

The Parkside School, Norwich

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121262
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339905
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Gamble
Headteacher	Barry Payne
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed, taught by 14 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, analyses of pupils' progress, systems for tracking and improving teaching and learning, and the school improvement plan. Inspectors took account of 68 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires, together with comments, and evaluated the analysis of staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- whether the school's specialist status in communication and interaction has improved the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes
- how attainment and progress data are used to support the planning for individual pupils' learning and progress
- the school's systems for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Parkside School caters for pupils aged 3 to 19 who have complex needs. Its designation changed in January 2010 from one serving pupils aged 7 to 16 with predominantly moderate learning difficulties. Currently, none of its 146 pupils are under the age of 7, or over the age of 16. Around half the pupils have moderate learning difficulties, with approximately equal numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, severe learning difficulties, and speech, language, communication and learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs such as physical disabilities, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, and significant medical needs. The complexity of pupils' needs on entry is increasing. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority. The great majority of pupils are of White British origin with very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are nearly twice as many boys as girls at Parkside, which is typical for schools of this type. The school has achieved a number of awards such as Healthy Schools and Sportsmark. It became a specialist school in interaction and communication in September 2008, and a foundation special school in October 2009, supported by The Parkside Community Trust.

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

Parkside provides an exceptional quality of education and care for its pupils and almost all aspects of its work and pupils' outcomes are outstanding. The senior leaders and managers have an ambitious, very well communicated aim to continually improve and enrich the provision and pupils' outcomes. Wide-ranging data on pupils' academic and personal development are gathered and analysed in order to bring about action to realise this ambition. The school is working successfully to extend its provision to benefit pupils, their families, schools and others in the local and wider community. For example, outreach work supports pupils in community schools, and the school's parent support adviser and senior staff regularly visit parents who are unable to attend the school. The new department, 'Open Door', which stems from the school's specialist status, together with the speech and language team, have significantly improved pupils' communication and ability to interact with others. Pupils throughout the school benefit from speech and language work, Open Door's high-quality teaching and innovative therapeutic support, such as 'positive play', 'drawing and talking' and 'in your shoes'.

Outstanding partnerships with other schools, colleges, businesses and organisations, such as Barnardo's, bring a wealth of additional benefits and opportunities for pupils, staff and families. Examples include the outstanding sports facilities, which are jointly funded with the adjacent infant school, and the development of an off-site family centre. The school does much to promote community cohesion through its community-based work, careful analysis of pupils' circumstances and strong emphasis on cultural and personal development. For example, outstanding links are developing with a school in Namibia, including reciprocal visits by the headteachers. However, this work has not been drawn together and evaluated to determine its impact on pupils' outcomes and the wider community.

The systems and practices of the school are robust and highly professional. They have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. Improvement continues and the school has an outstanding capacity for further sustained improvement. The school self-evaluation process is rigorous and innovative, and supports a thoughtful, collaborative approach to self-review. The outcome is accurate and sets a clear agenda for improvement. The work of the governing body is outstanding. A new committee structure aligns its work with the school self-review process. This enables the governing body to lead some aspects of school self-evaluation which gives members a clear view of the effectiveness of the school's performance and reinforces their accountability for it. The curriculum is good, and the quality of teaching and use of assessment to support learning are outstanding. The curriculum is very well structured and meets the needs of all groups of pupils. New technology is used exceptionally well. Plans are in hand to

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develop the curriculum to address the widening age-range and increasing complexity and severity of pupils' learning needs.

The outstanding quality of provision results in pupils' outstanding academic achievement and personal outcomes which prepare them extremely well for their future well-being. Their spiritual and social development is particularly strong. Pupils say clearly that they enjoy school, have increased self-confidence and that having friends for the first time is very important to them. They are exceptionally well safeguarded. Pupils feel safe, not only from potential dangers, but also secure enough to 'have a go' and make mistakes without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. The great majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Comments such as, 'Parkside is a wonderful school. Since being there he has come on leaps and bounds and is enjoying school life' are typical of parents' views.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the curriculum by extending planning and resources in preparation for meeting the increasingly wide-ranging age and special educational needs of the pupils.
- Draw together the school's work on promoting community cohesion and its contribution to the community, and evaluate its impact in order to develop it further and give pupils a greater sense of their own contribution to the wider community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' attainment on entry varies widely due to their complex needs, but it is always below that expected for their age. Pupils build up their skills, knowledge and understanding systematically. However, despite outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, understandably, pupils' attainment remains low overall. Nevertheless, many Year 11 pupils achieve Entry Level Certificate accreditation and a very small number achieve GCSE mathematics. Their achievement in many subjects including art, science, information and communication technology and Spanish is outstanding. Careful analysis of the progress of individuals, cohorts and different groups shows that most pupils reach the targets set for them and that there are good reasons when they do not. Learning in lessons is usually outstanding. This is evident in pupils' outstanding behaviour, interest and enjoyment, and their highly positive attitudes. The attendance of pupils without significant medical issues is outstanding. It is above the national average and far above the average for special schools.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. There are very few incidents of bullying or harassment and pupils say that the very rare incidents are usually 'play that gets out of hand'. Pupils have confidence in the staff and approach them about anything, including their concerns. Their views are routinely sought and acted upon. Pupils have a clear view that eating sensibly and taking plenty of exercise helps them to stay healthy. They say they enjoy these aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activities, for example enjoying the responsibility

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of being 'sports leaders' and helping the younger pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their self-confidence and self-esteem grow as they mature and they make an outstanding contribution to their school. They relish responsibility, such as for recycling school waste and supporting the wild-life area, being members of the school council and contributing to staff appointments. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, take responsibility for their own actions and are proud of their achievements. Their behaviour is outstanding both in school and in the community, as letters of appreciation show. The pupils have some understanding of how they make a contribution to the wider community, for example by raising money for good causes. Their cultural development benefits considerably from the school's developing global links and the good curricular provision, for example in art and multi-cultural education.

