

Park Lane School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111508
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337695
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Edwards
Headteacher	Ms Lorraine Warmer
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils including the school council. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; its plans for improvement; records relating to safeguarding; the school's data on pupils' progress. The inspectors analysed 36 parental questionnaires and also read questionnaire responses from pupils and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching
- the inclusion of pupils in mainstream activities
- accreditations gained by learners
- safeguarding procedures.

Information about the school

Park Lane School is located in a newly developed campus and shares this with a college of further education, a sixth form college and a high school. Key Stage 4 pupils are educated at the high school. The school's sixth form students are educated at the sixth form college where they have their own facilities. The school provides for pupils from East Cheshire who have statements of special educational need because of severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many of these pupils have additional medical and complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorders. The vast majority of pupils have communication difficulties. Almost all pupils are White British and a very small number are from families who speak English as an additional language. Most pupils join the school at the Early Years Foundation Stage and stay on through to the sixth form. The school achieved Specialist School Status in Communication and Interaction in 2007. It has also gained the National Healthy Schools award and Bronze Eco award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a marvellous school. The result of its excellent provision is pupils' outstanding progress and personal development. The very strong commitment, shown by leaders at all levels and shared by staff is making an exceptional contribution towards raising pupils' achievement and sense of well-being. Communication skills, personal development and inclusion are the pillars of the school's success. The school was judged as outstanding in nearly all areas of its work at the last inspection. The only outcome less than outstanding was attendance. This is now outstanding because of the school's closer working with parents. The school has done a splendid job of maintaining its outstanding provision since the last inspection and making further improvements. For example, the curriculum now has even more opportunity to gain accreditations in a broader range of areas. This track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that senior leaders provide. Self-evaluation is penetrating and insightful, marking yet another improvement. These factors illustrate the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve further. The school recognises that although community cohesion is good, global links have yet to be established.

Teaching is outstanding. There is constant attention to the development of communication skills with the result that all pupils make remarkable progress in this area. The spoken word is accompanied by signing or the use of symbols, pictures and aids that enable pupils to understand and be understood. This also means that pupils are then empowered to achieve as well as they can. Teamwork between teachers and their assistants is excellent. Adults know pupils' learning difficulties very well and this helps them to plan very stimulating and challenging activities which ensure that pupils flourish as learners. Teachers are very skilful in prompting and questioning. Consequently, pupils develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning and are able to draw their own conclusions to problems set in lessons. The chances to learn using all the senses are phenomenal.

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is making an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Attitudes towards learning and behaviour are exemplary. The pupils are wonderful ambassadors for their school and make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. For example, pupils are very effectively involved in the recruitment and selection of new staff. The school council asked very searching and difficult questions in the recent exercise to appoint a new senior manager.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further promote community cohesion by developing overseas links.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils persevere and work very hard to acquire new knowledge and improve their understanding. They take great pride in their achievements and those of their classmates. Pupils are very self-disciplined in lessons. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Although pupils' special educational needs and/or learning disabilities mean that they do not reach the levels of attainment reached by pupils of a similar age nationally, the majority make outstanding progress from their starting points. Achievement in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent. Work seen in art is stunning. All pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, ethnicity or gender. This is because all pupils are included very effectively in the learning activities. Pupils with profound and/or multiple learning difficulties, for example, move forward in very small steps. Their achievements are just as exceptional as those with other learning disabilities who might make bigger gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Pupils blossom into very mature and considerate young citizens. Inspectors are very impressed at pupils' excellent manners and courtesy towards others. Their inner resilience and will to succeed is remarkable. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to lead healthy lifestyles, for example, there is a very high level of participation in activities such as sport, dance and hydrotherapy. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school and have complete trust and confidence in adults to resolve any issues if they feel anxious or worried. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, for example, through the Eco-council. They are very keen to undertake monitor duties and always help and support each other in lessons. Pupils have a very good understanding of diversity and equality, saying for example, that 'difference is good'. Pupils love school and this is reflected in outstanding attendance. Judging by levels of attendance, communication skills development and outstanding academic progress, pupils are particularly well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons very carefully to ensure that all pupils are challenged and individual needs are met. They know how pupils prefer to learn and how to cajole and motivate them in order to get the best out of them. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught extremely well. There is excellent support for different groups of pupils, including the most-able and those with English as an additional language. This helps all pupils to achieve as well as they can. A typical example of outstanding teaching was seen in physical education in the high school's sports hall. Excellent pupil management and planning ensured that everyone, including a wheelchair user, weaved around others and developed admirable ball passing skills. Records about attainment and progress are very clear. The school has a wealth of assessment information and this is used very effectively by teachers to plan lessons and support pupils' awareness of their learning targets.

