

# Park Lane Learning Trust

Park Lane, Exley, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 9LG

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Teaching is good in the large majority of lessons and some is outstanding. This is having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of students.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning are good.
- Students are polite and well-mannered and relationships between students and with adults are good.
- The academic and personal support given to students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and those who are disabled or with special educational needs is a strength of the school.
- Students are very well cared for. Bullying is rare and students feel very safe in the school.
- The curriculum offers a good range of courses and opportunities that contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of leadership from the school's headteacher, senior leaders and governing body is good. They have a clear view on how good the school can be and what needs to be done to improve it further. They have a clear focus on driving continued improvement of teaching and student achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently good and not enough is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to take an active part in their lessons.
- Students do not learn quickly enough in mathematics.
- The marking of students' work by teachers does not always clearly inform students what they need to do to improve.
- More-able students are not always given work that will help them to make more rapid progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons taught by 27 teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, the school's information on students' progress and students' work, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, staff and four members of the governing body.
- A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Adviser and a meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 40 responses to the parents' questionnaires carried out by the school in July 2012.

## Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Derek Davies

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Park Lane Learning Trust is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from families in the armed services and those in local authority care. There are currently no students from families in the armed services. There are a very small number who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above the national average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school uses Calderdale's Pupil Referral Unit and the Mixenden Activity Centre to provide alternative off-site provision for some students.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding lessons to further raise students' achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - creating further opportunities for students to take a more active part in their lessons and find things out for themselves
  - making sure that teachers' marking of students' work always provides students with clear and precise information about what they need to do to improve, and checking that students follow up teachers' comments
  - setting tasks and activities that enable the more-able students to make progress that is at least in line with national averages.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is well below the national average. However, as a result of good teaching, students make good progress.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased significantly from well below the national average in 2010 to just below average in 2012. The school's information on the current Year 11 shows that this improving trend is expected to continue in 2013.
- In 2012, the unvalidated results indicate that the middle and lower-ability students performed above the national average in English and in mathematics. However, the more-able students performed less well than other students when compared to national averages.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English increased from being well below average in 2010 to be in line with the national average in 2012. The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics also increased in 2012 but remains below the national average.
- The recent introduction of the whole-school reading programme called DEAR, (Drop Everything And Read), is having a positive impact on developing students' reading and writing skills across all subject areas. The school is now beginning to introduce strategies to enable students to develop and apply their mathematical skills across the full range of subjects.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals achieved approximately one third of a GCSE grade lower than all other students in English and a quarter of a grade lower in mathematics. However, the school's information on the current Year 11 shows that the gaps are closing. This is because the funding is well spent on additional staffing and activities to develop literacy and numeracy skills to provide support to those students at risk of falling behind. The very small number who are in local authority care do as well as those eligible for free school meals.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium receive additional support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, they make similar progress to that made by other students.
- The school entered all Year 10 students early for foundation level GCSE English. Of these, most went on to take the higher level examination in Year 11 with 19% achieving the higher grades. The school entered some Year 10 students early for GCSE mathematics. Of these, all went on to take the higher level examination in Year 11 with 23% achieving the higher grades.
- The few students following courses in establishments away from the school site receive good support and achieve well.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- In the best lessons, where sometimes outstanding teaching was seen, teaching is very well organised and planned and teachers make clear to students what they are going to learn. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use effective questioning to encourage students to think for themselves and develop their understanding. In these lessons students are keen to learn and make good progress.
- In some lessons, where teaching was less effective, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to contribute to their own learning in lessons and find more things out for themselves.
- In some lessons learning is too slow, particularly for the more-able students. Teachers do not set

tasks and activities that are hard enough that enable students to learn quickly enough.

- Students say they are well taught in the vast majority of their lessons. They say that they enjoy their lessons, know how well they are doing and get good support from their teachers. The good relationships between students and teachers and between students themselves promote positive attitudes to learning and enable students to get on with their work well.
- Students have clear targets in all subjects. In the best examples of marking of students' work, teachers' comments tell students how well they are doing and provide clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. However, this is not consistent across all subject areas and students are not always given enough information about what they need to do to improve. In addition, teachers do not always ensure that their written comments are followed up by students.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons, particularly to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They help students to learn, develop skills and achieve well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The vast majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. Students have a good understanding of and value the school's rewards and sanctions system and say that this has helped to improve behaviour. Students are polite, well-mannered and courteous towards each other and to adults and visitors. This promotes students' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Students have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying. The school has a very strong anti-bullying policy. Bullying is rare and any incidents are quickly and effectively dealt with. Students take a very proactive role against bullying. For example, a group of older students gave a drama performance on anti-bullying to local primary schools.
- Students report that they feel very safe in school because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults and members of staff are always around the school. They have a genuine pride in their school and value the support they receive from staff at all levels. They understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about e-safety.
- The responses to Parent View and to the parental survey carried out by the school indicate that a very large majority of parents agree that students behave well, they are not bullied, that they are well cared for and that they feel safe at school.
- The school provides opportunities for students to develop as responsible individuals. Some students make a significant contribution to the school community by taking on positions of responsibility such as the student executive and school council. Some students act as peer mentors to support the younger students, and prefects support staff on duty at breaks and lunchtime. A group of students have been actively involved in setting up 'Family First' to create a centre of excellence for family learning at the school and were awarded third place in the national competition 'Solutions for the Planet'.
- Although attendance is still slightly below the national average, it has improved throughout the last three years as a result of effective actions taken by the school. The percentage of students who are persistently absent is too high, but the school is successfully implementing strategies to reduce this figure.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body know the school well. They have accurately identified the strengths of the school, what the school needs to do to improve further and show great determination in driving forward this improvement. There is rightly a strong focus on teaching and learning and this has resulted in the upward trend in attainment and achievement.
- The school has very effective systems to check the quality of teaching and provides teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. This information is used appropriately when advising the governing body about teachers' progression up the salary scale. These systems and

processes provide information about how best to support and encourage further training opportunities for staff.

- The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of students well. It enables students to follow different pathways and study a wide range of subjects for GCSE and work-related qualifications. The school makes very good use of alternative provision to provide appropriate courses for a very small number of students and takes appropriate steps to ensure that their individual needs are met. This supports the school's aim of providing equal opportunities for learning and success for all students.
  - The school offers students a wide range of enrichment activities that provide them with opportunities and experiences to develop their personal and academic skills. For example, the school has linked with a local business to form a partnership with a school in India. The 'Family Learning Days' are very popular with both students and parents and provide opportunities for families to learn together in a range of activities such as glider making, art workshop and family cooking. Students are proactive in raising funds for charities such as Grace's Fund, Help for Heroes and Red Nose Day. The curriculum supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
  - Through the work of the School Improvement Advisor and the local authority's school effectiveness officer the school has received very effective support and advice on the school's curriculum development, teaching and learning and attendance.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body provides good support and challenge to senior leaders and managers and has a clear focus on securing further improvement in teaching and learning. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's performance over time, especially the quality of teaching and students' achievement. It gives appropriate attention to performance management to set appropriate and challenging targets and to the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay progression. It has a good understanding of the school's finances including the allocation of pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support and a range of activities and opportunities to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of those students at risk of falling behind. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107561
<b>Local authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	405110

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

<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>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Des Ackroyd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 362215
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