

Parklands High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119764
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339529
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Hamer
Headteacher	Mrs C Hollister
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 43 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's monitoring, self-evaluation, students' progress tracking and improvement planning. Inspectors also took account of the 608 questionnaire returns from parents, 85 returns from staff and 113 returns from students.

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

- the extent to which students of all ability make progress and enjoy their learning in different subjects
- how well assessment is used to inform lesson planning and secure students' progress in lessons
- how effectively leaders and governors drive and secure improvement and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of the school's work
- the impact of recent changes to curriculum planning, pastoral support and provision for all students, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

Parklands is a larger than average comprehensive school with specialist language college status and full extended services. The majority of students are White British; a small number of students are from various other ethnic groups. The proportions of students entitled to free school meals and with special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average. The school has a number of external awards including a British Council International School Award, Investors in People, Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark Silver, Learning Excellence Award, and the Diana Award for peer mediation. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in 2008 and the leadership team has subsequently been restructured.

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

Parklands High is a good school providing a good quality of education for its students. Aspects of its work, such as partnership working and the care, guidance and support provided by all staff, are outstanding. As a result, all outcomes for students are at least good; their achievement, contribution to school and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. The new senior leadership team is successfully driving through improvements with the full support of middle leaders and all staff. They have put robust systems in place to track students' progress in their learning and provide support for those who need it. The curriculum has been reviewed and has improved since the last inspection. One teacher commented that 'senior leaders have a clear sense of purpose and their vision is shared. All staff have a high level of commitment to ensure that students achieve their highest personal best'. Inspectors also found this to be the case.

The school's inclusive approach ensures that students feel well cared for and achieve highly whatever their particular needs and ability. They make an excellent contribution to the school through the many and varied opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the running of the school. The vast majority of students say they feel safe and that bullying and racist incidents are extremely rare. Students have an in depth understanding of their own society and of other cultures and a well developed sense of environmental and human rights issues. A comment from one student, 'Parklands has a very friendly atmosphere and community spirit which makes everyone feel welcome and safe. I learn a lot in lessons and am proud to be a Parklands pupil', typifies the views of many.

Teaching is mostly good with some outstanding lessons and a minority that are satisfactory. The mostly good teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support enable students to make good progress in their learning and achieve high standards in their work. Their overall performance at GCSE and in vocational subjects is significantly above the national average. Their performance in many subjects is well above average but there are variations, with mathematics and languages being lower performing than other subjects. Assessment is used well in many lessons to support students' learning and meet the needs of different groups and individuals. However, there is some variance in the quality of teaching, the use of assessment and quality of self-evaluation between departments. School leaders are aware of where further development is needed and have already taken action to improve performance. With the strong drive from the leadership team and the high level of commitment from staff, the school has good capacity to bring about further improvements. Resources are deployed well resulting in good and outstanding outcomes for students. The school achieves excellent

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value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students make consistently good progress in all subjects by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching so that it is all at the standard of the very best in school
 - embedding assessment in all departments at classroom level.
- Carefully monitor the impact of new initiatives and ensure that the quality of monitoring and evaluation is consistent across departments.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students enjoy learning and are highly motivated to succeed. They enjoy learning most when they are given opportunities to work collaboratively and apply their knowledge and skills to challenging tasks. In the most effective lessons, they have excellent attitudes to learning, work independently and show perseverance. On rare occasions when the teaching does not fully motivate all students, the behaviour of a few can disrupt the learning of others. However, their generally good behaviour and positive attitudes helps students to make good progress from their mostly above average starting points. This is the case for students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at risk of under achieving. Their diverse learning needs are being increasingly well met.

Students overall attainment in GCSE examinations has been well above national averages in the last three years. A much higher than average proportion attained five or more A* to C grades. These high standards have been sustained and bettered in some aspects in 2009. Students do particularly well in English, science, history, art, information and communication technology (ICT), media studies and religious education. Their performance in mathematics is in line with the national average. Students' performance in modern foreign languages has been below the national average in terms of their average scores and the school did not reach its challenging language college targets in 2008. However, a higher number of students across the ability range have achieved good language qualifications than is the case in the majority of High schools. School data and lesson observations confirm that students are continuing to make good progress and the school is on track to meet the challenging targets set for 2010.

Students are proud of their school and make an outstanding contribution to it. They arrive punctually and their attendance is above average. The number of exclusions is reducing. Students are keen to participate in the many opportunities they have to take responsibility, support each other and promote the community spirit of the school. The vibrant 'pupil voice' group has a good impact on aspects of the school, for example, in deciding how to spend funds to improve dining facilities. All groups of students have an opportunity to make a contribution through, for example, peer mentoring and mediation, lesson evaluations, and as 'eco warriors'. The Year 11 prefects make an

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excellent contribution in supporting younger students. Students have a good understanding of how to maintain their physical, emotional and mental well-being. Participation in the wide range of health promoting activity, both within and outside the curriculum is high. They have a very good insight into similarities and differences between their own and other cultures. This is enhanced through work associated with Language College status and is promoted well through subjects such as art and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Students acquire a good range of skills and personal qualities to help them in their further education and careers. The vast majority progress to further education or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The core of good and better teaching enables students to make good progress across the school. Constructive and supportive relationships are a strength in the vast majority of lessons. The development of assessment to support learning is currently a whole school focus. It is used very effectively in English, ICT, art and physical education where students are actively involved in self-assessment. Marking is used to good effect and

¹ 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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students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. However, the overall quality of teaching and use of assessment is variable across departments resulting in students making slower progress in some subjects. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and well planned activities inspire students to learn and achieve highly. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and activities are well matched to students' abilities and learning needs. In less effective lessons, students have less opportunity to work independently and develop their understanding because lessons are more dominated by teacher activity and tasks are not as well matched to the range of students' needs and ability in the class.

