

The Parks

Inspection dates

12–14 July 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	Satisfactory

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Proprietors have a clear vision for the school which is shared by leaders and staff. They have established a calm and purposeful place of learning within an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Leaders enlist the regular support of a range of educational specialists to help improve provision. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know individual pupils very well and plan lessons carefully to make sure their needs are met well. Teachers use ongoing assessment of pupils' learning to help in the planning of lessons.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is good. They are keen to talk to visitors and share their positive experiences of school.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum which provides regular opportunities for social and emotional development.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They benefit from the support and guidance of a range of professionals and have access to a broad range of opportunities for personal growth. As a result, pupils develop their self-confidence and social skills well.
- Pupils' welfare needs are met well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Not all teaching is consistently of the highest standard. Although teachers receive much guidance and training relating to positive behaviour and personal development, more training is needed on the curriculum.
- The most able pupils do not always have access to, or complete, work which is sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders' self-evaluation and school improvement planning are not linked closely enough. Responsibilities are not always clear with regard to planning for improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - establishing a closer link between the self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the plan for improvement
 - ensuring that the improvement plan provides appropriate detail so that staff responsibilities are clear and progress towards targets is measured regularly.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - ensuring that all teaching staff have access to high-quality training opportunities, especially in implementing the curriculum to maximise pupils' learning
 - making sure that the challenge for the most able pupils is more consistent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **is good**

- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors and leaders share an ambitious vision, that the needs and ambitions of all pupils are met well. They work closely with a range of education specialists to ensure they continue to improve the provision for pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching and of pupils' outcomes have improved since the previous inspection and are now good.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and social skills are developed well. Pupils have studied a range of religions and different cultures. For example, they have studied Hinduism and Sikhism, as well as Christianity (including visiting a cathedral). They have also studied different cultures in depth, for example in a recent study of life in Brazil.
- Pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain has been developed in a range of ways. Pupils have studied citizenship in local and global contexts, including human rights and responsibilities, and the British legal system, including criminal and civil law and democracy.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the needs of pupils. Pupils are entered for a range of accredited qualifications, including GCSE examinations, which help to prepare them for further study or for the world of work. The curriculum is personalised to meet the varying needs of pupils, for example when providing opportunities to access employment-based learning or vocational study in fields which are of interest to pupils.
- Leaders engage and motivate staff through professional development opportunities linked to the main aims of the school. Training and guidance is particularly strong in helping to deal with challenging behaviour and addressing pupils' social and emotional development. Staff have also received training in child protection, including spotting the signs of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders support the professional development of staff well, for example by enrolling them on nationally accredited courses for teacher training. However, the provision of training to teach subjects other than English and mathematics is not sufficiently strong. Leaders recognise this as an area for improvement.
- The acting headteacher monitors the standard of teaching every term. Teachers are given written feedback so they know what they are doing well and how their teaching might improve. Performance management plans are in place which provide a framework for teachers' ongoing professional development.
- Leaders ensure that the provision of information for parents, carers and others is met. Parents and carers receive detailed reports at the end of each academic year which outline the curriculum studied and the progress pupils have made. The complaints procedures are clear and available for parents or carers on demand. There have been no complaints raised against the school since the last inspection. Parents and other carers spoken to during the inspection were supportive of the school and could explain clearly how pupils' outcomes had improved during their time at The Parks. They feel that pupils' needs are met well, especially their social and emotional needs, which has resulted in improved behaviour, attendance and outcomes.
- Proprietors and leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this small school. Proprietors are regular visitors to the setting and are closely involved in monitoring standards and planning for the future. However, their self-evaluation of school effectiveness is not closely matched to improvement priorities. In addition, the current school improvement plan does not provide enough detail about measureable targets and the roles that all staff will play in ongoing improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Proprietors know the school well because they visit regularly and are fully involved in day-to-day operations. They have first-hand knowledge of every pupil in the setting and seek to ensure that individual needs are met. Proprietors hold weekly meetings with leaders to check on the progress of individuals and to discuss ongoing school improvement.
 - Proprietors have ensured that the school buildings and site are fit for purpose. Classrooms are spacious, clean and bright. Outdoor spaces are safe and well maintained and provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills in horticulture.
 - Proprietors meet with leaders and external specialists to make sure that the school continues to meet the needs of all pupils. They have invested in support which has improved the effectiveness of the school and has meant that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and reflects the most up-to-date government legislation. Leaders maintain a comprehensive record of checks

