

Parkside House School

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	392/6011
Unique Reference Number	135001
Inspection number	331312
Inspection dates	18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Parkside House School is a small independent day special school which provides education for boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and/or speech and language or communication difficulties. There are currently 13 pupils on roll including 6 boys and 7 girls and all have a statement of special educational need. The school is situated in North Tyneside, but admits pupils from surrounding areas including Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and North Tyneside. Pupils are placed in the school by their local education authorities as they have often been excluded from one or more schools and have experienced disrupted education. Almost half of pupils are in the care of their local authorities and live in care homes or with foster parents.

The school was opened in January 1998 and was last inspected in November 2005. The school aims to *'provide a high quality education package to pupils who have difficulties in relating to education or others within a mainstream setting'*.

Evaluation of the school

Parkside House School is a good school, which successfully achieves its aims. The quality of education it provides is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Many pupils have failed in their previous educational settings and the safe, caring environment helps them to re-engage with education and make good progress. The school has addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection well, particularly in the provision of opportunities for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and information and communication technology (ICT). The school meets all of the regulations including those in respect of the provision of information for parents, premises and accommodation and procedures for handling complaints.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good with a strong focus on developing basic skills. As most of the pupils have experienced difficulties with their education in the past, the school's main aim is to re-engage them in learning. Therefore learning is personalised and tailored to meet the different needs of each pupil well with specific targets linked to their statement of special educational need. Lesson plans are based on detailed schemes of work. The school offers all the subjects of the National Curriculum with the exception of music as the school has found it difficult to recruit a specialist teacher. However, there are opportunities in lunchtime clubs to learn to play the guitar or keyboard. Additional lunchtime clubs include chess, computers, remote control cars, hairdressing, beauty club and jewellery club. The curriculum has been further enhanced by visits, for example to the local coastline for studies in geography and to an Army Exhibition Day when pupils were able to participate in a wide range of sporting events, such as golf and abseiling. There have been effective improvements in the provision of PSHCE since the last inspection and now all pupils are given the opportunity to follow the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course at the 'stepping stones' and Bronze level and also the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) award. In addition to GCSE and GCSE Entry Level examinations, the school has introduced a range of vocational courses such as hairdressing, catering, beauty therapy and motor vehicle studies. Good provision in art and design and technology encourages pupils to develop skills which enable a few of them to take their GCSE a year early. The school also provides teaching in French and German but this is not yet fully embedded. There have been effective improvements in the delivery of ICT across the curriculum since the last inspection and older pupils are now engaged in achieving the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) ICT qualification. Pupils receive helpful careers guidance through the Connexions service and this is complemented with good opportunities for work-related learning. During the inspection all Year 11 pupils were engaged in work experience including work at a hairdressing salon and also in a special school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. On entry to the school, pupils' abilities vary widely with some with standards which are below or well below that which is typical of their age. The school uses a range of baseline assessments to identify students' abilities on entry and then involves students themselves in deciding on targets linked to individual learning plans. These are reviewed termly to monitor progress and information is regularly shared with parents or carers. By the time pupils leave, academic standards still vary widely but some are broadly in line with what students achieve nationally and a significant proportion go on to places at colleges of further education. Although there are systems in place to record the progress of pupils individually, they are not yet brought together effectively. Consequently, the school does not have a full overview of progress made by all groups of pupils. However, staff do know pupils very well on an individual basis and there is much informal discussion to ensure pupil's needs are met.

Teaching and learning are good overall, enabling pupils to make good progress. The strengths in lessons include the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the way in which every opportunity is taken to build their confidence and self-esteem. Work is provided at an appropriate level and tailored to individual needs to

enable pupils to achieve success. In lessons seen, pupils demonstrated confidence in sharing their views and opinions and were mainly on task throughout the lessons. Most pupils have limited concentration spans, but for the most part they remained on task and were engaged in learning. Misconceptions are handled well, enabling pupils to understand 'that we can all learn from our mistakes'. Teachers provide good role models, have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations to pupils enabling them to make good progress. Staff are very calm even when dealing with challenging behaviour and this enables pupils to feel safe and secure and creates a purposeful atmosphere for learning. However, the use of assessment within lessons is not always as effective as it could be in enabling pupils to understand exactly what they have to do to achieve.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good and it is clear they have very good relationships with staff, enjoy their learning and take a pride in their school. This is demonstrated during 'improve your school' days when pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their surroundings by producing art work and improving the school grounds. Staff focus mainly on building up the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and the systems of rewards are highly effective. These include opportunities to participate in activities such as horse riding or visiting the cinema. Pupils' attendance is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong focus on developing life skills, particularly through the ASDAN scheme which increases pupils' confidence in preparing for future education and employment. Pupils contribute well to the community by taking part in fundraising for local and national charities such as Children in Need, Comic Relief and Cancer Research.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. They enjoy eating lunches from different cultures and visit different types of restaurants. Pupils study world religions and visit the places of worship of a number of different religious and cultural organisations. In English, they study poems from different cultures and study a topic on Native Americans and in art they are involved in projects on Aboriginal art, and produce African and Venetian masks. Pupils develop their moral and social skills through the curriculum and opportunities for co-operative tasks such as orienteering and problem solving. Pupils enhance their knowledge of public institutions through working with the police and fire brigade and through visits, such as those to North Tyneside Law Courts. The views of pupils are valued and they are able to contribute towards decisions made in the school. The school promotes inclusive education and all pupils are welcomed and valued. Staff use mediation to promote harmony and resolve conflicts and make every effort to promote racial harmony.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils benefit from small classes and consequently staff are able to give much attention to individuals. Staff understand the needs of each pupil well. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy

lifestyles and there is a good focus on healthy eating with healthy snacks and lunches being provided. There are many opportunities to take exercise with a wide variety of sports being provided, for example, skiing, archery, football, climbing, martial arts and tennis.

There is regular communication between parents/carers on a weekly and often daily basis which helps to promote a consistent approach between home and school in addition to providing opportunities to discuss pupils' progress. Relationships are very good between staff and pupils and pupils indicate they are confident that any concerns or incidents are addressed effectively by staff. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and designated staff have attended enhanced training. Whole staff child protection training has also recently been provided. Good risk assessments ensure that students are kept safe and include those for educational visits. There are clear written policies in place for child protection, anti-bullying and health and safety procedures. A comprehensive fire risk assessment has been carried out and the local fire authority has approved the procedures that are in place. A member of staff has recently attended training as a fire warden and equipment is regularly checked and appropriate records are kept. There are two members of staff who have received first aid training including one who is about to commence a four day refresher training course as his certificate very recently expired. There is also a good awareness of internet safety and parents/carers are requested to sign the policy. There are effective links with other agencies such as the health service, educational psychology service and speech and language therapists to support pupils with their specific needs.

The school has drawn up a comprehensive accessibility plan which complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to learn music within the curriculum
- enhance assessment procedures to ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do to achieve
- improve systems for recording the progress of pupils.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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School details

Name of school	Parkside House School		
DCSF number	392/6011		
Unique reference number	135001		
Type of school	Independent Day Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 1998		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 7	Total:13
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6	Girls: 7	Total:13
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 3	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 25,547.22 to £36,639.00		
Address of school	Station Road Backworth Tyne & Wear NE27 0AB		
Telephone number	0191 216 1051		
Fax number	0191 216 1051		
Email address	parkside.house@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Ms Belinda Young		
Proprietors	Mr J Thompson, Mr K Thompson		
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI		
Dates of inspection	18 September 2008		