Significant changes have been made to the curriculum to give students more choice through alternative pathways, a greater range of vocational courses or early entry to GCSE. These changes are popular with students and are proving effective in raising achievement and meeting their diverse needs and interests. School leaders are taking appropriate steps to ensure the languages curriculum is well matched to the abilities and learning needs of all students. Specialist language college status has a positive impact in supporting an international focus in all subjects and in promoting students' cultural awareness. Students acquire good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum and those with weaker key skills receive good additional support at Key Stage 3. The introduction of personal learning and thinking skills is helping students engage with and take responsibility for their learning. The personal, social and health education programme and wide ranging extra-curricular offer make a good contribution to students' outcomes.

There are excellent arrangements for the care of students. The supportive ethos is fostered by positive relationships and well targeted support for the most vulnerable. The new pastoral framework is effectively supporting students with special educational needs and those who are most at risk of under achieving. There is an extensive range of provision that meets their personal needs well. Students are very well supported at points of transition. Year 7 students are made to feel welcome and settle into school routines quickly. Older students receive good quality advice and guidance on post-school options.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team drive a powerful vision focused on ensuring

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that students achieve to the very best of their ability, celebrating the successes of all. Staff share their ambition and have enthusiastically embraced the changes that have been initiated. Governors have a range of skills and provide a good level of support and challenge in securing improvement.

There are good procedures in place to monitor the school's overall performance enabling school leaders to identify where improvement is needed. They are taking appropriate action to tackle weaknesses, providing support and professional development where it is needed. The expansion of the senior leadership team and the increased distribution of leadership responsibility across the whole school have increased awareness and ownership of school priorities for development. Middle leaders are developing their skills and are fully committed to securing improvements although there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of monitoring and evaluation.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to the school and all relevant personnel receive regular training to update them on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on students' activities and the school takes care to identify and support students who may be at risk. There is an outstanding range of partnership activity which makes a strong contribution to the excellent achievement of students. There are very effective links with outside agencies to support the most vulnerable and promote all students' well-being. Effective links with local businesses, schools and colleges help to broaden students' experiences. The school takes a leading role in local learning networks and as part of its specialist status.

The school has a good knowledge of its own community and has a well developed action plan to promote community cohesion. The school community is itself extremely cohesive. The promotion of equal opportunity and success for all is a guiding principle, creating a climate that is inclusive and supportive. Students feel valued as individuals and are well supported to succeed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a high response rate to questionnaires. Most parents and carers say that they are happy overall with their child's experience at the school. They feel that the majority of teaching and quality of support and care are good, stating, for example, that, 'some teachers really enthuse the pupils', 'I have been very pleased with the support my child has received'. A few identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between departments and isolated instances of behaviour disrupting learning in some classes. Most, however, feel that the school effectively deals with unacceptable behaviour. Parents and carers express a high level of confidence in the leadership team and feel able to approach them with any concerns. A small minority feel that communication could be improved. The high response rate is indicative of parents' support for the school and satisfaction with the quality of education provided. Inspection findings uphold their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parklands High 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 608 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,116 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	196	32	374	62	29	5	5	1
The school keeps my child safe	179	29	396	65	22	4	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	221	36	343	56	38	6	5	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	192	32	361	59	41	7	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	138	23	437	72	19	3	5	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	115	19	384	63	82	13	10	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	110	18	396	65	68	11	11	2
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)	148	24	388	64	21	3	5	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	145	24	407	67	37	6	5	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	148	24	364	60	64	11	13	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	94	15	410	67	52	9	12	2
The school is led and managed effectively	143	24	403	66	26	4	5	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	197	32	370	61	29	5	5	1

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.



11 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Parklands High School, Chorley, PR7 1LL

Thank you for the welcome and helpful contributions you made to your recent inspection. Inspectors thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and observing your work. Thank you, too, for your comments on the questionnaires. Your pride in Parklands High is evident and we think you are right to be proud of all your achievements.

We found Parklands to be a good school. There are aspects of the school's work and your own achievements that are outstanding. Well done!

These are the main findings from our report.

- Your social skills, cultural awareness and moral development are outstanding. You make an excellent contribution to your school through the many opportunities you have to support others, take responsibility and contribute your ideas.
- Your good attitudes to work help you to attain much higher than average results in examinations and other qualifications.
- School leaders and staff are highly committed to helping you succeed and achieve your personal best.
- The headteacher and leadership team are providing strong leadership to bring about improvements to the curriculum and make sure that teaching meets all of your varied needs.
- The quality of teaching is mostly good and staff provide you with excellent care, guidance and support. This helps you to make good progress in your learning and achieve highly.
- You behave well in lessons, especially when you are interested and motivated and show good care and consideration towards each other.

You told us that you enjoy some lessons more than others and we have asked the school leaders to ensure that all teaching and assessment is at the standard of the very best in school. We have also asked them to monitor the impact of new initiatives and ensure that the quality of monitoring and evaluation is consistent across departments.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you fulfil your ambitions.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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