

Knowsley Park Centre for Learning

Knowsley Park Lane, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 3NB

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Results in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science are not yet good enough. In addition, students' literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently developed in other subjects.
- The curriculum does not always encourage and enable students to do as well as they can.
- The skills of the governing body are underdeveloped. Members do not ask searching enough questions of the centre's leadership, particularly in relation to the impact of strategies to improve the progress students make.
- The assessment of the quality of teaching is not yet rigorous enough and there is insufficient emphasis placed on the link between teachers' classroom performance and the salary they receive.
- Teaching is sometimes uninspiring and does not motivate students to want to learn.
- Students are not always given enough opportunities to be independent in their learning. They sometimes rely too much on the teacher to make progress.
- Lesson planning does not always take account of the accurate assessments of students' progress. Activities therefore do not get the best out of students.
- Some low level poor behaviour in lessons means students do not always get on with their work as well as they could; they choose to adopt a rather lethargic approach to moving to lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- The governors, headteacher and other leaders have a clear view of what needs to improve and are implementing plans to secure this improvement.
- The headteacher is working with other school leaders and the local authority to develop leaders and teaching in the centre.
- The centre has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now broadly average.
- Students say that they enjoy their centre for learning and they get on well with their teachers and with each other.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons and 36 teachers including one joint observation with a senior leader.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff, groups of students, representatives of the local authority and a National College Leader who has supported the centre in helping it to improve more rapidly.
- The views of 31 parents who responded to on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views expressed in the centre's parental surveys.
- Inspectors also considered the views of 20 teachers and support staff who responded to an internal centre questionnaire.
- The inspection team observed the centre's work and examined documentation including records of students' current progress and strategies to enable the centre to gain an accurate picture of its performance. Inspectors also scrutinised documentation relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gary Kelly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Neil MacKenzie	Additional Inspector
Paul Lathom	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized secondary school. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A small number of Year 10 and 11 students study vocational subjects part time at a range of local learning and skills providers as part of their Key Stage 4 pathway.
- There are partnership arrangements with an accredited Teaching School in a neighbouring local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring lesson planning provides activities for students, particularly those of lower and higher abilities, which interest and get the best out of them and uses the accurate information the centre has on individuals and groups of students
 - ensuring students have more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and that they do not rely purely on the teacher to help them make progress
 - providing teachers with more opportunities to share and learn from good and outstanding classroom practice within the centre and also further afield
 - supporting all students who are in danger of underachieving more effectively to accelerate their progress and raise their attainment.
- Continue to improve middle and senior leadership to ensure there is a clear focus on improving achievement by:
 - developing a whole-centre approach to improving student's literacy and numeracy skills
 - improving the curriculum so that all courses enable students to achieve as well as they can
 - further developing the skills of governors to enable them to ask searching questions of the leadership, particularly in relation to students' achievement
 - ensuring a more rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning with greater emphasis on the link between classroom performance and salary progression.
- Further improve students' behaviour by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own behaviour, including their attitudes to learning in class.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attainment on entry to the centre varies from year to year but is generally broadly average. Achievement requires improvement because some students do not make the progress they should in English, mathematics and science, and too few, particularly the more able, make more than expected progress in these subjects.
- Progress and attainment in these key subjects is not yet good because students' knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped as a result of lesson planning, which does not use the accurate assessments of how students are doing, to provide activities which meet their individual needs.
- There is an improving trend in attainment from 2010 to 2012. However, the proportion of students attaining 5 A* to C grades, including English and mathematics remains below average. Not enough students attain high GCSE grades A* to A in several other GCSE subjects.
- Those students who are in receipt of free school meals, or are looked after by the local authority and benefit from pupil premium funding achieve well when compared to their peers, as a result of effective strategies to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. The gaps between their performance and the performance of other students in the school are closing.
- Students with special educational needs and disabilities are making slightly better progress than other groups in the school, largely due to the high level of targeted support and intervention available to them.
- Those students who have significant emotional, psychological, self-esteem and confidence problems achieve well from their starting points, also because of the focused support they receive.
- Some students also receive additional support to improve their communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills which is helping to improve their progress. However, this practice is not yet widespread.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet good because some lessons do not meet the needs of less able and more able students in particular. Occasionally, activities are not matched well enough to what students need to extend their knowledge and thus help them to make good and better progress. At times, such lessons lack imagination and purpose.
- The assessment of how well students are doing is generally accurate but is not always used well enough to plan lessons which interest and motivate students to want to learn. In addition, teachers do not always make enough use of their generally secure subject knowledge to inspire their students and to ensure that they think more deeply about the topics they are studying.
- The centre possesses a range of good quality resources, the electronic whiteboard, computers and access to the internet, for example. However, although these materials are sometimes used well and bring lessons to life, they are not used widely and effectively enough, to capture the interests of students.
- On occasions, teachers do not give students the opportunities to be inquisitive, to be independent in their learning and to challenge themselves and their classmates to higher levels of attainment. In lessons such as these, students rely too much on the teacher to make progress and do not take enough responsibility for their own learning.
- Nonetheless, there are examples of good and outstanding classroom practice in the centre. In these lessons where teaching is good or better, teacher's knowledge and understanding of individuals and groups is thorough and is evident in planning. Lessons include a wide range of questioning techniques, interesting and challenging activities and opportunities for students to

