

Parklands High School – An Academy

Southport Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 1LL

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well across the school. Attainment in five or more good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is significantly above the national average. Progress in English has been consistently good over recent years. In mathematics, progress has improved and is now consistently good for students in all year groups.
- The progress of all groups of students, including those who are disadvantaged, is good. The proportion of students making better than expected progress in English and mathematics is in line with what is seen nationally. This demonstrates strong improvements in mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers provide activities which develop students' oracy skills particularly well and, as a result, students are confident communicators, willing to question and offer ideas and opinions.
- Students have good attitudes to learning. They always follow instructions and are keen participants in all they are asked to do in their lessons.
- Students enjoy coming to school and this is seen in the way many of them are involved in extra-curricular activities and in leadership roles within the school. Their above average attendance, smart appearance and good punctuality also demonstrate their enjoyment and pride in their school.
- Students feel safe in the school and understand how to keep themselves safe. Parents and carers also believe their children are happy and safe in the school and that the school provides a lot of useful information for them about their children's progress. Students' good behaviour has a positive impact on the progress they make.
- Leaders, including governors, have improved the quality of teaching and progress since the school became an academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Feedback to students about how they can improve their work, including presentation, is not always clear.
- Written work is not always well presented.
- Checks on students' understanding in lessons do not always meet the needs of different students. Nor do they always put right students' misunderstandings.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, one of which was observed jointly by the headteacher and four with the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with students during lessons and at break times. They also met formally with groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4 as well as a group of student ambassadors from Years 9 to 11. Inspectors observed a pupil-led Digital Leaders’ meeting and observed students in form time. There was no assembly taking place during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and with six members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with the school’s professional partner.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents, including students’ work in their books, the school’s arrangements for safeguarding, performance management procedures, and the students’ attendance data. Inspectors also looked at information about students’ progress and attainment.
- There were 116 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to help inspectors to gauge the views of parents.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average secondary school.
- Parklands High School – an Academy converted to become an academy in September 2012. When its predecessor school, Parklands High, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The large majority of students are White British.
- There is a smaller than average proportion of disadvantaged students. However, the proportion is increasing and in some year groups the proportion of disadvantaged students is high. These students are predominantly White British students. These students receive support through the pupil premium funding, which is provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are no students currently who have special educational needs supported through school action.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is just below average.
- There are a small number of students who attend Shaftesbury High School to receive alternative provision.
- The school is in a partnership with Bishop’s Rawstorne’s Academy, a Teaching School.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of marking of students’ work by:
 - always offering students feedback from written work which offers them clear direction on how to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers always challenge students when their presentation is not neat or clear enough, so that students understand and respond to high expectations of their presentation in work.
- Ensure that checks on students’ understanding in lessons always inform teachers’ next steps in the lessons and teachers ensure, where necessary, that students’ misunderstandings are dealt with.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- As a result of accurate analysis of students' achievement and of robust systems put in place to improve key areas of achievement, the school leaders, led by the headteacher and deputy headteachers, have made significant improvements in the progress of students in mathematics and the overall progress of disadvantaged students. Equally, there has been sustained strong attainment of students leaving Year 11 in recent years, as well as sustained good progress of students in areas such as English and science. Within this work, leaders, including governors, have been highly focused on ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all groups of students, including disadvantaged students, so that all groups are now achieving well. This confirms the school's effective use of pupil premium funding.
- Staff have confidence in the headteacher and other senior leaders to make the right improvements. They report that there are very rigorous systems for checking on the quality of teaching as well as on students' achievement and, as a result, students' outcomes have improved well and continue to do so. The middle leaders believe that priorities are well chosen by leaders and have enabled key areas to improve. Equally, there has been appropriate opportunity for them to develop their own effective leadership through opportunities to work with and support other schools, as well as training of all staff to improve classroom practices.
- The appraisal system has been used effectively to ensure that all staff are clear about the priorities set by leaders. For example, in 2013-14, following weaker progress of disadvantaged students, all teachers focused on improving the outcomes for disadvantaged students as a key objective for the year. In addition, where objectives have not been met, teachers have not received pay progression. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged students has significantly improved.
- The checks on the quality of teaching are regular and rigorous and the school's documentation demonstrates that leaders use a variety of information to make judgements on teaching over time and use this information to support teachers as necessary. As a result, there is no teaching in the school which is weak and where teaching is not yet good, this has been accurately identified by the school and support is in place.
- Marking and the feedback have improved in the past 12 months and is often of a good quality, leading to students making improvements to their work, understanding how to improve work and making rapid progress. However, it is not yet consistently at these levels, as school leaders acknowledge.
- Leaders work closely with Shaftesbury High School to ensure that students who attend there receive strong provision and are able to achieve well. The systems in place for checking on how well students are doing and the close links enjoyed with the second school mean students from Parklands who go to Shaftesbury have good attendance and make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum is very well developed and students' interests and abilities are taken into account very well when guiding students as to which pathway to take in Key Stage 4 and as they move to a post-16 provider. Most students are expected to take a course of academic qualifications which results in a higher than average proportion of students gaining the English Baccalaureate qualification. Other courses are also available and students achieve well in these too. Students report that school leaders consider their needs closely when problems arise and, as a result, they are provided with the opportunity to complete and pass a wide range of courses.
- The opportunities students have to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exemplary, as seen in the varied and numerous opportunities for students to exercise leadership. It is also seen in the students' participation in various charity and fund-raising activities, as well as their willingness to engage in the mentoring of younger students.
- The students' engagement in sporting activities is very high, resulting in a very varied sport offer outside of lessons. Every half term there are Respect Days, when students focus on a particular theme, such as disability awareness, e-safety awareness and road safety awareness. Visitors speak to the students on the different subjects, developing their understanding about life beyond their own experiences.
- There is a house system in the school. Students are in forms with students in Years 7 to 11 in each form, meaning students of all ages are regularly grouped together and they work well in these groups. Form time is used to challenge students in a variety of ways and each daily session has a specific focus, such as silent reading, current affairs or a general knowledge competition. Leaders have developed a programme in form time to support students' learning in many areas, as well as encouraging them to read about the world around them. In this way, the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is further enhanced.

