

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Kam Grewal-Joy
Headteacher
Parkside Community School
Boythorpe Avenue
Boythorpe
Chesterfield
S40 2NS

Dear Mrs Grewal-Joy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parkside Community School

Following my visit to your school on 19 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, a member of the senior leadership team responsible for data, representatives of the faculty heads, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. I held meetings with two groups of pupils and spoke with others informally during visits to lessons. I toured the school twice and visited a sample of lessons. I examined records of safeguarding checks carried out by the school. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection in June 2015, two new leaders have been appointed in the areas of music and design & technology.

Main findings

You, your colleagues, governors, and the pupils convey a strong sense of significant improvements at the school in recent years and particularly so in the past 12–18 months. You are now reaping the first real fruits of a well-conceived, long-term strategy for improving the school as apparent in the massively improved examination results in the summer of 2015. You have established a clear and unequivocal drive and direction for improvement, which is now evident among leaders at all levels.

You carry out detailed analyses of a broad range of data and information about the pupils' achievement and about the quality of teaching. You draw appropriate conclusions from those analyses. Subsequently, you take well-thought-out actions to bring about further improvements. The impact of your actions is apparent in improvements in the quality of teaching and in the pupils' increasingly positive attitudes to learning and views about the school.

Your practical and effective approach is progressively building capacity within the school. You have extended the opportunities for the professional development of the staff, including for teaching assistants. You are making much greater use than previously of opportunities for the staff themselves to share good practice and to lead professional development activities.

The improvements in the quality of teaching that have resulted from these approaches have been assisted by greater accountability for performance among the staff. Faculty leaders now have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are, consequently, more active and more effective in leading improvements in their respective subjects. Among the various means by which you have improved the quality of teaching, the use of MAD ('Make a Difference') time is motivating the pupils by helping them to understand what they have learned and how to improve, which has increased their self-confidence and their aspirations to do well.

The pupils' more positive attitudes to learning and to school are translating into increasingly better behaviour. Changes to the behaviour policy, in which the pupils played a leading role through the Parkside Parliament, have been an important element recently. The pupils with whom I spoke described major improvements in behaviour at the school, particularly compared with three or four years ago, saying, for example, 'It's so much better now.' The continued improvements are being assisted by the staff, who are more consistent in their use of the school's behaviour policy.

The actions you have taken to improve attendance have been effective. I was struck by the way in which the pupils were aware of strategies such as the Parkside Pickup. Although the Parkside Pickup is aimed particularly at pupils at risk of not getting to school, it has influenced the thinking of other pupils, who recognise from such actions that the school is serious about improving attendance.

The governing body contributes significantly to the school's improvement. It sets an appropriate tone and demonstrates that it is fully prepared to challenge leaders at all levels. It is well informed about developments at the school and uses what it knows well. The school improvement plan is succinct, very clear, focused sharply on relevant priorities and actions, and written in such a way as to make it a useful tool, both in guiding action and in checking on how well the school is doing.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has benefited from and made good use of a range of well-focused and effective support provided both directly by and brokered by the local authority. The school is now, appropriately, taking more of a lead in identifying the support it needs, in collaboration with the local authority.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector