

Inspection of an outstanding school: Sir Charles Parsons School

Westbourne Avenue, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE6 4ED

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

Sir Charles Parsons School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and inclusive school with a deep community spirit. The school values every pupil as an individual who has a special and unique talent. Staff show a passion and commitment to the pupils. Pupils are happy and safe here. They build strong and trusting relationships with each other and with staff.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. It has designed an ambitious, personalised curriculum that reflects those expectations. The school meets pupils' complex needs through skilful adaptation of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching and support. This motivates pupils. It enables pupils to realise the school's high aspirations for them.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school has established a positive culture in which pupils thrive. It has created a set of behaviours for learning that are known and understood by pupils. Pupils are polite, friendly and inquisitive. They show kindness and respect for all.

Pupils enjoy frequent opportunities to enrich their learning and gain new life experiences. They visit art galleries and participate in music, drama and sporting activities. Pupils also go on residential trips. The school develops pupils' independence. It prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

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

The school has an ambitious and highly inclusive curriculum. It adapts the curriculum with skill and precision for pupils on different learning pathways. The school meets pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. It meets these needs in a personalised and effective way. For example, some pupils access a sensory curriculum. Pupils at an early stage of language development benefit from the use of sight recognition and signing strategies. All pupils have access to therapeutic

programmes. These include water-based therapy in the school's heated pool and movement therapy on trampolines.

The school has identified the essential knowledge and skills it wants pupils to secure. The curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils build their knowledge and skills in a progressive manner. This includes subject-specific knowledge, for example in mathematics, English and science. Pupils also learn about relationships, equality and diversity, and online safety. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils at an appropriate stage of development learn to read using phonics. Well-trained staff deliver phonics effectively. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers. In English, pupils study texts such as 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', 'Oliver Twist' and 'Macbeth'. The school brings books to life for pupils through the use of drama and role play. Pupils develop a love for stories and books.

The school ensures pupils have appropriate learning and communication aids. In lessons, teachers make effective use of these resources. Pupils participate fully in their learning. They can share what they have learned in a way that suits them best. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and understand. Teachers are quick to address any misunderstandings pupils may have. The school deploys learning support assistants effectively. All adults contribute skilfully to pupils' learning.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. They attend school regularly and behave extremely well. There is no disruption to learning.

Right from the start, the school prepares pupils for adulthood. Pupils learn how to apply their knowledge of number and language to real-life situations. As pupils develop, the school ensures that they learn important skills for life. For example, through visits to local shops and use of public transport.

In the sixth form, students benefit from a vocational curriculum, personalised to their needs. For example, some students manage the school café. Pupils enjoy outdoor activities such as forest school, wood hub and horticulture. The school prepares pupils well for employment and for independent or semi-independent life. Several pupils leave the school at the end of key stage 4 to go on to further study at local colleges. The school prepares students well for supported employment programmes. For example, some students secure internships with local partners from the National Health Service.

The school is providing pupils with a high-quality education. It is adapting that education with considerable expertise to meet the needs of individual pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well from their differing starting points. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities with appropriate rigour. They exercise strategic oversight and hold school leaders to account. The school ensures that staff workload is manageable. It prioritises staff well-being. Staff appreciate this. They enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	131987
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10323011
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ashley Thomas Ferguson
Headteacher	Karen Hamilton
Website	www.scp.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Newcastle Special Schools Trust, also known as The Compass Trust. There is one other school in the trust, Hadrian School, a foundation special school for pupils between the ages of two and 11.
- The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body, the school's school improvement partner and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and literacy, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also held discussions about the curriculum in science and computing.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, staff survey, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Suzanne Connolly

Ofsted Inspector

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