- The school uses form time in a number of ways as an opportunity for students to gain useful qualifications. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Form time is used well to develop students' general knowledge.
- The school works well to engage parents; this is seen through the very useable and clear website, where information is regularly updated. Parents report that they receive enough information about their child's progress and that communication with the school is made very easy for them. The vast majority of parents believe the school responds quickly to any concerns they may have.
- The school works in partnership with a Teaching School, from where they take trainee teachers and support their development. In turn, staff at the Teaching School believe the school works very well in the partnership and that it provides strong support and training for the trainees. In addition, the school uses the opportunity for training new teachers to identify strong practitioners to recruit. This has worked well in bringing in strong new teachers, especially into subjects where recruitment has been difficult previously.
- As an academy, the school works with an external consultant to cover school improvement advice. This includes working on the school's evaluation of its provision as well as identifying the areas for further improvement.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have confidence in the leaders to make improvements, evidenced, they say, by the significant improvements in teaching and progress. They are well informed and can challenge leaders appropriately because of this. They are also aware of what still needs to be done to further improve students' achievement.
 - Governors know that improvements to disadvantaged students' achievement has been a priority and, as such, are clear on the use of funding for these students and the positive impact of that. They are aware of how these students' achievement has been a target for all teachers and are aware of the link between students' achievement and teachers' pay progression.
 - The governors manage the school's financial resources effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students' attitudes to learning in all key stages are positive. This is seen in the strong impact of their behaviour on their progress across all subjects. They conduct themselves well in class and around school, demonstrating respectful attitudes to both their fellow students and towards adults. This is modelled well by adults. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere which also means there is very little low-level disruption and learning time is not wasted.
- Where students have faced difficulties in managing their behaviour, there have been strong support programmes in place to guide them to make better choices. This has been enhanced by nurturing pastoral and teaching teams as well as through tailoring the curriculum for certain individuals, when required. As a result, there are no students who leave the school who do not go on to remain in education or into employment or training. Equally, there are very few incidents of low-level disruption, very few serious behaviour incidents, much lower than average exclusions of students and no permanent exclusions of students in recent years.
- Students say they enjoy coming to school and feel valued by the teachers and other adults. They particularly enjoy the many leadership opportunities available to them which cover a variety of areas, such as the Eco Group, Digital Leaders, School Ambassadors and Student Support. In each area there are students involved in developing the school's provision and older students lead developments. They hold meetings, create action plans, advertise their work in assemblies as well as review how the provision can be improved. When speaking with these students, inspectors were very impressed by their commitment to improving their school further and to ensuring that all students feel happy and safe in school, while making a worthwhile contribution to the community.
- Students' enjoyment of school is also seen in their very regular attendance, which is above the national average and has been for some time. There are very few students who are absent repeatedly, thanks to the concerted effort of leaders who work with students and families to ensure very regular attendance. Students also arrive to school and lessons on time.

