

# Park Lane School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111508
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288979
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael McDowell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	77
6th form	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick O'Brien
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Calvert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Park Lane Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 8JR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 423407
<b>Fax number</b>	01625 511191

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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Park Lane is a community special school for students from East Cheshire who have statements of special educational need because of severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Almost all are White British and all are from English speaking families. Most join the school at the Foundation Stage. A very small minority transfer from mainstream schools at later stages. Because of their acknowledged learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students' attainments are well below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school is exceptionally effective. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start. From very low starting points, they make swift progress towards their individual targets. They learn to communicate effectively and to get on with others. They leave the Foundation Stage as confident, very well prepared learners. Students from Year 1 to Year 11, whatever their capabilities, make outstanding progress. Their communication, personal, and social skills develop particularly well. Among students aged 16 to 19 the development of social and independent living skills is exceptional. Achievement is as exceptional as it is because teaching is outstanding and the curriculum is very well suited to the needs of individuals. Teachers are energetic and have very high expectations of their students. The lively and enjoyable atmosphere that prevails in lessons ensures that students remain interested in their work, do their best and learn very well. The very positive experiences that students have in their classrooms and the support they are given fills them with confidence. Their personal development is very good. They are sociable and helpful and get on well with one another and with the adults who teach and support them. Those who are able to do so consider the needs of others. The elected school council acts on behalf of students to help bring about changes that benefit all.

Students learn very effectively about the importance of exercise and eating and drinking sensibly. They enjoy the healthy lunches and snacks that the school provides. Students like coming to school; they trust the adults and are confident that help will always be on hand. The care, guidance and support given to students is exceptionally good. Every effort is made to ensure that communication with students is as effective as possible so that the needs and wishes of individuals do not go unrecognised. Procedures for safeguarding students and ensuring their health and safety are robust and are reviewed regularly. Intimate care is given in a manner that preserves the dignity of those receiving it. The school has very good knowledge of each student. However, it does not collate assessment data to give a broader picture of how well groups of students with similar starting points make progress over time. This makes it difficult for the school to compare its performance with that of similar schools.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership is exceptionally clear about the direction the school must take. The issues raised by the last inspection have been fully tackled. Imaginative ways have been found to overcome the limitations imposed by the cramped accommodation. In evaluating its performance, the school has been too modest in its assessment of achievement overall, the quality of teaching, and the curriculum. It is seeking specialist status for communication and interaction, areas that are a particular strength of its practice. Governance is very good and the governing body keeps the school under review effectively. The leadership of the school is ambitious and successful and outstandingly placed to bring about further improvement. The school provides excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision made for students aged 16 to 19 is excellent. The accommodation provided in a demountable classroom is barely satisfactory but this is compensated for by a lively and suitable programme which ensures that much learning is centred elsewhere. Students are offered supported work experience placements, opportunities to pursue college-based courses and involvement in an enterprise scheme which gives them work-related learning and greater economic awareness. Their work is externally accredited. Overall their

achievement is very good. They all gain pre-Entry Level unit awards in areas including literacy, numeracy, and self-help skills, and they complete the MENCAP Essential Skills programme. All students successfully complete the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), units. Their progress in developing independence and social skills is particularly good. The provision is very well led and managed and is effective in preparing students for their lives after they have left school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make more effective use of assessment data to improve understanding of the school's performance.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Achievement is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, children get off to a very good start and make exceptional progress towards their learning goals and individual targets. Their communication, personal, social, and physical skills develop rapidly. Students across the age range from Year 1 to Year 11 continue to make excellent progress from their starting points. They make significant gains in English, mathematics, science, and personal, social, health, and citizenship education. Gains in other subjects are good. The emphasis placed by the school on the development of communication and literacy skills leads to students making exceptional progress in these areas. They master, and use very effectively, alternative means of communication, including the picture exchange communication system (PECS), Signalong signing, and symbol writing. Those who need to, make very competent use of switch-operated devices to speak for them. Students with the most profound disabilities develop unique means of communication through which they express their views and signal their needs. All students in Year 11 have their work accredited by the Associated Schools Direct Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and complete the Transition Challenge programme.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding. They are happy at school and eager to tell of the many things that they enjoy. They are very confident and they learn from the earliest stages to do things for themselves and to be polite and sociable. Even the youngest children, where they are able, carry their own chairs to their tables and say or sign 'please' and 'thank you' when making their choices at snack time. Students report that they feel safe and that they know the adult to whom they would turn if other students caused them concern. Attendance is good. Absence is almost always for medical reasons. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. There have been no exclusions in the past year. However, a few pupils, because of their individual difficulties, need help to understand and control their feelings and impulses. The school is exceptionally good at enabling these pupils to recognise and manage their emotions and, as a consequence, their social skills improve markedly. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is very good. Students respect the beliefs and customs of others and enjoy art from other cultures. They understand and obey the few, simple school rules. Students learn about healthy lifestyles. They make sensible choices at lunchtime and

