

Park House School

Park House, Wentworth Way, Tankersley, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 3DH

Inspection dates

12–14 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully established a new school and guided it well through its early stages.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for disadvantaged young people to take a meaningful role in society. They are making a positive difference to the life chances of pupils in Park House.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are developing pupils' good social and academic progress.
- Strategies for improving pupils' behaviour for learning are consistent and effective and pupils' behaviour is improving well as a result.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Since they started at the school most pupils have made good progress in English, mathematics and practical subjects.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' attendance has improved since they started at the school.
- Staff understand pupils' needs well and are effective in helping them to develop self-awareness, confidence and a good understanding of the wider world.
- Pupils who were disaffected are re-engaged with learning and are making good progress in the early stages of their placement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the strong focus leaders have on developing these attributes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' improvement has not been sustained over a substantive length of time.
- Assessment information is not always accurate enough in identifying how well pupils are achieving over time.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement so that a significant proportion of pupils reach the standards expected for their age.
- Track pupils' outcomes more accurately so that it is clear how much progress pupils are making and over what period of time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers promote pupils' social and academic development effectively in a caring environment based on high ambitions for pupils' future lives.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. School policies are based on a framework devised by the proprietor and are effectively customised to reflect the school's own circumstances. These policies are fully implemented and are making a positive difference to pupils' learning, safety and care.
- The well-planned curriculum meets all the areas of learning required by the independent schools standards. Strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education supports outstanding outcomes in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are able to access an appropriate range of qualifications including Entry Level, GCSE and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. They are making good progress in their English, mathematics and broader practical subjects.
- Leaders and managers promote consistently good teaching through detailed schemes of work and lesson planning which supports individual pupils' needs. They ensure continuous improvement of teaching quality through a performance management programme which identifies areas for teachers' continuing professional development. A teacher said, 'I feel supported and respected'.
- The school has strong and trusting relationships with placing authorities and parents. A parent commented on how approachable the staff are.
- Leaders successfully recognise and promote the inclusion of people with 'protected characteristics' (specific areas covered by equality and diversity guidelines and legislation) and ensure that pupils are prepared positively for life in modern Britain; for example, by promoting a balanced view of political issues. Pupils experience a democratic process through their school council.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The school is successfully supported and held to account through regular visits from a regional director and an operations manager.
 - Leaders and managers, in partnership with the proprietor's representatives, have produced a self-evaluation report which accurately reflects the school's strengths and areas for development. This is used as the basis for an effective development plan.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
 - Every effort is taken to ensure a safe and secure environment for pupils. The single central register fully meets requirements and all recruitment procedures include at least one person trained in safer recruitment.
 - The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website and includes all the required up-to-date guidance and information. This policy is also included in the school's prospectus and in the handbook sent to parents.
 - All named persons hold current child protection qualifications at the appropriate levels. All staff have undergone appropriate up-to-date training and have signed to confirm that they have read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', in line with the Department for Education's requirements.
 - Teachers are trained in the 'Prevent' and 'Channel' projects and, consequently, pupils are well taught to understand the need to oppose radicalisation.
 - The school operates a policy to ensure that pupils are presented with a balanced view in all political matters.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers plan lessons well by focusing on the individual needs and prior achievement of their pupils. Each pupil has individual targets with an appropriate level of challenge in all lessons. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching which involves practical activities is particularly effective. For example, pupils achieve well in food technology because they have pride in their achievements.

