

Park House School

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

Inspection dates

5–7 March 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher models the school's commitment to secure pupils' achievement and personal development and well-being. Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are consistently met.
- Staff are highly motivated. They build positive relationships with pupils to help them re-engage with learning. Pupils respond positively to staff support. As a result, the school continues to improve.
- Pupils behave well throughout the day. Pupils' behaviour improves strongly over time. When they struggle to manage themselves, pupils respond well to staff support. Pupils improve their attendance rapidly after starting at the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are looked after well. Staff are well trained and keep a sharp eye out for any concerns they might have about pupils' well-being.
- Leaders and senior officers of Keys Group monitor the school's performance closely. They do not, however, evaluate the impact of all actions to improve the school further with precision.
- Staff plan lessons that engage and interest pupils. They have good subject knowledge and know pupils' needs well. At times, staff miss opportunities to challenge and deepen pupils' thinking further.
- The renewed curriculum is a strength of the school; it helps pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- From their starting points, pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects in the school. Some pupils make particularly strong progress from their starting points, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils develop a well-rounded understanding of the world around them. They grow in confidence as learners. They are open and curious about people who have different backgrounds from their own.

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 teaching learning and assessment by:
 - making more precise use of the full range of information about pupils to refine learning tasks, so that pupils are challenged to stretch their thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making greater use of monitoring information to sharpen leaders' evaluation of the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' progress, especially in a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring that those responsible for governance use their evaluation of performance to challenge leaders to bring about further improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's determination to ensure that pupils thrive and re-engage in learning successfully is exemplified by ensuring that all the independent school standards are met consistently. With those responsible for governance, she leads by example in her determination to meet pupils' needs as fully as possible. Staff are motivated and share her commitment. Staff are ambitious for their pupils. As a result, pupils grow in self-awareness as young people and in self-confidence as learners. They thrive and achieve well.
- Recent evaluation of, and subsequent changes to, the curriculum are a strength of the school. Broad and balanced, the curriculum provides pupils with engaging and interesting learning opportunities that engage them effectively. As a consequence, pupils, who have disrupted histories in education, re-engage in learning, make strong progress and improve their attendance rapidly.
- Leaders effectively link their checks on the quality of teaching and learning to refining personalised support for pupils and to staff professional development. As a result, pupils grow in self-confidence, and staff feel valued. The school continues to improve.
- Leaders and staff share a common approach to managing pupils' needs. They have consistently high expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning and attendance. They skilfully balance their expectations with well-tailored support for pupils. Leaders and staff respond quickly to emerging needs, which they identify accurately using their in-depth knowledge of their pupils.
- Leaders check closely on the progress pupils make, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and science, so that they can accurately address the gaps in pupils' learning and move them on. As a result, pupils make strongest progress in these areas, achieving an increasingly secure performance in basic skills.
- Checks on pupils' progress in a wider range of subjects is still developing, as the new curriculum and related assessment processes are rolled out. Leaders do not evaluate progress information in these subjects closely enough to improve pupils' achievement as sharply as they might. Progress in these wider subjects is nevertheless strong, but fewer pupils are making the very rapid progress seen in the core subjects.
- Leaders review pupils' work and learning in lessons regularly. Staff plan learning well, using baseline on entry information well, but sometimes miss opportunities to adjust learning in the light of pupils' responses, to sustain challenge to stretch pupils' thinking further.
- Leaders ensure that the personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) programme provides wide-ranging opportunities that promote pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Leaders support staff to adapt the programme to address emerging issues promptly as part of their work to help pupils manage themselves well and to keep them safe.
- Leaders focus firmly on ensuring that pupils are kept safe and have the information they need to recognise risks to their well-being. Leaders make sure that parents are informed about the school's safeguarding arrangements in the prospectus. They inform parents

that they can receive a copy of the school's child protection policy and other school policies from the headteacher.

- Leaders ensure that arrangements to promote good attendance and behaviour are rigorous and increasingly effective. Pupils improve their attendance rapidly. Effective action supports pupils very well in reducing significantly the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Safer recruitment and high-quality staff training underpin leaders' work to ensure that pupils can learn in a safe, orderly and well-maintained environment. Pupils say that they feel safe, as a consequence.
- By paying equal attention to pupils' personal development and well-being and to their achievement, leaders make sure that pupils are prepared well for the next steps in their education and training. Careers guidance is independent and tailored to pupils' needs and aspirations. Significant focus on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development supports pupils well in preparing them as young adults in modern Britain.

