

Inspection of Parkside Academy

Greengate Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA13 9BY

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at Parkside Academy. They make the most of the friendly atmosphere. As they arrive for school each morning, staff are there to greet and welcome them. Trusting relationships with staff help pupils to feel safe and support the youngest children to quickly settle into life in school.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, and pupils try their best. Leaders ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have the support they need to access an ambitious curriculum and achieve well. Leaders identify the needs of children in the early years swiftly so that they have the support they need to access the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary and their conduct around school is impeccable. In lessons, they try hard and listen to staff and one another. They said that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. When such incidents do happen, staff deal with them swiftly and appropriately.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These help pupils to develop their sporting and artistic prowess. Pupils really enjoy singing. Many older pupils enjoy learning to play the guitar.

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

Leaders and governors ensure that all pupils access a broad and suitably ambitious curriculum. This is especially true in the early years. The high-quality curriculum that children enjoy supports their exceptional achievement.

Over the last four years, the school has grown from the original infant school to become a primary school. Throughout this process, leaders have continued to plan and improve their curriculums. In many subjects, leaders have organised subject content carefully, so that pupils can build on what they know already. In most subjects, including mathematics, teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils have remembered the intended curriculum. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' learning are less effective. This hinders teachers in spotting gaps in pupils' knowledge and hampers pupils' progress.

Many children join the early years when they are two years old. They get off to the best possible start. Leaders in the early years have focused their efforts on the development of children's language and communication skills. Leaders have forged highly effective relationships with parents and carers. This enables leaders to support parents so that they can help their children with their learning at home. Through the early years curriculum, children quickly develop their curiosity. They engage in well-planned activities with high levels of concentration.

Leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour begin in the early years. The youngest children very quickly learn to adapt to routines and listen carefully to instructions from staff. For example, children check their own spelling of words with high levels of independence. In art lessons, they understand the need to adapt their artwork using different colours and techniques. Children typically leave the early years with the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve well in key stage 1.

Across the school, pupils benefit from calm classroom environments because teachers have clear and high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well. They show high levels of commitment to their learning.

Leaders have prioritised the early reading and phonics curriculum. Children in the early years are immersed in stories and speaking and listening activities. Skilfully trained staff teach pupils, including children in the early years, new sounds in a logical order. Staff ensure that those pupils who fall behind in gaining phonics knowledge are supported well to catch up. Staff ensure that the books pupils read are matched precisely to the sounds they have been learning in class. Almost all pupils can read confidently and fluently by the end of Year 2. Older pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of genres and authors. They appreciate the joy that reading widely can offer and they are keen to talk about their favourite authors.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities that leaders have organised to complement the curriculum. Pupils develop their confidence and empathy for others by engaging in a range of charity events. For instance, pupils have recently been collecting food parcels for the local food bank. Pupils know that it is important to stay physically and mentally healthy. Leaders ensure that all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school competes in a wide range of sporting events, including girls' football and gymnastics.

Staff believe that leaders care for them. Leaders make sure that newer members of staff can learn from their more experienced colleagues. Leaders provide all staff with opportunities to develop their professional skills and knowledge. Staff are very appreciative of the efforts that senior leaders have taken to reduce their workloads.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant in their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that all safeguarding concerns are followed up diligently. Leaders have ensured that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, including guidance on noticing and tackling peer-on-peer abuse.

Leaders know pupils and their families well. They have formed links with several external partners. As a result, leaders provide specific and timely support for vulnerable pupils and their families when needed.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. For example, they are aware of the potential dangers associated with walking and cycling on busy roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In those subjects where curriculums have been introduced recently, teachers' checks on pupils' learning are less effective than in those subjects where curriculums are embedded well. This hinders teachers from spotting gaps in pupils' knowledge and prevents pupils from making links in their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers are supported effectively to make checks on pupils' learning, considering changes to subject curriculums, so that pupils know and remember more.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	142249
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10200826
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Laura Kendall
Headteacher	Caroline Walker
Website	www.parkside-academy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and the trust's chief executive officer.

- Inspectors viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. They scrutinised training records and staff employment checks. Inspectors spoke with a wide range of staff to gauge their understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes. They met with pupils and parents to gather their views about the school. Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent view, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. Inspectors spoke with teachers and subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed examples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stage one read to trusted adults. In addition, inspectors considered curriculum planning across a range of other subject areas.

Inspection team

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