

Inspection of Park Lane School

Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8JR

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who are able to, say that they are happy and safe in school. Parents and carers agree that their children are safe.

Pupils benefit from staff who are positive and passionate about their work. They receive good levels of care from all staff. Staff provide support for activities, including eating, dressing, toileting and physical development. However, academically, teachers do not consistently expect the best from pupils.

Pupils do not have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying. However, they know that staff will help if they feel upset or worried.

Members of the school council talked proudly about their work. Activities include looking after the flowerbeds and selling the flowers they grow. School council members also fundraise for charities, interview new staff members, lead assemblies and reduce global warming with a 'Lights Out' campaign.

Many pupils use signs, symbols or technology to help them communicate with others around them. They learn to make choices, express how they are feeling and request help when they need it. Over time, pupils learn to use these strategies independently, and some learn to talk. However, strategies to support and promote communication skills are not used effectively by some staff.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The special educational needs and disabilities of pupils in school are becoming more severe and complex in nature. In response to this, leaders have made a start on revising the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of all pupils. This work is at an early stage.

The quality of education is variable. Sometimes, pupils experience disconnected activities rather than a well-designed and coherent curriculum. Some teachers do not make effective use of assessment to plan learning activities which help pupils to make small but important steps of progress. Expectations of what pupils can achieve across subjects are not consistently high enough.

Not all school staff are aware of how to support pupils to develop early reading skills. Phonics is not taught in a systematic way. Teachers sometimes use resources and plan activities that are not well matched to pupils' needs.

Leaders and staff know that a key priority for pupils is to learn to communicate effectively. While many staff members are experts in developing communication, others are not yet as skilful. The use of visuals to support communication during lessons and outside the classroom is not yet embedded. This limits how quickly some pupils learn.

Although there is an established mathematics curriculum in place, pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as it could be. Support staff are not always deployed effectively to support individual pupils away from the group. As a consequence, pupils, at times, become disengaged and do not learn. Some teachers do not respond effectively to low-level disruption. At times, the teaching of some concepts such as measurement leads to confusion and misconceptions. As in other subjects, some teachers do not make effective use of assessment to plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning.

The early years curriculum is based on the early years foundation stage framework, along with specialist teaching approaches. Staff take time and care to get to know the children and how best to support them. They plan activities based on children's interests. Over time, staff build up children's communication, interaction, early literacy and numeracy skills. In the early years, as in other year groups, strategies to support children's sensory needs are not as effective as they could be. Sensory breaks are not well planned or resourced to respond to individual needs. As a consequence, unwanted behaviours, at times, disrupt learning for other children.

The school provides experiences like swimming, horse riding, trips to the park and shopping. Pupils really enjoy these activities. Trips out of school help the pupils to remember what they have learned and successfully develop their social skills. Parents said that these experiences with school have helped improve family life.

Leaders have planned a well-sequenced curriculum in the sixth form. This curriculum allows students to further develop their mathematics and English skills and gain a range of qualifications.

Preparation for adult life is a strong aspect of the school's work. Students enjoy running their college café, preparing hot and cold food and drinks, taking orders, washing dishes and cleaning the tables. They develop a range of skills when shopping for the ingredients for their cooking each week. Where appropriate, students benefit from an independent travel training programme.

Leaders work with the students to find suitable work experience and college placements based on their needs and interests. Leaders have plans to extend this year's successful supported internship programme so that more students can experience the world of work and secure employment in the future.

Some parents who met with inspectors said that their children are happy in school. They cannot fault the education and care that the school provides for their children. Parents typically commented: 'My son loves school and runs in every day. I couldn't be happier.' Parents value the support and guidance given to them. They say that school makes a difference to the whole family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the last inspection, safeguarding procedures have become more robust. All staff receive regular safeguarding updates and training.

Staff know the pupils well and refer any concerns they have to the designated safeguarding leads. Leaders follow up any concerns swiftly. The headteacher works effectively with external agencies. She is persistent in making sure that pupils and families get the support they need.

Leaders have ensured that the extra risks associated with pupils' medical needs and physical disabilities are addressed through detailed care plans.

Governors' oversight of safeguarding is strong.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans are not firmly established. Plans, which are in their early stages, have yet to be refined or implemented consistently. Leaders need to make sure that comprehensive plans are in place and adhered to by all teachers.
- Leaders need to make sure that all units of work are well planned, sequenced and adapted to pupils' cognitive ability. Teachers and support staff need further training to identify and plan the subject content that they want pupils to know and remember, with a particular focus on early reading and mathematics. This will help to ensure that pupils achieve their best.
- At times, in lessons low-level disruption occurs and learning slows. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have strategies in place, including planning effective sensory sessions, to manage any instances of disruptive behaviour. This will help to ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils are engaged in learning.
- Some staff are very well trained in the use of non-verbal communication techniques. Not all staff who work with pupils have had the same training. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive training so that there is a consistent approach to communication throughout the school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	111508
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10110931
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Maintained special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ms Tandy Palmes
Headteacher	Lorraine Warmer
Website	parklaneschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Park Lane School is a maintained special school providing education for pupils and young people aged two to 19. It provides care and education for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex medical needs and severe learning difficulties. There is an increasing number of pupils joining the school with complex autism spectrum disorders.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is situated in the Macclesfield Learning Zone and is co-located with Macclesfield Academy and Macclesfield College. Pupils in key stage 4 are based in the Academy. The sixth-form students are based in the college.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with a range of senior staff during the inspection, including the headteacher, the senior leadership team and members of the governing body. The lead inspector also held a telephone call with a representative of the local authority.
- We carried out a range of activities to look at safeguarding. These activities included meeting leaders, talking to staff, parents and pupils. We also reviewed a range of school documents and records.
- We met with several parents and we evaluated responses on Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents.
- We met with members of the school council.
- We considered literacy and communication, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and design and technology in depth during this inspection. This included discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, lesson visits, talking to groups of pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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