- Teachers set clear expectations of behaviour for learning and are well supported by other adults because they all share the same expectations and correct pupils in a calm and controlled manner.
- Pupils respond well to the school's policy of awarding 'stars' and reward points when their behaviour for learning merits these.
- Teachers skilfully extend pupils' learning by responding to questions and encouraging pupils to think more deeply. Literacy and numeracy are developed in context across the curriculum. For example, in a food technology lesson, the pupils were able to calculate amounts of ingredients in both metric and imperial measures.
- Teachers help pupils to develop good reading skills. Pupils read with confidence and demonstrate good levels of comprehension.
- The provision in science is effective. Pupils learn how to plan and carry out an experiment. They gather results and discuss them. They learn how to appreciate the process of fair testing. In one experiment, pupils learned about the parts of the tongue and their effect on taste, and they tasted various fruits while holding their nose. Some pupils understood the part played by smell in identifying taste.
- Teachers have good knowledge and skills in the subjects taught and use them well to encourage pupils to make progress. One parent said her child is 'growing in confidence in all aspects of his learning'.
- Leaders have developed an effective framework for assessment based on targeting pupils' outcomes in the range of accreditation used in the school. This enables teachers to plan work for individuals and to focus learning on their social and academic needs.
- The school provides detailed annual reports to parents on pupils' progress. The school also contributes to reports provided for reviews of looked after children and pupils with education, health and care plans or statements.
- The school records the attainment levels of pupils when they join the school. They successfully track progress over time. The length of time upon which the progress measure is based can be very short. Although standards have been recorded accurately, the timescale of pupils' progress is not accurately measured, which tends to underestimate their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are making significant progress in understanding and managing their autism. One pupil articulated this by describing Park House as the first school where he was not seen as a 'hazard'.
- Another pupil wrote, possibly autobiographically, about a white autistic boy's friendship with black pupils, saying that they were friends 'because they were the only other people who didn't fit in with the rest of the class'.
- Older pupils are aware of the need to prepare for the next stage in their lives. They know that this will mean engaging with the wider world. They have ambitions and know the pathway to realise these.
- The school has an effective safeguarding policy and systems for keeping pupils safe are good. The risk assessment policy and procedures are thorough, focusing on the environment, activities including trips and visits, as well as individuals. Pupils learn about safety in PSHE and citizenship lessons.
- The school's health and safety procedures for fire safety, first aid provision, electrical safety and supervision of pupils are thorough and regularly reviewed in the light of events.
- There is good supervision of pupils arriving and departing by taxi.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils join the school with varying prior experiences. Almost half the pupils at Park House have not attended school for at least a year and may have lost much of their understanding of appropriate behaviour. Every pupil in the school would have been a 'persistent absentee' in his former school. However, leaders are successfully engaging pupils in school life and, overall, attendance at Park House is now approaching the national average.
- Adults work very effectively to reintroduce the need to respect the rights of all pupils to learn, and pupils are making good early progress in their relationships with adults and other pupils.

- Staff encourage pupils to improve their behaviour in a calm and non-confrontational way. As a result, even where pupils sometimes fail to control their instincts, they are developing a sound appreciation of right and wrong. The school's tracking shows clearly that there has been a significant reduction in behaviour incidents in the short time the school has been open.
- Pupils' understanding of the need to improve behaviour is successfully fostered by the way in which the school applies its restorative justice policy and by being held responsible for their behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- All pupils enter the school with academic standards that are below, and often well below, those typical for their age. This is the result of previous disruptions to their education and, often, extended absence.
- Over a short period after arriving at Park House, pupils make consistently good progress. Over half exceed expected progress measures and all pupils at least meet expectations, in English and mathematics. Pupils also make good progress in other areas, particularly practical subjects.
- Literacy and numeracy are successfully integrated into other subjects as part of the project-based curriculum. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and calculating in these areas.
- Pupils are improving their social skills, attending more frequently and improving concentration, all of which contribute to better learning and progress.
- Pupils are successfully engaged in projects with the local community involving such agencies as the police and fire service. They support a range of charities including animal charities and Children in Need, and engage in charitable events including a sponsored bike ride for Sport Relief.
- Pupils have increased their understanding of other faiths and cultures by visiting a range of places of worship. They learn about festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Easter and Eid and celebrate them with food from around the world.
- As part of a lesson to understand 'protected characteristics', when teachers wore blindfolds to put themselves in the place of a blind person, pupils responded by guiding them around the school. As a consequence, pupils began to understand the challenges faced by physically disabled people.
- The school is on course to meet its aims to prepare pupils successfully for the next stage in their lives. In a very short time, pupils have successfully re-engaged socially and educationally with school life. Many have developed ambitions to extend their learning in a way which would not have been possible a few months ago.

School details

Unique reference number	142320
Inspection number	10012849
DfE registration number	370/6000

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7–17 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Heather Laffin
Headteacher	Jennie Littleboy
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,900
Telephone number	01226 744870
Website	www.keyschildcare.co.uk
Email address	jennielittleboy@keyschildcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Park House School is a small specialist provision which caters for pupils with social and emotional difficulties and with an autistic spectrum diagnosis.
- The school opened in September 2015 and admitted its first pupils in November 2015. This is the school's first inspection.
- The school is registered for 24 boys and girls aged seven to 17 years. There are currently 14 pupils, all boys, on roll.
- Three pupils are in the care of the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan
- Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities. They have normally been excluded from a previous school or have persistently failed to attend.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision.
- The school's aim is 'to develop pupils' self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance in a positive and supportive environment'.
- The school is run by the Keys Group.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects and activities. He analysed the school's assessment and behaviour records.
- He scrutinised a selection of pupils' work, considered school policies, schemes of work and other documentation and viewed the school's website.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, the proprietor's representatives and pupils. He had a telephone discussion with the representative of a placing authority.
- The inspector analysed staff questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. However, the inspector received two written comments from parents.

Inspection team

Peter McKenzie, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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