

Parkside Community College

Parkside, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 1EH

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- In a culture of inclusive learning, the headteacher, governors and senior leaders demonstrate an unwavering commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make exceptional progress between Years 7 and 11.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve very well in comparison to other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- High-quality teaching and effective interventions ensure that pupils make strong and sustained progress over time. Knowledgeable teachers promote high expectations in a typically calm atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.
- Teachers know their pupils well. The very good working relationships they establish with their pupils make an important contribution to the positive attitudes to learning seen in the school.
- Senior leaders have an incisive and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance. As a result, improvement planning is swift and effective.
- A broad and balanced curriculum combines with a carefully considered programme of enrichment to ensure that pupils develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness during their time in the school.
- The wide-ranging skills of governors and the trust are deployed very effectively in holding school leaders to account for pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. High expectations of pupils' personal development and conduct, alongside academic performance, are well promoted by staff at all levels.
- Pupils build strong foundations for future progression to the next stage of their education and/or training. As confident learners, they are well prepared to take the step to the next level.
- The leadership of safeguarding in the school is vigilant and well embedded in an open culture that is committed to keeping pupils safe.
- The effectiveness of the implementation of 16 to 19 study programmes is good. Progress in the sixth form is not yet as strong as it is for pupils at the end of key stage 4.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the progress of students in the sixth form, so that they reach the outstanding levels of progress secured by pupils from different starting points in other key stages in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school is a highly inclusive community. As such, the headteacher, governors and senior leadership team demonstrate an unwavering commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils across all key stages and the full range of pupils' abilities, including in the sixth form. As a result, all pupils, including the most able, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils, make outstanding progress between Years 7 and 11.
- Considerable strides have been made in the leadership of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. Middle leaders are well supported in holding their teams to account through regular and extensive reviews of pupils' progress. Consequently, high-quality teaching leads to outstanding outcomes by the end of key stage 4.
- The exceptional progress pupils make is exemplified in the 2016 examination results. For example, under the government's new progress measure, Progress 8, Parkside Community College pupils' progress was well above average and in the top 5% of all schools nationally.
- Nevertheless, senior leaders are not complacent. Consequently, quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened further. For example, systems used to collect information about pupils' progress have been improved since the last inspection and are well managed. Assessment information is regularly checked for accuracy. The detail of the information gathered is used effectively to identify any interventions needed to accelerate the pace of progress for individuals and for specific groups.
- As a result of system changes, senior leaders now have an incisive and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of education they provide. In the rare cases where aspects of the school's work fall short of the expected standard, improvement planning is swift and effective.
- Detailed evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning are developed, systematically, through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and an in-depth analysis of the progress pupils are making. Where teachers' practice requires further improvement, an effective and intensive programme of coaching is implemented over a six-week period, focusing on the teachers' standards that need to improve. Similarly, when pupils need extra help, relevant support is put in place quickly.
- Professional development opportunities for staff ensure that good practice is shared and that the focus on continuous improvement is sustained. High expectations are a non-negotiable priority, reinforced through rigorous performance management processes. These high expectations are promoted very effectively at all levels across the school. Impressively, leaders are also successful in working with other schools to help them to improve their performance.
- The school has established good links with teacher training providers. As a result, it offers regular teaching practice placements for trainee teachers. Newly qualified teachers appointed to the school team are very well supported and welcomed as valued members of the teaching community.

- Raised expectations of pupils' standards of behaviour, attendance, punctuality and compliance with uniform requirements are grounded in the rigorous application of the school's associated policies and procedures. Policies have been revised recently to make sure that the boundaries are absolutely clear to pupils and that sanctions continue to be effective.
- Resources are managed very well to give all pupils the best foundations from which to achieve their potential. For example, the effective use of the pupil premium funding is reflected in the strong progress this group of pupils make when compared with other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. This is also true of the additional funding to help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, and of the catch-up funding to help Year 7 pupils needing extra support with English and mathematics when they join the school.
- The broad and balanced curriculum combines very effectively with a carefully considered programme of enrichment, including sports, creative arts, charity work and science, to ensure that pupils develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills, as well as academic skills, during their time in the school.
- The strong focus on pupils' personal health, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reinforced in bespoke lessons, as well as through assemblies and tutorials. The range of opportunities, including work experience in Year 10 and very effective careers information, advice and guidance, ensure that pupils gain important life skills. As a result, they are ready to progress to the next stage of their education and/or training.
- Students and staff have close working relationships based on mutual respect, trust and high expectations. British values, for example those reflecting democracy and tolerance, are well embedded across the curriculum and in the daily life in school.
- The transition from primary school to secondary education is very well managed. The comment from one parent reflected the views of many when they said: 'Transition from primary to secondary has been brilliant; lots of information and opportunities to visit before my child started but then a good policy of helping children to become self-reliant.'

