

Inspection of Park Lane Academy

Park Lane, Exley, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9LG

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Park Lane Academy is an improving school. In recent months, there have been changes to leadership at a senior level. This has helped the school address its weaknesses at pace. The school is well supported by the trust. They have added extra staff to drive improvement. Leaders act with integrity and are focused on creating an inclusive school. Pupils talk positively about the changes that they are seeing. Behaviour has improved. In classrooms, the majority of pupils are respectful to staff. However, suspensions are still too high. Not all pupils behave as well as they should.

Pupils have been given greater leadership opportunities in school. They speak positively about how much more involved they are in the life of the school. The school is proud to have introduced new head pupils and a number of mental health ambassadors. The opportunities for enrichment activities are increasing, although not all pupils take part. Leaders are aware that they need to do more to involve all pupils in the range of extra opportunities on offer. They know that they need to offer a wider range of opportunities to suit all pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that they have adults they can go to if they are worried or concerned. Pupils say that sometimes there is bullying in school. They know who to report bullying to, but they feel that it is not always taken seriously. Leaders are taking effective steps to address this.

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

Leaders have prioritised the continuation of training for all adults at Park Lane Academy. Staff are positive about this training. As a result, teachers have good subject knowledge. They are clear about what they want pupils to achieve. Leaders have worked hard to create a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. However, they have not yet achieved this in all subjects. Here, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the order of knowledge in which pupils need to learn. This means that pupils do not always have the knowledge they need for future learning to be successful.

Leaders support teachers to help them plan and deliver lessons. This is helping them to engage pupils while building their knowledge. In English, teachers make links between pupils' prior knowledge and new learning. This helps pupils to make progress. Inspectors visited lessons where pupils showed great enthusiasm in developing their understanding on the theme of racism through the poetry of John Agard.

Teachers check what pupils are able to remember. However, leaders do not always make sure that pupils are assessed on the key knowledge that has been taught. Pupils are often confused when learning new content because of the gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and effectively. However, leaders do not accurately identify the best ways of supporting these pupils. Information provided for staff is not consistently well used. Teachers do not use the information in SEND support plans well. This means that pupils are not always supported well in their learning.

Leaders have placed a high focus on reading. They have put in place a new programme of reading in form time to help pupils become more fluent in their reading. This is having a positive effect, although leaders know there is more work to inspire a minority of key stage 4 pupils to read widely and often.

Personal, social, health and economic education for Year 7 to Year 11 is well planned and has been carefully sequenced. The programme includes opportunities for pupils to learn about respect, ambition and pride. Pupils are not always able to understand the importance of fundamental British values and some pupils do not value the opportunity to learn about other cultures. Pupils benefit from a strong careers education.

The school meets the eight Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance. It also fulfils the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance. New staff have been appointed to support the existing team to make sure that pupils come to school on time. This is starting to make a difference. However, there are still too many pupils who do not attend school regularly.

Trustees and the school improvement partner have a sharp understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know the school's priorities and care passionately about its success. They hold leaders to account well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has an experienced team of safeguarding leaders. They are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils face. Leaders ensure that staff have regular training to help them identify signs of harm. Staff know where to record their concerns. These are acted upon by leaders, involving external agencies where necessary.

Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and talk to leaders regularly to monitor their actions. The culture of safeguarding is strongly promoted by leaders in the trust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers have not thought carefully enough about the order of knowledge in which pupils need to learn. This means that some pupils do not know what knowledge they need to be able to reach the end points in their learning. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum in all subjects sets out a clear sequence of learning.
- While leaders provide staff with enough information and training so that they know how to help pupils with SEND, teachers do not use the information effectively. This means that some pupils with SEND do not get the support that they need. Leaders should robustly monitor the provision for these pupils so that all can achieve well.
- Some teachers do not use the assessment system that leaders have put in place effectively. This means that, in a number of subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding that are not being checked. Leaders must make sure that assessment processes are used purposefully by all staff so that gaps in knowledge and understanding are identified and learning is adapted effectively.
- Pupils are not taught well enough about the importance of fundamental British values and cultural diversity. This means that pupils are missing key knowledge to understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people. Leaders should make sure that the gaps in the curriculum are addressed so that pupils are able to understand, appreciate and respect these differences.
- Not all pupils attend school regularly. This means that some pupils are not able to follow the curriculum that has been planned. Leaders must ensure that attendance is improved.

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.

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	143115
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10244631
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Kay
Executive Principal	Kash Rafiq
Website	http://parklane.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses two alternative providers: Calderdale College and Orange Box.
- The school is part of the South Pennine Academies Trust.
- The executive principal took up post in February 2022 and the head of school in December 2020.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, history, science and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with trustees, the chief executive officer of the South Pennine Multi Academy Trust, the executive headteacher, the head of school and senior leaders. They spoke to teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders responsible for SEND provision and personal development across the school. They spoke to leaders about provision for pupils who are in alternative provision and those responsible for behaviour and attitudes.
- Inspectors spoke to staff with responsibility for safeguarding, checked records and procedures for keeping children safe. They spoke with staff and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils through surveys, including Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Marc Doyle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Manina Tyler-Mort	Ofsted Inspector
Kieran McGrane	Ofsted Inspector

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