

# Parkside Community School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 112961          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Derbyshire      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 338060          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 23–24 June 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Susan Walsh     |

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>                      | Secondary                                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 509   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mrs Jean Horton                               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mr Andrew Knowles                             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 13 November 2006                              |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Boythorpe Avenue<br>Boythorpe<br>Chesterfield |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01246 273458                                  |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 28 teachers deliver 28 lessons or parts of lessons. They observed the school's work, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They also looked at the school improvement plan, the school's records of the monitoring of teaching, departmental files and 68 parental questionnaires.

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

- sustaining recent improvements in attainment and progress
- the progress of boys and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the opportunities for vocational education and developing work place skills
- the effect of specialist status on the school's performance.

## Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most secondary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with a statement of need. The school gained specialist status for mathematics and computing in 2007 and is part of National Challenge, a national initiative to raise standards. It is also a member of Chesterfield Learning Community. The headteacher joined in the school in January 2009.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Parkside Community School is a good school that has improved many areas of its work. The new headteacher has won the respect of parents, students and staff. With staff describing him as a 'breath of fresh air' and parents praising the 'structure and motivation' provided by the head, it is clear that he has been pivotal in inspiring governors, staff and students to raise their aspirations and to pursue improvement rigorously. A key strength of the school is the good standard of care offered to students and this is reflected in the way that they feel very safe in school and in their good behaviour. Both students and parents say that bullying is rare and any isolated incidents are rigorously tackled by the school. Although students are proud of their school and are keen to contribute to the school community, the school is aware that they have limited opportunities to get involved in the local community and to develop their awareness of the cultural diversity present in the United Kingdom.

When students join the school in Year 7, their attainment is usually below average. Students achieve well and most groups of students make good progress so that by the time they leave school, their attainment is broadly average. Students with special education needs and/or disabilities often improve their behaviour and their social skills but their academic progress is satisfactory rather than good. This is because the school is not rigorous enough in tracking their academic development and is not doing enough to develop their literacy skills in lessons.

The school's specialist status along with improvements to the curriculum have underpinned the improvements to attainment and progress, with students making particularly good progress in developing their information communication technology (ICT) skills. Not only do students have access to courses that are better matched to their needs, they also receive better quality advice before they select their options in Year 9. The range of vocational courses on offer in the school has been broadened and the partnership with Chesterfield Learning Community has also increased the vocational opportunities available to students. Good quality teaching has also been central to boosting the rates of students' progress although some inconsistencies remain. Even though improvements have been made to the way teachers use assessment information there are still some classes where the work is not always well matched to students' needs. Student's work is usually marked but the teachers' comments do not always clearly tell students how to improve their work.

Senior leaders, staff and governors all share a determination to build on the good practice that is being developed in the school. They are aiming high. There is an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Systems for monitoring performance are becoming more rigorous and are used to inform well laid

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plans for future development. All this underpins the pursuit of ambitious targets which are not only met but sometimes exceeded, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that work is always well matched to students' needs
  - making certain that marking tells students how to improve their work.
- Accelerate the academic progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
  - keeping careful checks on their academic progress
  - providing robust structures that encourage the development of literacy skills in all lessons.
- Enhance student's awareness of and contribution to the local community, as well as their understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Students make good progress through Key Stage 3. More able boys are doing particularly well, especially in mathematics and science, indicating that the school's strategies to raise boys' attainment are having some success. This good progress is built upon in Key Stage 4 and an average proportion of students are gaining five A\*-C grades in GCSE examinations including in English and mathematics. Lesson observations together with the school's tracking information indicate that attainment is continuing to rise. In lessons, students are keen to learn and apply themselves well. Some students, particularly those boys who find learning challenging and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can give good answers in class. However, they are sometimes held back by their limited literacy skills, and their written work sometimes does not always reflect their verbal ability.

Students say that Parkside is a school where 'You can be yourself'. Behaviour in lessons is good especially in the lively lessons where activities are challenging. Students have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They get on well together and there is a calm ethos in school. Opportunities to contribute to the school community are improving. The active school council has been working on encouraging healthy eating in association with the school canteen and there are wide ranging opportunities for sport and exercise which are embraced by students. The school knows that the students' contribution to the wider community is limited and is starting to improve this. This is because they know they have to address the students' narrow understanding of the cultural influences that have shaped their own heritages and of the rich cultural diversity in the wider United Kingdom. Attendance rates are improving and are now average. Although students' aspirations are clearly rising, helped by the school's involvement with Aim Higher, the development of work place skills, including their basic

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skills, is satisfactory

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## How effective is the provision?

