

Inspection of Park House School

48 North Side, Wandsworth Common, London SW18 2SL

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The proprietor, leaders and staff have extremely high expectations and value all pupils as individuals. They work well together as a team to prepare pupils for the future and their growing independence. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff ensure that pupils can use a variety of ways to communicate and express themselves confidently. They learn to use signing and visual cues, as well as verbal and written methods.

Staff build strong professional working relationships with pupils. They help pupils to learn and remember routines regularly. This helps pupils to grow in confidence. Staff are highly trained to manage pupils' behaviour. They use a range of strategies very skilfully, including de-escalation techniques. As a result, the school is a calm environment where pupils are safe. Pupils are taught to understand the importance of respect, as one of the school's key values. Staff help pupils to recognise unfriendly behaviours. Adults make sure they are always available to respond to any concerns and take appropriate and swift action.

Leaders provide pupils with many exciting extra-curricular activities during the school day, such as horse riding and visits to an adventure playground. All pupils participate fully.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. It covers all the required areas of learning and gives pupils a broad, rich experience. Leaders have developed an education programme which is unique and tailored for each pupil. They think carefully about pupils' daily timetables. Leaders' curricular thinking is highly developed and builds progressively from the early years upwards.

Staff deliver the subject content very effectively, including through class groups, one-to-one and therapy sessions according to pupils' needs. Staff use a wide range of modelling, equipment and visual resources to help pupils learn successfully. They plan activities very carefully for pupils. This helps pupils to build on and revisit their prior learning regularly.

Assessment is well planned and highly effective. Staff check pupils' understanding continuously with precision. This helps to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Staff make changes to pupils' learning if they fall behind. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully. They review the curriculum constantly to meet pupils' needs excellently.

Leaders have developed a strong, well-planned programme for early reading. They help to promote a love of reading. Staff teach pupils phonics every day. They use assessment information to check pupils' early reading carefully. Staff build in time expertly across the curriculum so that pupils practise sounds regularly. This includes the use of therapists to support pupils who may have difficulty with letter sounds.

Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a wide range of decodable books. These are closely matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. Staff give pupils opportunities to practise small steps in reading. Pupils enjoy reading and can apply their phonics knowledge in the wider world, for example to read signs, notices and recipes.

Staff who work in classes are highly qualified to support pupils' behaviour. They check individual pupils' needs very carefully and adapt plans swiftly if necessary. Staff set clear expectations and routines for pupils across the school. These are developed from the early years upwards to help pupils regulate and manage their own behaviour.

Leaders' work to enhance pupils' personal development is exceptional. This includes many opportunities to develop character through the curriculum and play. Leaders make sure that all pupils make the most of these opportunities. For instance, pupils visited a zoo and a farm, and went pond dipping, while learning about 'living things'. Classes have weekly special events, such as celebrating Eid. Leaders have implemented the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education. Through the school council, pupils have a voice in the running of their school. For example, they helped to select the play equipment chosen for the playground.

The proprietor and leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leadership at all levels in the school is exceptional. Leaders delegate well, so that staff contribute fully to pupils' learning and welfare. All staff have relevant training, including opportunities for accredited qualifications. Leaders ensure that all staff are supported through an induction process of training and observation. Leaders continue to develop systems to reduce workload. Staff feel well supported.

Leaders empower staff to take responsibility and be accountable. For instance, staff follow the school's values of 'proud to challenge'. This helps them to routinely challenge each other's professional practice to improve the provision for pupils. Parents and carers are supportive of the school. The proprietor, leaders and staff are very ambitious for the next stage of the school's development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe underpins leaders' and staff's work. Staff follow up any concerns diligently and leaders take prompt action. Staff have regular training and are skilled in identifying any concerns. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need. This includes in school by a range of professionals. Leaders have a clear oversight and manage any cases effectively.

The school's safeguarding policy meets the requirements of the statutory guidance and is published on the school's website for parents. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

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 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.

School details

Unique reference number	134145
DfE registration number	212/6405
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10267630
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	BeyondAutism
Chair	Angus Johnston
Headteacher	Matthew Le Blanc
Annual fees (day pupils)	£58,960 to £65,350
Telephone number	0203 031 9700
Website	www.beyondautismschools.org.uk
Email address	parkhouseschool@beyondautism.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 December 2018

Information about this school

- Park House School is an independent school for pupils with special educational needs between the ages of 4 and 11 years old. All the pupils have education, health and care plans for autistic spectrum disorder.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher took up his post in September 2022.
- The school's previous inspection was in December 2018. The school was judged to be outstanding.
- The proprietor continues to be the charity BeyondAutism, although the proprietor's name on GIAS is blank.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trustees of the proprietor body, the chair of governors and the director of education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, personal, social, health and economic education, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. Inspectors met with groups of other professionals in school, including therapists, behaviour analysts, advanced skills practitioners, and teaching and learning practitioners.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and safer recruitment, and reviewed the record of pre-employment checks. Inspectors talked with staff about the impact of their safeguarding training. Pupils gave their views to inspectors, including about how safe they felt in school.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Frances Hawkes

Ofsted Inspector

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