Governance of the school

- The local governing body, the chief executive of the Parkside Federation and the board of trustees have a clear strategic vision for the future of the school.
- Governors are well supported by the trust. Together, they have wide-ranging skills and expertise that are deployed very effectively in providing an appropriate blend of challenge and support in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress.
- The board and governors regularly reflect on their own performance and continually strive to improve. As a result, the governance structure has been refined since the previous inspection. The different roles of the local governing body and trust board are much more clearly defined now. Governors have an in-depth understanding of their responsibilities, including those related to keeping pupils safe.
- They are meticulous in ensuring that they keep a close eye on the school's budget and making sure that additional funding is used effectively. For example, minutes of

governors' meetings track forensic and detailed discussions of their checking that disadvantaged pupils, those who need to catch up and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress they should.

- Governors are equally thorough in overseeing the performance management of the headteacher and in considering recommendations for teachers' pay and progression.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership of this aspect of the school's work is vigilant and well embedded in an open culture that is committed to keeping pupils safe. Senior leaders and governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. Staff training is up to date and regularly reviewed. As a result, teachers and support staff understand how to spot the potential signs of abuse and how to refer concerns on to others as appropriate.
- Links with external agencies are strong. Follow-up actions are checked regularly to ensure that support for vulnerable pupils is put in place quickly and that it is effective. Records are well managed and individual cases are carefully tracked.
- Appropriately, staff are routinely on duty to ensure that pupils move quickly and safely between lessons and when accessing other buildings away from the main site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- High-quality teaching and effective interventions ensure that pupils make strong and sustained progress over time. Knowledgeable teachers promote high expectations in a typically calm atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. As one parent said: 'My son, who is now in Year 11 at Parkside, has made remarkable progress. The school is turning out resilient and outstanding citizens.'
- The very good working relationships fostered between teachers and pupils make an important contribution to the positive attitudes to learning seen in the school. Teachers know their pupils well. Lesson time is used productively and purposefully.
- Most teachers plan learning that takes careful account of pupils' different starting points. Activities, for example 'deep, deeper and deepest' and 'bronze, silver and gold', are structured to ensure that all pupils are challenged to do as well as they can.
- Recently introduced individual pupil 'strategies' sheets are designed to make sure that teachers know and understand the techniques to get the best from pupils who need extra help to succeed. A particular strength of this approach is pupils' involvement in identifying useful ways of supporting their progress and reviewing how well these are working with their teachers. The very good progress made by lower-ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a testament to the impact of this whole-school initiative.
- Teachers are skilful in using questioning to extend pupils' learning and to encourage deeper thinking. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were guided thoughtfully by the teacher as they provided mature and well-considered responses to questions on the poem 'The Farmer's Bride'.

- In mathematics, younger pupils worked diligently on solving 'real-life' problems as they calculated distance, time and the cost of travelling between different routes.
- Pupils are expected to complete homework on time and to required standards. The feedback from teachers on the quality of the work pupils produce contributes effectively to their strong progress over time. However, the school's marking policy is not yet consistently well applied across all subjects.
- A love of reading is well promoted in the school. Pupils enjoy reading. Most of them read fluently and at an age-appropriate level. This provides a strong foundation which helps pupils to reach, and often exceed, the high standards expected of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- This is because the school's highly inclusive ethos is underpinned by high expectations of pupils' personal development and conduct, alongside high expectations of academic performance. The principles of tolerance and respect feature highly in the culture and are values that are well established in everyday routines.
- Pupils are extremely positive about their school experience. They enjoy the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities on offer, including sport, art, music and charity work. They are knowledgeable about world affairs and understand the principles of democracy and fairness.
- Pupils respond very well to the leadership roles on offer to them, such as applying to be members of the school council. In addition, pupils' ideas for new roles are encouraged by senior leaders. For example, Year 7 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their roles as 'student librarians', which was a suggestion they made when they joined the school this year. They were particularly keen to tell inspectors about the certificates awarded to 'avid' readers and how, as part of their role, they helped in the library every day.
- The school environment is welcoming. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident that, if bullying happens, staff will resolve any concerns they raise. They say that they feel safe and secure and know who to go to if ever they need help. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that vulnerable pupils have the support they need.
- A watchful staff presence ensures that pupils move safely around school, enjoy outdoor sports activities on the adjacent green and walk to buildings away from the main site.
- Pupils are taught about important life skills in tutorials, assemblies and personal, social and health education. As a result, they are well versed in how to keep safe online. In their meetings with inspectors, they spoke articulately about the dangers associated with the use of social media and online gaming.
- Planned work experience in Year 10 helps pupils understand the skills they need for future employment. The school is currently reviewing its arrangements for careers information, advice and guidance. This is to ensure that pupils and students in the sixth

