is individualised to meet students' particular needs and interests. It is supported with suitable policies and schemes of work and is planned carefully to give students a broad and balanced education. The school has a policy for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) that is implemented effectively. Students are taught ways to improve their social interactions with peers and staff and about leading healthy lifestyles. Weekly citizenship lessons give them insights into the global community and teach them what is expected of them as citizens of this country.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

The curriculum ensures that students acquire the necessary skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE) and PSHCE form the basis of the curriculum provided. Students choose additional subjects according to their interests. The curriculum enables students to undertake a range of courses of study with accreditation. These include Skills for Life, the national strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills (ESOL); short units of work which are accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN); GCSE and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). The school ensures that students are provided with experiences in all of the required areas of learning through the careful integration of different subjects. An example of this practice was a mathematics lesson on time that included elements of art and citizenship that conveyed important insights into children's rights through media.

Students' personal development and many aspects of the curriculum are supported through outdoor education sessions that take place every week. During the first half of the school year, these activities are linked to art, history and science and include visits to a variety of museums, a glass factory and a 'behind the scenes' tour of the Trafford Centre. During the second half of the year, activities are linked to geography and citizenship and include visits to a bird centre, dog and cat home, aquarium, reptile centre and a prison for young offenders. Students appreciate the ways that these activities contribute to their education and see them as a highlight of the week.

Students receive careers guidance from advisors that come to the school and through discussion with their teachers. They are prepared for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life through a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and through PSHCE. Students take an active role in determining their own programmes of study; they decorate the school with their own work and have painted the common room with their own chosen designs. As a result, they feel part of the school community. The school works hard to provide students with consistent approaches and experiences. For example, students that cannot attend school are provided with private tuition at home.

Teaching and assessment is satisfactory although the quality of teaching is stronger than some aspects of the assessment procedures. Students are enabled to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers plan their lessons well and the pace of lessons ensures that students keep on task and do not lose interest. Teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes of individual students and lessons are planned accordingly. As a result, students of varying abilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, are suitably supported. The school has good systems for behaviour management; there are high levels of supervision and behaviour in lessons, which is often challenging, is managed well. Teachers have developed good, supportive relationships with their students; students respect their opinions and often discuss important issues with them. Students are provided with opportunities to work on their own with minimal input but clear guidance from their teachers. Students agree that the school has a good variety of resources to support

the curriculum; these include an interactive whiteboard, computers, a kitchen and resources for art.

Students undergo a baseline assessment when they start school and this informs their personalised programmes of work. Teachers assess progress and this informs the planning of lessons. They monitor students' personal development well; they check the progress students make in lessons and provide useful feedback to them about their work. Records of achievement and students' work demonstrate that they make satisfactory progress. However, the tracking of academic progress is underdeveloped and inconsistent. It is therefore hard to gauge exactly how much progress each student makes over time and this limits the ways that the school assesses the overall quality of students' learning. The school is in the process of establishing a system of self-evaluation to appraise its strengths and areas that need to be developed to help to improve curricular provision and teaching.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is satisfactory. They experience spirituality through many of the activities that take place during outdoor education and art. Often, spiritual issues are discussed during PSHCE lessons. Students learn about morality through citizenship and the firm but caring guidance of their teachers. The school maintains a 'moral high ground' and demands that students are respectful and speak appropriately. Students are encouraged to be sociable; they spend time together during break times, often in the common room where they play pool together and with teachers. They gain confidence and grow in self-esteem as they make progress in improving their social skills and in their overall personal development. Teachers are always positive and complimentary; this provides students with a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

Behaviour during lessons and around school is satisfactory; students are inquisitive but polite to people that visit the school. Attendance rates are high and students are punctual to lessons. Generally, students have good attitudes towards school; they are engaged and take interest in their lessons. They appreciate the range of activities attached to the curriculum. One student noted that in school, 'We do loads of things!' Students gain sufficient understanding and an appreciation of different cultures and religions through citizenship, food technology and discussions. However this area of the schools provision would benefit from a review and extension. Students learn about public services and respecting the law through PSHCE and visits; they contribute to the community through a sponsored walk and biscuit sale to raise funds for charity.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students at the school is good. The school has written policies to promote the safeguarding and welfare of students, good behaviour and the prevention of bullying and these are implemented appropriately. All staff, including the designated person for safeguarding, are suitably

trained in child protection at the required level; refresher training for child protection takes place at the required intervals. The school has full regard for the safe recruitment of staff. It has written policies on first aid and health and safety for the premises and school trips and completes comprehensive risk assessments for all activities both in and out of school.

One member of the school staff is trained in first aid and the school has suitable arrangements in place to ensure that someone is always on hand in case of emergencies. The school suitably records sanctions for students who behave inappropriately. There is a good level of fire safety; fire drills take place every month and are duly recorded. The school's admission register meets the requirements and attendance is registered properly.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school fulfils its responsibilities to ensure that proprietors and all staff are appropriately checked prior to taking up their appointments. A comprehensive single central record is maintained of the checks made.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located in a detached house in a residential area. The premises and accommodation form a good base to support the provision of the curriculum. There are two decorated and furnished classrooms; a small kitchen to support food technology is attached to one. The school has two large grassy areas where students can play during break times; one has a trampoline. The school utilises a local sports centre, playing fields and an astro-turf for physical education. Students also have a common room that is equipped with a pool table and soft furnishings. The school has sufficient toilet facilities for students, warm running water and a room for students that are ill that meets the requirements.

Provision of information

The prospectus contains all of the required information. The school sends reports and conducts information evenings with parents and carers every term. It sends reports about the progress and attainment of students to placing local authorities every week. Annual accounts are sent to the local authorities placing students at the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Improve the tracking of students' academic progress and the assessment of their learning over time.
- Develop the system of self-evaluation to inform the development of the curriculum and to improve the quality of teaching.
- Further expand students' knowledge of different religions and cultures.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special – for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)		
Date school opened	January 2012		
Age range of pupils	11–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 3	Girls: 1	Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 1	Total: 4
Annual fees	£28,276		
Headteacher	Stuart Stokes		
Proprietor	Inspire Training and Education Services Ltd.		

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.



13 December 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of The Parks,

I thoroughly enjoyed inspecting your school. Thank you for being so welcoming and for spending time speaking to me. I spent my time at school observing lessons, speaking to staff and looking through documents. I was impressed by the ways that you were engaged during lessons and showed real interest in new topics that you were learning about.

I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory level of education and is satisfactory in the ways that it promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides for your welfare, health and safety well.

I have suggested that the school expand the ways in which you learn about different cultures and religions so that you can gain a better appreciation and understanding of people that are different from you. This will help you to continue to grow into mature, tolerant members of the community. I have also suggested that the school improve the ways that it makes checks on your progress and the ways that it assesses its own strengths and areas that need to be improved.

I wish you the very best for the future. If you have faith in your own ability to do well, I am sure that you will.

Yours sincerely

Chanan Tomlin
Lead Inspector