

# Parkside Pupil Referral Unit

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	124527
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340591
Inspection dates	28-29 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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

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Type of school	Pupil Referral Unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	14-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The Local Authority
Headteacher	Stuart Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2007
School address	291 Spring Road Ipswich Suffolk IP4 5ND
Telephone number	01473 717013
Fax number	01473 718656
Email address	

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St. Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. He visited six lessons and held meetings with a member of the management committee, staff, groups of students and parents. The inspector observed the unit's work and looked at planning documents and various policies and scrutinised the ten parent questionnaires that were received.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the unit's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of students with statements of special educational need
- trends for students' attendance and the effectiveness of procedures to improve attendance
- the effectiveness of transition arrangements for students as they enter and leave the provision.

## Information about the school

Parkside Pupil Referral Unit educates full-time students in years 10 and 11 in the southern area of Suffolk. The unit educates a small number of students in year 9 for several hours a week. Students are referred by the Local Authority and come from varied social backgrounds. They have not benefited from mainstream education for a variety of reasons. Many have significant mental health difficulties and complex emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. About half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Twelve students have statements of special educational need. Students are almost all of White British backgrounds. In the previous two years, the needs of students attending Parkside have become more complex. Parkside has a Becta Information and Communications Technology Award, being the first Pupil Referral Unit in England to gain this and also has an Artsmark Gold 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Parkside offers good provision. It provides an outstanding curriculum; care, guidance and support are excellent; and students' behaviour is outstanding. Its deeply embedded, warm and open ethos gives an excellent foundation to much of its work. The hard working and committed staff work very closely together for the benefit of students.

Well supported and challenged by the management committee, Parkside's leadership and management drive improvement well. Teaching is regularly and accurately monitored and this is resulting in effective teaching and assessment and good student progress. Parkside's self-assessment is accurate so that all staff know the considerable strengths and areas where they can do better. This gives the provision a good capacity to improve further. The unit promotes equal opportunities well so that students are very accepting of others, and it provides a safe environment in which they feel secure because its procedures for keeping students safe are strong. Community cohesion is promoted well but not always as rigorously evaluated as it should be. Leaders and managers have striven to encourage attendance as students' needs have become more complex over recent years. They have developed a wide range of approaches, which for some individuals lead to impressive increases in attendance even after years of previous school absence. Nevertheless, attendance remains satisfactory. The provision does not always evaluate in sufficient depth the reasons why particular interventions work with particular groups of students and individuals and rightly recognises the importance of now doing so. Partnership with other agencies and establishments is excellent because Parkside vigorously develops these links to benefit students. The provision deeply engages parents who profoundly appreciate the dedication staff put into their work. Parkside offers good value for money.

The excellent care, guidance and support students, including those with statements of special educational needs, receive ensures great care and attention is given to individual needs leading to the great confidence and trust students place in staff. Parkside strains every sinew to forge links with others, including agencies and parents, to extend and improve provision. Enormous care is taken that students settle in, for example by staff making home visits and having taster days for students to get used to the new setting. Equally thorough preparations are made to ensure students transfer successfully to college or work and this has resulted in a dramatic decline in numbers who are neither in work nor employment.

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They eat healthily, take exercise and to a very high degree strive to make full use of support for their mental and emotional health because Parkside places great store in this and creates an extremely supporting ethos. Students behave outstandingly well because staff have very high expectations of behaviour yet are skilfully sensitive to students when they are finding things difficult.

Relationships between staff and students are excellent so that lessons are enjoyable and productive. Staff work very closely together using good resources and interesting activities to capture students' interest. Great care is taken to provide for individual differences among students and information and communications technology (ICT) is well used to support learning. In some lessons, outcomes for students' learning are not explicit enough so assessment does not always precisely indicate next steps of learning, constraining progress from being better. The excellent curriculum offers a very well balanced range of subjects and activities and is greatly enriched by a wide range of popular activities at lunch times and at the end of the day. Its support for personal development is especially strong; leading to excellent outcomes for example with regard to healthy lifestyles. Cross-curricular links are very well developed and brought together in a range of practical activities for example through the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) provision.