completed on staff. This helps to ensure that any new staff are safe to work with young people. Leaders and staff receive regular safeguarding training to help protect pupils and make sure that procedures are followed, for example when completing risk assessments for trips and visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teaching is characterised by positive relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers know pupils very well and manage low-level disruption expertly so that it does not affect learning. There is a healthy respect between pupils and teachers. As one pupil said: 'We respect the teachers because they respect us'.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning. This allows teachers to plan lessons with due regard for pupils' individual needs, such as the development of geometry skills in mathematics.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning because teaching is fun. They explain how they learn new things every day and benefit from completing practical as well as written tasks. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have in completing educational visits to museums, libraries and places of worship because this helps to develop their social skills as well as learning new things. They say that teaching is challenging. As one pupil said: 'Sometimes the work is hard, but this is because they want us to get higher levels'.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective. All teachers adhere to the agreed marking policy. Work is marked regularly and pupils can see what they have done well and where they need to improve.
- Support staff are kept well informed about lesson content so they know what all pupils are trying to achieve. They are particularly skilful in supporting pupils with the most complex learning needs. They provide challenge and support, just at the right levels, so that optimum learning takes place.
- An educational psychologist is a regular visitor to the school and provides important learning and emotional support to pupils. He provides regular feedback to teachers and leaders and attends termly review meetings to discuss pupils' progress. The impact of his work is clear, in terms of pupils' emotional development, improved self-esteem and attendance.
- Work in mathematics books shows that pupils study topics in detail and have good understanding. For example, the teaching of geometry shows an impressive development of pupils' knowledge over time. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge by completing regular reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils complete work which is not challenging enough for them. This restricts the progress they make in a minority of instances.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils overcome significant obstacles to learning because of the expert guidance and support they receive. Of particular note are developments in their self-esteem and confidence, allowing pupils to be successful learners and to improve their outcomes.
- Leaders are well aware of pupils' long-term aspirations and work well to secure important experiences which help pupils to plan successful futures. Past pupils have gone on to university and others have entered the world of work successfully. This is made possible through the support given to pupils to secure relevant qualifications or to complete work-based learning during their time at the school.
- There is a positive culture in the school which promotes pupils' welfare. Pupils all say that they feel safe and they know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Parents and carers agree that the school works hard to keep pupils safe. Pupils say that challenging situations, which arise from time to time, are dealt with swiftly and well by staff.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to complete educational and cultural visits. They report that such visits help to develop their social skills because they are able to engage well in the wider community.
- Occasionally, pupils' attitudes to learning in class are less positive. In a minority of lessons, where teaching did not always gain the interest of all pupils, there were instances of low-level disruption which were quickly dealt with by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around school and in classes is good. On the rare occasions when behaviour is less positive, pupils respond to directions and learning is not lost. Staff know pupils well and use the agreed procedures and policies to help ensure that any issues of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly, and are fair and consistent.
- Pupils say that their behaviour has improved since being at the school. They say that behaviour is managed well and that it rarely results in them missing learning. This view was shared by parents and other carers spoken to on inspection.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying. They spoke about lessons in anti-bullying and say that instances of bullying at the school are rare.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection. The majority of pupils attend school regularly and are rarely late. Where this is not the case, leaders work closely with parents and other carers to help overcome any barriers. Individual case studies show clear examples of improved attendance for pupils who had poor attendance previously.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress observed in lessons, work in pupils' books in a range of subjects and leaders' own assessments of learning show that pupils make good progress overall from their starting points.
- Most pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have statements of special educational need or education, health and care plans which outline the specific support needed for them to make progress. Evidence shows that the support given to improve behaviour and their social and emotional development is having a positive impact on improving academic outcomes. Coupled with improved attendance, this is ensuring that these pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils make strong progress in reading and spelling. Regular assessments show consistent improvements in reading and spelling competencies.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in education, training or employment because support is tailored to their needs and aspirations. Where pupils wish to access further and higher education, leaders and staff facilitate visits to other educational settings to help achieve a smooth transition and discuss options. If pupils prefer a pathway into work, they have opportunities to experience work-related activities to develop their understanding of working practices and gain new skills. Pupils receive training in writing curriculum vitae and have help to prepare for interviews as well as receiving career advice from outside agencies.
- Pupils' broader outcomes, such as improvements in behaviour and attendance, are positive and result in pupils having high aspirations for their futures.

School details

Unique reference number	137821
Inspection number	10008886
DfE registration number	359/6000

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	Special
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Inspire Training and Education
Chair	Paul Keogh
Headteacher	Garfield Binns (Acting)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,275–£31,005
Telephone number	0845 074 0475
Website	Not applicable
Email address	enquiries@inspiretes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2012

Information about this school

- The Parks is an independent non-denominational independent school which caters for residential and day pupils. It is registered for up to eight boys and girls, aged between 11 and 16 who have significant social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There are eight pupils currently on roll and five have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of the Inspire Group which also provides residential healthcare, supported living and family support.
- The school aim is 'to provide young people with complex behavioural and educational needs a bespoke education that is tailored to their individual needs in a small learning environment with increased needs-led staff ratios'.
- Local authorities place pupils at The Parks, often following a period of disrupted education elsewhere.
- The school opened in 2012 and this is its second full inspection.
- The school does not have a website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place over two and a half days. The inspector visited lessons with the acting headteacher and held meetings with him. He also looked at work in pupils' books alongside the acting headteacher.
- A meeting about governance was held with the proprietor.
- The inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, including checks made when recruiting new staff and checking case files of vulnerable pupils.
- The inspector spoke with all staff and pupils during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the school improvement adviser and educational psychologist. Telephone conversations were held with two parents and a carer.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Ian Hardman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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