- Students are proud of their school as is seen by their involvement in many aspects of school life. For example, students interview candidates for job vacancies and a group of students were given the opportunity to look over the plans for new building work in the school and were allowed to question architects and have an influence over the final plan. In addition, students wear the school uniform smartly at all times. The classrooms and other areas around the school are tidy and well organised. Occasionally, students' work is not as well presented as it could be and this is not consistently challenged by teachers when marking work.
- Students, parents and staff have very positive views about behaviour and say that poor behaviour is rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students say they feel safe at school and believe the adults in the school care for their safety and well-being. They feel this is helped by the organisation of form time where students from all year groups are in forms together. Students demonstrate a strong capacity for getting on well together, including with students of different ages. Older students work to mentor younger students, where necessary, and in doing so, help to improve the behaviour of younger students, as well as their ability to achieve well. For example, Student Support Leaders mentor younger students who need help with reading.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying. Students of all ages in school believe bullying is very rare and parents agree with this. Parents and students believe the school responds well to any concerns they have and, as a result, any incidents of bullying are dealt with immediately. The school's own logs of bullying incidents reinforce the inspection finding that bullying is rare.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the academy opened, the quality of teaching has improved and is good. Students' work in books, their assessment outcomes and the progress they make demonstrates this. In addition, good teaching can be seen from the very thorough monitoring of teaching completed regularly by leaders in school.
- Teachers plan lessons where students' oracy skills are practised and developed well. As a result, in lessons and in other activities, students demonstrate high levels of confidence in offering opinions and sharing ideas, using sophisticated language. They also feel confident to offer opposing views. They do this in a respectful and constructive way.
- Teachers' questioning of students in lessons, and that of teaching assistants, is a strength in the school with teachers demonstrating high expectations of students' responses in terms of details and evidence for their answers. Equally, through questioning, teachers ensure that the students are expected to think for themselves and guide students well, without giving them the answer.
- The teaching of reading through English is strong and contributes to the good progress students make in this subject. In addition, where students need support, there are extra classes for small numbers of students, delivered by teachers, to enhance their skills in reading and literacy as a whole. Furthermore, the school provides students with regular opportunities to read for pleasure, in form time each week.
- Due to consistently strong teaching in English and mathematics, the progress of students in English and mathematics is good in all year groups. This represents a strong improvement of students' progress in mathematics and sustained strong progress in English. It also represents strong improvement of disadvantaged students' progress in mathematics and improvement for these students exceeding expected progress in English.
- Often, teachers' checking of students' work and their understanding of the learning is skilful and the information is used to plan activities which suit the needs of students well. When this happens, it means that students are given work which moves their learning on rapidly or reinforces learning points, as needed. However, this is not always seen; in a minority of cases, students' understanding is not checked thoroughly enough and the teacher misses the opportunity to address some of the students' misconceptions. When this happens, a small minority of students are not completely secure in their understanding and this can slow their progress.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers to support students and, at times, lead support sessions independently. The impact of the extra support has been good in improving the outcomes of the disadvantaged students and students who are disabled or have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very knowledgeable about the students in their care and, thanks to strong collaboration

with teachers, they are clear about the aims of lessons and so are able to support teachers well in the classroom.

- Marking of students' work is regular in all subject areas and there is clear evidence of improvement in how students are offered feedback, following marking. When this is done well, students are offered clear guidance as to what they now need to do to improve their work further or what corrections are needed. However, in some cases, feedback to students is too general and does not offer the students specific direction about what they could do to make their work better. As a result, the response from students following this feedback is not as useful as seen in the best practice in school and does not help them to make the right improvements.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students achieve well in both Key Stages 3 and 4, including in English and mathematics. Students enter the school with attainment significantly above that expected for their age. This is not the case for disadvantaged students, who enter the school with attainment below what is expected for their age. From their different starting points, students make good progress across all subjects and all year groups. As a result, the proportion of students gaining top grades in both English and mathematics is above average, as it is in most subjects. The proportion of students gaining A* to C grades in all subjects is above average.
- The proportion of students achieving the English Baccalaureate benchmark by the end of Year 11 is significantly above average. This is the benchmark which indicates students have gained a C grade or above in English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language and in either history or geography.
- Disadvantaged students now make good progress in all year groups, from their starting points. This is seen in the progress of students currently in Year 11 as well as in all other year groups. In the latest published data, disadvantaged students' capped points score across eight qualifications showed they were less than a grade behind their peers in school. In comparison with all non-disadvantaged students nationally, the disadvantaged students in school were less than a quarter of a grade behind. This demonstrates that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in the school is narrower than that seen nationally and narrows during their time in school.
- Students who attend Shaftesbury High School have access to a curriculum which is tailored to their specific needs and interests, as well as English and mathematics. This support for students to access appropriate qualifications ensures that students make good progress.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. This is the case for students currently in the school and for those who have left Year 11 recently, where in the latest published data, overall attainment of these students is significantly higher than for students with special educational needs nationally. Progress rates have also been significantly better than those seen nationally for these students.
- The most-able students achieve well, with students making good progress in English and mathematics and in other subjects. The proportion of the most-able students in school achieving the English Baccalaureate benchmark is significantly above the average of most-able students nationally.
- Students for whom English is their second language and who are from minority ethnic groups achieve well. A significantly higher proportion than average achieves the English Baccalaureate benchmark and, at times, their attainment by the end of Year 11 is better than that of other students in school. They make good progress during their time in school in English and mathematics. The good achievement of different groups of students, those from different backgrounds and of different abilities, shows the school's dedication to ensuring that all students have an equal chance to achieve well.

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	138647
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448885

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,035
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Hamer
Headteacher	Claire Hollister
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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