work with, support and test each other. When this happens, students are keen to learn and show real interest in the activities.

- There are examples of high-quality marking and accurate, detailed feedback to students to enable them to become more aware of how they can improve their work. This practice is, however, variable across the centre.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because some students do not always show positive attitudes to learning. However, around school, most students are well mannered, respectful and courteous to each other, to adults and to visitors. As a result of effective strategies to encourage students to come to school regularly, attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly average. The proportion of students who are absent more often than they should be has decreased and is also in line with that usually found.
- The centre's promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural themes is evident in the centre's commitment to providing activities, visits and links with other schools, institutions and wider communities so that students have broader experiences of cultures different to their own.
- Students believe that bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly and effectively when it occurs. Their awareness of bullying is good and they know that systems are in place to respond to the few issues of this nature and other types of poor behaviour when it happens. Indeed, the use of exclusions to manage poor behaviour has decreased. Parents' are largely positive about the centre, particularly in the work it has done to improve behaviour.
- Parents also believe the centre keeps their children safe. Students are of the same opinion. They feel safe because teachers and other adults have developed very positive relationships with students, their parents and the local community in which they live. This has resulted in fewer incidents of poor behaviour both in the centre and in the local community, particularly in the last two years.
- The systems to support those students who have significant emotional, psychological, self-esteem and confidence problems are outstanding and precisely targeted. They have significant impact on their progress, attainment and attendance. This practice is exemplary and a strength of the centre.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the wide range of systems and practices which leaders have established, and continue to develop, have not had time to make a full impact on students' achievement. Nonetheless, signs of improvement are already evident, particularly in relation to the impact of the systems to monitor and improve teaching, achievement and attainment.
- The headteacher has developed strong partnerships with other schools, a National Leader of Education and a Teaching School to focus on improving the quality of leadership and management, teaching and learning and improving achievement more rapidly. The local authority also provides effective support and advice in these areas.
- The leadership team and governors are continuing to develop their quality assurance and performance management systems. However, there is more to be done to ensure that the monitoring of teaching is rigorous enough and that sufficient emphasis is placed on the link between performance in lessons and salary progression. Subject leadership is strengthening as a result of good training opportunities. These leaders have a thorough understanding of the centre's priorities and the mechanisms for improving students' progress and attainment.
- The development of literacy across the curriculum to support the improved progress students make is not rapid enough. There are examples of good literacy development in some lessons

and subjects and strong examples of where this is taking place as part of support activities. However, this is not yet systematic across the centre.

- Leaders and Managers continue to develop the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of all students. However, some students are still not following courses which will give them opportunities to achieve at a higher level.
- The centre's safeguarding and child protection statutory duties are in place and meet requirements. The promotion of equality of opportunity is at the forefront of its work and discrimination in all its forms is rejected.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the centre well and members have a keen interest in its performance. They have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development but do not yet ask searching enough questions of its leadership, particularly in relation to students' achievement and the links between teachers' classroom performance and the salary they receive. They oversee the spending of pupil premium funding and monitor the impact of this spending closely.

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	135477
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	406602

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Rimmer
Headteacher	Judith Walker
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2011
Telephone number	0151 477 8680
Fax number	0151 477 8681
Email address	knowsleyparkcfl.knowsley.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