form continue to be as fully prepared as they can be to make their choices as they progress to the next stage of education and/or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- This is because the school is a highly inclusive place in which to learn. Leaders are fully committed to, and successful in, supporting the progress of a few pupils with potentially challenging behaviour and, sometimes, complex learning needs.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Typically, they work hard and watch out for each other. Their behaviour in lessons during the inspection was often exemplary. The occasional incident of low-level disruption was managed very well, by a glance or a comment from the teacher.
- Senior leaders' high expectations of pupils' conduct, compliance with uniform requirements, attendance and arrival on time to lessons mean that all of these aspects have improved since the previous inspection. This improvement is supported well by tighter systems and greater consistency in teachers' application of relevant sanctions.
- Sustained and highly personalised support is offered to the very small number of pupils who struggle to attend school as regularly as they should.
- Inspectors noted some occasional, less orderly conduct when pupils left school at the end of the day. However, any boisterous behaviour was checked quickly by good-natured interventions from staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Parkside Community College pupils make outstanding progress from the start of their secondary education to the end of key stage 4. Most pupils join the school in Year 7 with above-average attainment in English and mathematics. High-quality teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum ensure that they continue to flourish and build on their previously acquired skills.
- Typically, the small number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make better progress than other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. The differences between the progress of this group and other pupils in the school are diminishing. This is especially so in English and mathematics.
- A strong focus on ensuring that all pupils reach their potential ensures that, from different starting points, pupils achieve very well, including the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective progress monitoring and swift, well-considered interventions make sure that no group falls behind.
- Alongside well-developed academic skills, pupils build strong foundations for future learning and progression to the next stage of their education and/or training. As confident learners, they are well prepared to take the step to the next level.
- Although the progress of students in the sixth form is not yet as strong as at the end of

key stage 4, sixth-form achievement has improved, year on year, since the first set of published examination results in 2013.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is well led and managed. As a result, 16 to 19 study programmes are implemented effectively. The range of courses, including the International Baccalaureate and BTEC National Diploma programmes, meet a need that is complementary to other 16 to 19 provision available locally.
- Students are expected to work hard, attend regularly and arrive on time. Typically, they respond very well to these expectations.
- Sixth-form leadership has ensured a sustained improvement in students' examination outcomes and progress over the last three years. In-year assessment information indicates that this trend is set to continue in summer 2017.
- All students completing the International Baccalaureate course achieved their qualification in 2016. Students completing BTEC National Diploma courses, on average, achieved grades at distinction level.
- Students who have not previously achieved a higher grade in English and/or mathematics are expected to study and retake these qualifications. Success rates in mathematics examination retakes are not yet as strong as in English. In recognition of this, senior leaders have increased students' access to specialist mathematics teaching in timetabled sessions. As a result, more of them are on track to achieve higher grades.
- Recent changes have brought arrangements for assuring the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form in line with those in place at key stages 3 and 4. As a result, teachers' planning for learning is now better matched to students' different starting points. The most able students are challenged more consistently to do as well as they should.
- The proportion of students who are successful in gaining university places is higher than the national average. Most students who choose this route gain their first-choice university place. These include opportunities to study in some of the best-performing higher education institutions nationally.
- Sixth-form leaders are aware that there is more to do to ensure that students have a better understanding of the breadth of opportunities available to them when they leave school, including higher-level apprenticeships. As a result, plans are in place, this year, to extend further the range of careers information, advice and guidance on offer.

School details

Unique reference number	136636
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10023466

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	779
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	140
Appropriate authority	The Parkside Federation
Chair	Joan-Pau Rubies
Headteacher	Jodh Dhesi
Telephone number	01223 712 600
Website	www.parksidefederation.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@parksidefederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school converted to become an academy in April 2011 and introduced sixth-form provision in September of the same year.

- It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions took place between inspectors, different groups of pupils, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teaching and administrative staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, the trust chief executive and the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors observed pupils and spoke with them in lessons, in an assembly, at break and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- They also considered 56 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from staff and 154 responses from pupils. In addition, they reviewed 72 responses to the parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 68 parental free-text responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, the school improvement plan, information relating to pupils' progress and the policies, procedures and arrangements for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Georgina Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webb	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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