enjoy the balanced meals the school provides. Most students are active at break times; they are eager to be on the move using the school bicycles and tricycles. They greatly enjoy swimming and they take part in out-of-school sports activities. Students aged 16 to 19 are very well prepared for their next step after school. Through enterprise schemes and work experience placements they develop their economic understanding and their awareness of the world of work very well. Students of all ages make contributions to the community of the school. The school council provides a voice for the students and helps to bring about improvements.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Outstanding teaching and learning underpin the students' excellent progress. Teachers for all ages know their students very well and are exceptionally good at finding ways to help them learn. They assess them thoroughly and keep a keen eye on their rate of improvement. In all lessons they ensure that students fully understand what is about to take place and what is expected of them. They use PECS as an alternative to the spoken word whenever necessary and augment what they say with good Signalong signing. They are careful to ensure that students who communicate through electronic devices always have these to hand. Lessons are frequently active and exciting. Teachers engage their classes in a rich variety of ways, including through song or through the use of interactive technology. They use resources very well and ensure that classroom staff always know what they should do. Teachers' gentle management of students successfully helps them to get the best out of each lesson.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets statutory requirements and the individual needs of students very well. The learning opportunities for children aged 2 to 5 are excellent and help children gain confidence in themselves as learners. The provision for the development of pupils' communication skills is exceptional and provides a strong foundation on which future learning in all areas is based. Those with the most profound difficulties and/or disabilities are enabled, through very good adult support and facilities adapted to their needs, to experience all areas of the curriculum. Their learning needs are very well met. There is effective education for health and safety. Older students have appropriate opportunities to have their work externally accredited and students aged 16 to 19 are given the chance to attend college, take part in running an enterprise, and to have work experience. The curriculum is enriched extensively by a broad range of visits, themed days and by music and drama provided by visiting companies.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. This contributes significantly to the students' excellent personal development and helps to ensure their well-being. Students are monitored thoroughly. The school makes effective use of suitable scales to assess students

and ensure that they make expected progress. It sets them challenging targets. Together with parents, it reviews the progress students make towards these. Teachers and all staff are strongly committed to students' welfare. Teachers guide all of their students carefully. They manage the needs of the most challenging students very well and plan effectively to help them become sociable, self-controlled and happy. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established and understood by all staff members. The required checks on staff are made. Students leaving the school are carefully guided towards future placements, usually college courses that best suit their needs. The school liaises very effectively with parents, who have the highest regard for its work. It also works very well with other agencies. Health service personnel work within the school and contribute significantly to supporting students and their families. Links with social services are effective. The school oversees vigilantly the welfare of its more vulnerable students and it initiates joint action with other agencies to support these students and their families when necessary.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding and have improved markedly since the last inspection. Achievement is higher, especially for secondary aged students and those aged 16 to 19. Teaching is now more consistent and of better quality overall. The headteacher knows what must be done to ensure that the school continues to improve. The senior leadership team and all of the staff share his vision. They are proud of the school and want it to be as good as it can be. The school seeks the views of parents and students and takes these into consideration. A robust regime of school self-review has been established. Priorities for development are planned carefully, although these do not take into account nor analyse fully how well groups of students progress in comparison with those in similar schools. The school improves continuously the provision it makes for students. In particular, the teaching of communication skills throughout the school has been very well developed and is now an area of strength. Imaginative leadership is enabling the school to overcome the severe limitations of accommodation. It has arranged, from the start of the next school year, for the 16 to 19 age group to be based in the college with which the school shares a campus. There is strong commitment to inclusion. Students are given opportunities to learn in mainstream schools with peers their age. Governance is very good. The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Financial management is prudent. The present budget surplus is earmarked for equipping the new post-16 centre and for improvements to the building. Management is very effective so that the school runs smoothly from day to day.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your friendliness and help when I visited your school. I really enjoyed seeing you in your lessons and at break and lunchtime.

I was very impressed by how well you behaved and how helpful you were in your classrooms. You use your PECS books, signs and symbol writing very well. I thought that those of you I saw at snack time were very polite and calm. At break time, it was lovely to see so many of you riding your bicycles and tricycles so confidently. You really do like to be as active as you can. It was also clear that you enjoy your lunches. I noticed that you are very well mannered.

Thank you to the members of the school council who spent time talking to me. You said that you enjoy coming to school and trust your teachers and all the grown-ups who support and care for you.

From talking to Mr Calvert and the teachers, seeing records of your work, and learning much about what the school does, I found that Park Lane is an outstanding school that helps you very much. You learn very well, make excellent progress and become much more confident and independent. You are extremely well taught and very well cared for and supported. Your school is led and managed excellently.

To make the school even better, I have asked Mr Calvert to compare the progress you make with that made by girls and boys in other schools that are like yours. Then he can decide if the progress you make could be improved even more.

Thank you once again for your help.