Drawing on the good teaching and an excellent curriculum, students achieve well. They enter Parkside attaining below levels typical of others of the same age. But they learn and progress well so that by the end of Year 11, they attain at average levels gaining a good range of examination qualifications. Because of the individualised teaching and support, students in different groups including those with statements of special educational needs, students of all ages, gifted and talented students and boys and girls all progress well. Achievements in art are particularly strong.

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

- Improve student's attendance to 92% or better by December 2010 by more rigorously evaluating the relative success of the provision's strategies for improving attendance for different groups to ensure they are more precisely focused where evidence indicates they will have best effect.
- Improve student's progress and the quality of teaching in lessons by ensuring learning outcomes are always explicit and precise so assessment more sharply informs subsequent work.

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Students' achievement and enjoyment is good. Their attainment when they start at Parkside is very varied but, when considered over time, is below average. This is because of students' mental health difficulties and poor or non-attendance at previous schools that has affected their learning. Once at Parkside, all students and all groups, progress and learn well. For example students with particular talents have these encouraged through links with other schools. Those with a statement of special educational need thrive because of the effective individualised teaching and support they receive. Students progress particularly well in art where some produce excellent work and attain high grades in GCSE examinations. Students aim for challenging examination targets and leave with a range of GCSEs selected from the very wide variety that Parkside offers attaining at a level that is broadly average. During lessons observed during the inspection, learners made good progress. In a good ICT lesson in Year 11, students learned to create the background scene for an animation and participated keenly because of the teacher's enthusiasm and humour, although the focus would have been sharper and progress better if learning objectives had been more explicit. In a good science lesson in Year 10, students successfully made a universal indicator using red cabbage helped by the well organised activity and the teacher's probing questions. Students strive to reach the targets built into their examination courses; these are suitable and challenge them well.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent particularly in moral and social development because the provision places great emphasis on this area in its ethos and through personal, social, health and citizenship education. Consequently, students have a very clear sense of right and wrong and progress very well indeed in developing social skills. They delight in activities reflecting other cultures such as in music and art. The self-esteem of students is a priority and they gain greatly in confidence and feelings of self worth in their time at Parkside. They feel safe and place great faith in staff to whom they know they can talk if they have concerns. Behaviour is excellent and students are courteous, considerate and very tolerant of others. Students strive to adopt healthy lifestyles to an outstanding extent, eating healthily, taking exercise and benefiting from the support offered to improve their mental well being. They contribute well to the community of Parkside and to the wider community as they increase in confidence that they have something to contribute. Although attendance is satisfactory, skills for economic well being are well developed because of the good contribution from English, mathematics and ICT and Parkside's very thorough support for successful transition to college or work.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	3

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<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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Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup> 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	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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching including the effective use of assessment leads to good progress. Excellent management of behaviour, very good relationships between staff and students and between students are among common strengths in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work harmoniously together and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning because they are thorough in keeping students on track and skilled in managing behaviour. Resources are interesting and well used and this helps capture students' interest and motivate them. However, in some lessons, although activities are clearly described, the outcomes for students' learning are not as explicit as they should be so that assessment does not point as precisely as it could to the next steps of learning. This constrains students' progress from being even better. In a good English lesson, students worked hard on a spelling support computer programme showing great pleasure when they succeeded and made good progress in literacy and ICT skills. Both the teacher and assistant were enthusiastic, worked together very well, conveyed clearly what was expected, and managed behaviour exceptionally well; for example: guiding a very active student to be calmer and direct activity into the learning task. Boys and girls and students with statements of special educational need progressed well because of individualised support for their learning.