Governance

- Representatives of Keys Group are responsible for the governance of the school. Their work is characterised by:
 - working with staff and leaders to ensure that safeguarding remains the school's first priority
 - ensuring that they make a full contribution to meeting all the independent school standards consistently
 - regularly reviewing how well pupils attend and the progress they make. However, they do not evaluate their findings with enough refinement to hold leaders as fully to account as they might
 - underpinning a culture for improvement through support for staff professional development
 - providing opportunities for leaders to share effective practice with other schools in the group
 - ensuring that all the health and safety requirements are met, so that pupils can learn in a suitable, well-maintained and safe environment
 - ensuring that school policies are fit for purpose and effectively implemented.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are kept safe. Leaders ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to learn about risks to their well-being, and how they can contribute to their own safety and well-being.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that all the required pre-employment checks on staff and for visitors to the school are carried out fully and carefully recorded on a single central register. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy and related documents are up to date and take note of the current guidance of the Secretary of State. Leaders work with other agencies and teams to ensure that pupils in need get the early help they require.

- Staff are well trained to spot any signs of neglect or abuse. They know what to do if they have concern about a child. Staff build strong positive relationships with pupils. As a consequence, pupils know that they can, and are confident to talk to a member of staff, if they have a concern or worry. They know that they will be listened to and helped. Their growing self-awareness and confidence, and strongly improving attendance at school, help to keep them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils' learning supports their strong progress, because staff know them well, plan lessons that interest and engage them, and maintain high expectations of their conduct. Staff always challenge pupils, when they use inappropriate language and instances reduce as pupils develop their learning and language skills.
- Staff help pupils by using a wide range of strategies to help pupils develop a sense of positive achievement. They support pupils in developing strategies for the classroom so that pupils can manage themselves.
- Staff establish effective routines for learning. Pupils begin to lose their fear of failure through success in achievement. As a result, they very largely follow staff instructions and apply themselves, with well-targeted support, to their tasks. Pupils become more and more keen to improve their learning.
- Staff plan learning that enables pupils to fill the gaps in their knowledge and understanding, by making good use of the information they have about pupils' prior learning. During lessons, however, staff sometimes miss the opportunity to adjust tasks quickly enough, when pupils show that they are ready to move on. As a result, learning slows at these points.
- Questioning by staff to check that pupils understand tasks and have not misunderstood is much more effective. When pupils are struggling, staff skilfully offer further explanation and give examples to clarify pupils' understanding.
- Staff promote pupils' literacy skills very well across the full range of subjects taught. They ensure that pupils meet, practise and use subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, they are able to discuss their learning, using language with increasing accuracy. For example, in a science lesson, pupils talked confidently about variable factors, such as time and temperature and fair testing, as they dissolved jelly blocks in hot water. Similarly, in an English lesson, the correct use of grammatical terminology enabled pupils to understand more fully how sentences are constructed.
- Pupils improve their reading and writing skills very well. They make rapid progress. Staff give pupils frequent opportunities to read during lessons in all subjects, so that they continually practise their decoding and word recognition skills. Pupils rapidly improve their vocabulary as a result. Their improving reading skills support their understanding across all their subjects and enable them to present their ideas with confidence. Pupils, as a consequence, develop insight into how they can link their learning across subjects together. For example, discussion in science about communicable diseases prompted pupils to make links to their learning in PHSE about sexually transmitted infections and to their history project on how the plague spread.
- Staff produce helpful annual reports for parents. Reports provide an overview of pupils'