The curriculum provides a vast array of rich and imaginative learning experiences for pupils. The sensory curriculum is excellent and the school makes best use of its light room, soft play-area and sensory garden. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent. There are many opportunities to develop self-confidence and take responsibility for others, wherever possible. Integration and inclusion opportunities are excellent. Many pupils take part in lessons and social activities with secondary school and sixth form peers in mainstream settings. Exciting educational visits, visitors and residential opportunities enrich the learning further. For example, a visitor recently helped pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills to create video cartoons and animations.

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Pupils are treasured as individuals and treated with dignity and respect at all times. Very well-targeted support for all pupils has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. There are striking examples of where the school has helped particular pupils overcome significant barriers to their education. Careful assessments of pupils' personal and social needs are used to provide specialist support. Parents value very highly the availability of a full-time school nurse and also the physiotherapists and speech and language therapists based in school. Excellent care is taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment. This is assisted by very clear procedures to manage behaviour. The school's expectations are fully understood by all pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the quality of provision and outcomes achieved. Leaders have developed a team approach to teaching and learning where everyone feels as though they are part of a circle whose sole purpose is to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the future. Remarkably, pupils feel as though they are part of this circle that unites everyone. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's performance. Any underachievement is quickly identified with additional support put in place where required. Teaching is monitored frequently to ensure that planning is fully effective. Arrangements for professional development are excellent. Governors are very supportive of the school and fully involved in setting priorities. They use their expertise very well in financial and educational matters. All leaders are very effective in communicating high expectations. The determination to constantly improve the work of the school is shared by all staff. Self-evaluation is very effective. Simple modesty explains why the school graded itself as being only good with outstanding elements.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were found to be excellent. The procedures are very well understood by staff and implemented with great care.

Meticulous attention is paid to the recruitment of suitable staff. Education at the high school and sixth form settings is organised in such a way that the health, safety and welfare of pupils is safeguarded very effectively.

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion based on a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. The impact of the

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school's work can be seen in pupils' attitudes towards diversity and equality. The school actively engages with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. The school has firm plans to introduce an international dimension to its work, for example, through developing links with overseas schools. Engagement with parents and external agencies makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' outcomes. The school takes very good actions to engage parents effectively in their children's learning. Parental workshops are organised regularly, for example, about communication skills development. The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The management of resources to support learning is very effective. The school provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Leadership and management ensure that all outcomes are outstanding. Children are making outstanding progress in most areas of early learning including communication, language and literacy. The quality of provision is outstanding. Using assessments of children's prior knowledge and understanding, teaching is very carefully planned to ensure that children's academic and pastoral needs are fully met. Resources are plentiful, and planning ensures that there is a stimulating balance of both indoor and outdoor activities. A lesson about the weather enthralled children, as adults provided excellent experiences by using resources very effectively and safely. Children could hardly contain their excitement as they felt the sensation of a fine mist of water spray on their faces. Health and safety are always given top priority.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

The sixth form leader evaluates its success very well and knows exactly how well the students are doing. A good number of students attend part-time college courses and use college facilities with their peers. This makes a significant contribution to personal and academic development. Sterling work has been done to increase the range of qualifications students can gain. All students gain good qualifications by the time they leave, for example in money handling, personal care, environmental studies and science. Some students achieve an astounding number and range of accreditations. Students are highly independent within the limitations of their learning difficulties. There is much continuity in teaching and learning. For example, an excellent lesson was seen in food technology where students made a meal, for which they had previously shopped, and then enjoyed their own cooking at lunchtime.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A good proportion of parents returned questionnaires. The inspection supports parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Representative views from parents include, 'the experience of Park Lane from a parent's perspective is exceptional, nothing is ever too much trouble to help your child and the support given to parents is invaluable. Everyone is treated as an individual no matter what their needs. From the smiles as you walk through the door, to the greeting in class and from the secretarial team, there is no better place to leave your child'. Many parents were keen to express their appreciation of the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the fact that the school keeps their children safe. They feel listened to and valued as partners in their children's

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education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Lane School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 74 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	72	9	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	72	9	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	81	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	67	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	61	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	67	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	81	7	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	61	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	69	10	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	83	5	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	89	4	11	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Lane School, Macclesfield, SK11 8JR

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about Park Lane School. You told me how happy you are. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and provide lots of exciting things for you to do. You know what you need to do in order to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is outstanding and you are excellent young citizens. I was very impressed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone. I give special thanks to the pupils who introduced the final meeting between inspectors, staff and governors. What wonderful ambassadors you all are for your school!

You have excellent teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. The oldest pupils gain lots of certificates for their work. This helps to make sure you are ready to leave school when the time comes.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard to make sure you all keep learning so quickly. Your parents and carers think Park Lane is an amazing school and I agree with them. It is outstanding!

I have asked the school to make links in other countries so that everyone can find out about your super school. This will also help the world community to stick together.

I send my very best wishes to each one of you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Saleem Hussain

Lead inspector

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