In the outstanding curriculum, there is an extremely well considered balance of subjects and activities are carefully monitored to ensure each student gains a broad and rich educational experience. Every effort is made to find creative ways to develop extra courses in line with students' interests, for example Parkside works successfully in partnership with a local secondary school to provide extra courses. First rate and much appreciated lunchtime and after school activities such as the guitar class enrich provision. The very coherent and relevant curriculum makes a great contribution to the excellent aspects of the students' personal development for example through extremely well considered personal, social, health and citizenship education and tutor time. The curriculum prepares students exceptionally well for their future as indicated by the marked increase in students successfully transferring

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to college or work in the previous two years.

Parkside’s warm ethos welcomes all. Support and guidance are extremely well targeted so that students can make the best of opportunities. Student’s needs are individually met through the provision leading to them being very confident about the help and advice they receive. Work with families is extremely supportive and greatly appreciated. Parents’ views are carefully sought and they greatly value the advice and guidance they receive. Work with other agencies to benefit students is excellent. Parkside leaves no stone unturned to get the help and support students require, leading to the outstanding aspects of students’ personal development and well being. A particular strength is the very tenacious way Parkside helps new students settle in and the way it smoothes their transition to work or further study when they move on.

*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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

### How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers effectively drive improvement leading to the provision’s good teaching and achievement and they have forged a cohesive and hard working staff team who are always trying to do better. The management committee provides good support and challenge and benefits from a wide range of representatives. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on clear evidence including regular monitoring of the quality of teaching. Equal opportunities are well promoted so that students are very accepting of others. Staff are regularly and suitably trained with regard to child protection. Community cohesion is well promoted. The unit has a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and social aspects of its context and acts on these well for example developing links with students in other countries. However, the provision does not always monitor and evaluate this area as rigorously as it should. Partnership with others is excellent because the provision is extremely proactive in forging links that will improve the lives of its students. Parkside engages parents deeply and they are enormously appreciative of the way staff go that extra mile. The provision has good and well cared for facilities, benefiting from a dedicated science laboratory, an art room, multi-gym, and computer suite. It provides good value for money.



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*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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents who spoke to the inspector and who completed questionnaires were almost universally positive about the provision. One typically says, the staff are 'highly professional and always meet the students' needs'. Others speak powerfully of the

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life transforming nature of the support and encouragement they and their child receive from Parkside. They appreciate the way that Parkside is always an open door for them and they recognise the welcoming ethos and dedication of staff. A suggestion for improvement was the provision of an on site mental health nurse.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkside Pupil Referral Unit 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 32 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	14%	6	86%	0	0%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	43%	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	43%	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	5	71%	1	14%	1	14%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	43%	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	57%	3	43%	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)	2	29%	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	71%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	86%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%
The school is led and managed effectively	6	86%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	43%	4	57%	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 all 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

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>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 pupils' 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.



30 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Parkside Pupil Referral Unit, Ipswich, IP4 5ND

It was lovely to meet you when I inspected Parkside recently. Thank you very much for meeting with me and helping me with the inspection by giving me your views. You made it clear how much Parkside means to you and how you appreciate what it offers.

You achieve well because Parkside provides good teaching and supports you excellently. There are many superb and good things about your unit. It is well led and managed and staff make every effort to provide you with the best. The care, guidance and support you receive is first rate and your behaviour outstanding. The curriculum is also first rate and so are links with other schools and services. Parkside works extremely closely with your parents and carers. Teaching is good so you make good progress in lessons and gain a good range of qualifications.

There are a couple of things Parkside could do even better so I have asked staff to:

- Improve your attendance by establishing which approaches work best for different students and groups and using this information to focus efforts better
- Improve teaching and your progress by making sure what you are meant to learn is very clearly set out in lessons so this can be better assessed and help indicate what you need to do next.

I know some of you find attendance a real challenge and I hope you will try your best to help Parkside do better in this area.

Every good wish for the future.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Michael Farrell'.

Michael Farrell

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