Although teaching is good overall, inconsistencies remain with some outstanding teaching seen in some ICT and mathematics lessons and less inspiring teaching in vocational subject areas. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subjects which they share well with students. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and praise is used very effectively to boost students' confidence. Expectations are rising. Although in some lessons work is very precisely matched to students' needs, in the satisfactory lessons students of very different abilities are sometimes given very similar work to complete. Consequently it offers limited challenge to more able students and those who find learning more difficult, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can struggle. When students are provided with additional adult support it is often of a good quality but generally there is insufficient use made in class of other resources designed to help improve literacy. Not only has attainment risen but incidents of inappropriate behaviour have decreased

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

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as the curriculum has become increasingly well matched to students' needs. For example, there is a better range of qualifications on offer in science. The opportunity to study three separate sciences has raised students' aspirations and more able boys talk particularly enthusiastically and knowledgably about future career paths in science-based occupations. More vocationally based offers in science have allowed boys in particular to access the curriculum; for example, they were very vocal in a Year 10 science lesson in expressing their well informed opinions about whether animals should be culled. There is good provision for promoting numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum, reflecting the school's specialist status, although literary is not consistently developed to the same extent. The formation of nurture groups for boys is having a very good effect on the behaviour and social skills of those in the groups although these groups are not quite as successful at boosting academic achievement. A good range of clubs is available to students.

The school provides a welcoming and good quality learning environment. The range of strategies designed to give vulnerable students extra individual support is a strength of the school. It starts early with extra induction for potentially vulnerable Year 7 students, which helps them to get off to a good start in secondary school and continues with a whole host of interventions including mentoring and art therapy. All this ensures that students feel safe and are able to gain confidence and develop their personal skills. However the impact of this support on raising levels of attainment has not yet been fully explored and more needs to be done to focus on the attainment and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The new headteacher and senior leaders form a hardworking team with many strengths. They are building on the good work that was going on in the school and are accelerating the rate of improvement. Partnerships with other schools and the local authority have been central to improving the quality of teaching because teachers have been able to learn from the good practice of others. Many departmental heads have improved their skills since the previous inspection. Core subjects are particularly well managed but there is still more to do to sharpen the quality of monitoring and self-evaluation of a minority of foundation subjects. The new tracking system has been very effective in identifying individual students who are at risk of underachieving but is not used

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rigorously enough to monitor the progress of different groups of students. The governing body are well informed, committed and not afraid to challenge. They clearly want the best for every student. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures are of good quality including making certain that staff are carefully vetted and that students are safe and secure in school.

The school's specialist status has ensured that resources such as ICT equipment and software are available, along with technical advice and support, and this has helped to raise attainment. The school's sincere commitment to promoting equal opportunities and challenging discrimination is reflected in the way that students from a local special school are being welcomed on site and are starting to integrate into main stream education. However the school knows it has more to do to ensure that their own students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as its other students. Work has started on improving the school's contribution to the local community and the international community but the school is aware that students do not have sufficient direct experience of a wider range of cultures. Therefore the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was lower than normally found. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are delighted with the quality of education offered by the school. They recognise the recent improvements and the good leadership provided by the headteacher and his team. They say that they are pleased with the way



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isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with. Most are happy with the level of communication with the school and say that staff are easy to contact. They feel that their children are challenged and that opportunities are widening.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkside Community 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 inspection team received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 509 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 31             | 46 | 35    | 51 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 38             | 56 | 29    | 43 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 37             | 54 | 29    | 43 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 36             | 53 | 29    | 43 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 29             | 43 | 37    | 54 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 23             | 34 | 43    | 63 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 22             | 32 | 45    | 66 | 1        | 1 | 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) | 29             | 43 | 39    | 57 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 32             | 47 | 36    | 53 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 30             | 44 | 36    | 53 | 1        | 1 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 24             | 35 | 42    | 62 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 36             | 53 | 31    | 46 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 36             | 53 | 32    | 47 | 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

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



25 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Parkside Community School, Chesterfield, S40 2NS

Thank you for making us so welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It is clear that the school has improved over recent years because of good leadership and management and is now providing you with a good quality of education. You are making good progress not only because of good teaching but because of an improved curriculum with more emphasis on gaining vocational qualifications and much better advice when you are choosing your options. Although teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, there are still some lessons where improvements could be made. In these lessons all of you often complete very similar work which may be too easy for more able students and too difficult for those of you who are finding learning challenging. We noticed that you are not always told how to improve your work so we have asked teachers to make sure they cover this in their marking. We have also asked the school to make better checks on the progress of students who find learning challenging and to make sure that they are helped to improve their literacy skills in lessons.

It's good to hear that you are proud of your school and I was pleased to hear about your plans for when you leave school. Many of you are aiming high. You told us that behaviour in the school has improved and we saw lots of good behaviour. We were pleased to hear from you and your parents that bullying is rare and that when it does happen the school is quick to deal with it. I know you are keen to contribute to the school community, for example, through the school council. I particularly enjoyed hearing the rehearsals for the summer festival and listening to the rock band practise. The school knows that there is more to do improve your contribution to the local community and to improve your understanding of cultural diversity.

However your school is getting better all of the time because of the hard work and dedication of the senior leadership team and teaching and support staff. You can help by always giving your very best in lessons and making sure that you come to lessons on time. I hope you enjoyed your sports day and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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