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	*
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	2
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

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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How effective is the provision?

The great majority of lessons are consistently lively, challenging, and engage pupils so that they enjoy learning and work independently as far as possible. Outstanding support is given for communication and interaction. Lessons are very well planned to meet individuals' specific needs, based on assessments of their skills and knowledge.

Assessment to support learning is highly effective and guides and prompts pupils throughout lessons. Learning by the end of lessons is evaluated and informs the next lesson in the series. Teachers are enthusiastic and creative, and frequent laughter shows that pupils often have great fun while learning. Teachers make excellent use of new technology, for example to assess subject knowledge and understanding through a technological quiz, or to help pupils understand how to use co-ordinates. Behaviour management is expert and effective, to the extent that it is largely invisible. Teaching assistants usually use their initiative to complement the work of teachers and provide outstanding support for behaviour and learning.

The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the different age and ability groups. The primary curriculum has an appropriate topic-based approach which links subjects together and makes them enjoyable for pupils. The school has begun to develop a similarly creative approach for Key Stages 3 and 4 to support pupils' enjoyment and reinforce learning, for example by combining religious education with learning about sustainability. Courses leading to new accreditation in Year 11 are being implemented from the beginning of next term to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. Throughout the school, an appropriately strong emphasis is placed on the development of functional skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology; key skills such as problem solving and team work; and on personal development. This prepares pupils very effectively for adult life.

The school has outstanding consideration for the well-being of each pupil. Child protection is robust and partnerships with numerous external agencies and professionals support pupils, parents and carers very effectively. Written communications are provided in different formats, where needed, and additional meetings are arranged with parents if required. Transitions in and out of school are supported to be as smooth as possible and high quality advice and guidance is given so that appropriate choices can be made about pupils' lives after school. The pastoral support team, speech and language team and the work of Open Door make a significant contribution to pupils' well-being, relationships and preparation for the future.

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	2

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders and governing body have high ambitions for pupils' future opportunities and well-being. These are shared by the school staff who work hard and effectively to achieve the school's aims. The school's specialist and foundation statuses strongly support this drive. They have enriched the quality of provision and improved pupils' outcomes. The head teacher promotes helpful professional collaboration within the county and further afield. Rigorous self-evaluation, underpinned by detailed, first-hand observations and wide-ranging data analysis underpins school improvement. This has led, for example, to improvements in teaching, target-setting and pupils' outcomes, and in the support given to parents and pupils in other schools.

The governing body is reflective and regularly questions the effectiveness of its own work as well as the school's. It has secured various partnerships that complement those of the Parkside Community Trust. The governing body's practice is outstanding and contributes very effectively to Parkside's success. The senior leaders and managers have accurately identified the school's strengths as well as areas for further development, such as an evaluation of its work to promote community cohesion.

The promotion of equal opportunities and practices to assure no discrimination are outstanding at both an individual level, where each pupil's unique needs are addressed, and through the school's ethos and curriculum which have equality at their heart. Safeguarding procedures are highly effective and encompass much more than the rigorous child protection procedures. The school's effective practices, judicious use of financial resources to benefit pupils and their outstanding outcomes indicate that Parkside 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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1
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Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A small minority indicated concern about how well the school helped them support their children's learning and prepared them for the future, and outlined some individual anxieties. The inspection findings supported the positive views, but not the concerns. However, inspectors acknowledge the parents and carers' concerns about the continued lack of sixth form provision at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Parkside School, Norwich 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 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	62	22	32	2	3	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	52	76	15	22	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	66	20	29	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	56	24	35	2	3	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	46	68	18	26	0	0	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	54	24	35	5	7	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	49	33	49	0	0	1	1
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)	37	54	22	32	4	6	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	68	16	24	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	63	22	32	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	50	27	40	3	4	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	51	75	13	19	0	0	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	71	16	24	1	1	2	3

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). 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">■ 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Parkside School, Norwich, NR2 3JA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school earlier this week. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting some of your lessons. I would particularly like to thank the school council members for their contribution to the inspection. We are pleased to tell you that you go to an outstanding school. Your questionnaires and conversations tell us that you know this already, and almost all of your parents and carers agree, too.

These are some of the things that are outstanding about your school:

- your learning and progress
- your personal development
- the amount you know about staying safe and healthy
- your contribution to the school community
- your enjoyment of school
- your behaviour and attendance
- the way the staff care for you, keep you very safe and prepare you for adult life
- the teaching
- the work of all the staff, and the senior leaders and governing body
- the way that the speech and language team and Open Door have improved the school, and help so many of you
- the ambition of the staff and leaders to make the school even better than it already is, and to help your families and more people in the community.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve, these are:

- to develop the curriculum ready for the likely increase in numbers of pupils who find learning more difficult, and for older and younger pupils
- to review and develop the good work it does in helping people in the local community and the wider world.

Keep up your excellent work and standards!

I wish you all the best for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth

Lead inspector

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