attendance and behaviour, as well as their learning. The school sees the report as part of a wider communications strategy with parents. Parents, who contacted the inspector, spoke very highly of the way the school supports their child and keeps in touch with them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- As pupils settle into the school and build trusting relationships with staff, they develop positive attitudes to learning. Many engage and participate in lessons and learning activities for the first time following significant disruption to their education in the past. These positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the strong progress they make.
- When they struggle to focus on their work, pupils use the strategies staff have shown them to help manage themselves. They respond well to staff support. Almost always they are respectful of staff and their peers.
- The PHSE programme supports pupils well in developing an understanding of the diverse nature of society. Pupils are open and curious about people who have different backgrounds from their own. As one pupil put it, 'We're all different and all the same'. Pupils show care for each other and help each other to deal with questions and behaviour through talking and listening. Explicit focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development encourages pupils to think about and respond to a wide range of experiences that broaden their understanding of and interaction with the world around them.
- Pupils learn too about the harm that bullying causes. They recognise that very occasionally there are instances of bullying in school, but are adamant that staff deal with it well. They understand different types of bullying and that the use of the internet and social networking sites can be a medium for bullying. Pupils thoughtfully explained their thinking about how they can link learning about the wrongs of bullying in schools to wider discrimination in society.
- Pupils gain an increasingly well-developed insight into mental health issues through the PHSE programme, including an understanding of healthy relationships. They become more self-aware over time and know that they can rely on staff to help them when they have a difficulty. As a result of the high level of care staff show pupils, pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to keep well outside of school.
- Pupils develop a wider understanding of how to keep themselves safe and well through the well-considered PHSE programme and its links to other subject areas. Pupils learn about, and appreciate the importance of, physical activity to keep healthy. They enjoy a wide range of activities from gym work to rock climbing.
- Pupils learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs or alcohol, and understand how this can make them vulnerable. They learn about the positive roles played by public services and develop an understanding of the importance of the rule of law.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They very largely respond positively to the expectations of staff. For the most part, they learn how to control their emotions and develop strategies with staff to help to manage themselves well. Pupils also help each to behave well. This reflects the school's focus on developing a sense of respect for all, whatever their backgrounds.
- Very occasionally, however, pupils struggle to manage themselves and they need extra support from staff. Staff deal with such situations skilfully and de-escalate situations quickly so that pupils have opportunities to regain control of their emotions. As a result, pupils improve their behaviours quickly over time, but still need extra support occasionally.
- Attendance is below the national average. However, for many, their attendance improves very rapidly from extremely low points on entry. For others, they maintain the high levels of attendance they had already achieved before starting at the school. Many pupils were previously persistent absentees before beginning at this school, but almost all of these no longer fall into this category.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From very low starting points, associated both with pupils' identified learning needs and significant disruptions in their educational histories, pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. A significant proportion make particularly strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils rapidly improve the breadth of their vocabulary. As a result, they are able to discuss their learning and begin to write with greater precision. The school's focus on the correct use of vocabulary and on spelling and grammar helps pupils to understand and practise writing accurately. Pupils develop their skills effectively across a wide range of subjects, from recording their science experiments to writing poetry.
- Pupils' reading skills improve rapidly as staff focus on addressing basic skills, often revising phonics skills to support pupils in catching up. Pupils read with increasing accuracy and fluency from their starting points. They try hard to make sense of their reading as they go along. They use their phonics knowledge to help them sound out words accurately.
- The progress made by pupils in courses leading to external accreditation is strong, both in core subject areas and wider subject areas, for example in food technology. Pupils follow routes to accreditation at a range of levels, from entry level to GCSE, that match their learning and take into account their starting points. As they make progress, pupils' motivation and ambition grows.
- Pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects is successful. They quickly develop knowledge about their various topics, such as the plague or different parts of the world. They apply their literacy and numeracy skills in these new subject contexts.
- Pupils successfully relate their learning in one subject to others and to the PHSE programme. For example, pupils' work about economic migration in the past, studied in history lessons, is linked to respect for others arriving in Britain today.
- By carefully interweaving subject learning with personal development themes, pupils are well supported to make better sense of the complex society in which they live. This helps

prepare them well for the next steps in their education and training and for life as young adults in modern Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	142320
DfE registration number	370/6000
Inspection number	10061285

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Jennie Allport
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,805
Telephone number	01226 744 870
Website	Not applicable
Email address	jennieallport@keyschildcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–14 April 2016

Information about this school

- Park House School is a small specialist school that provides day education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is one of a number of specialist schools in the north east run by Keys Group.
- Pupils are all supported through an education, health and care plan. There are currently 17 pupils on roll, all boys. All pupils currently on roll are of secondary school age.
- Pupils are placed in the school through referral from regional local authorities.
- The school does not use any other alternative provisions.

- The school was previously inspected in April 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with school leaders and a representative of Keys Group, with responsibility for governance.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in each group and spoke with pupils informally and in a more formal meeting. A sample of pupils' work across all their subjects was scrutinised.
- The inspector met with all staff and took into account their views.
- The inspector took into account the responses of a small number of parents, who provided 'free-text' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also took into account the views of a small number of parents expressed in emails to the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements, pupils' progress, the curriculum, behaviour and attendance information.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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