

# Parklands High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131883
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	328654
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	572
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Andrews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Phil Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Simonsway Wythenshawe Manchester M22 9RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4992726
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 4991147

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## Introduction

When Parklands High School was inspected in January 2008, it was given a notice to improve and asked to address issues related to the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. It was subsequently visited in October 2008, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average sized school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is four times the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than that usually found. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils learning English as an additional language. The school is to become an Enterprise Academy in September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Parklands now provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Strong leadership from the headteacher, good levels of teamwork among all staff and an accurate evaluation of performance in all areas of school life have ensured that the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. Parents agree that the school is making progress and comment, 'We are really pleased with the improvements the school has made.'

Although standards remain low, improvements in the quality of teaching and in the use of assessment to plan learning mean that pupils are now on course to reach challenging targets both at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Achievement in both Key Stages is now satisfactory and standards are beginning to rise.

Pupils are taking increasing responsibility for their own actions and their behaviour has improved as a result. It is now satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them are strong and pupils feel safe and secure in school. They say that bullying has decreased and that there is always someone to turn to when they are experiencing difficulties. Attendance is improving but is still a cause for concern, mainly because a significant number of pupils do not attend regularly.

In most lessons, pupils are now being challenged much more to show what they can do and they are responding well to their teachers' insistence that they aim for higher standards. The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall and there are outstanding examples in both Key Stages. Pupils enjoy taking more responsibility for their own learning but opportunities to do this, for example by working in pairs and groups to research for themselves and also to support their peers, are limited in some lessons.

The curriculum has been extended and there is a wider range of vocational and work related courses for pupils in Key Stage 4. Early entry in Year 10 for GCSE English is a positive feature and focuses pupils' attention on examination technique and on the punctual completion of coursework. The competencies curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is developing apace and is popular amongst pupils who are able to transfer their newly-acquired skills from one subject to another. However, there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop further basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

The school is rightly proud of the good care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. The personal, social and emotional well-being of each individual is central to everything the school tries to do and pupils are grateful for the support they receive from the adults who work with them. Parents agree and add, 'The study support unit and the year zones do so much to help our sons and daughters when they are having problems.' The quality of marking, however, is variable across the school and pupils are not always sure of how they can improve their work.

Without doubt, there is a shared vision among all staff for how the school should develop and for how it can raise the aspirations of its pupils and of the community it serves.

### What the school should do to improve further

- To raise standards further, give pupils more responsibility for their own learning in lessons, in order that they can find things out for themselves and act as a resource for each other.

- Provide more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who miss school regularly.
- Ensure that marking consistently informs pupils of how they can improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' standards on entry are low and are exceptionally low in literacy. Following a period of underachievement across the school, particularly in Key Stage 3, improved teaching and better use of assessment to plan lessons which meet the needs of pupils more closely, are leading to an increase in progress, which is now satisfactory. For example, inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in the current Year 9 are on course to reach the highest standards the school has ever reached in English. Achievement and standards are improving in mathematics too, but attainment in this subject continues to lag behind that in English.

Standards at the end of Year 11 remain low. However, achievement in this Key Stage is improving also, as a result of extensive and most effective support from senior leaders for the mathematics department. Early GCSE entry in English has also focused pupils' concentration on examination technique. 38% of Year 11 pupils have already reached C grades or above in English and pupils have reached, and in some cases exceeded, their targets in mathematics. Given the exceptionally low standards reached by current Year 11 pupils when they left Year 9, this represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, across Key Stage 4.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils generally enjoy school and relationships between pupils and adults are good. Bullying has reduced and behaviour is now satisfactory overall, but is often much better in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory and their cultural awareness is developing well through drama and music and also through cross-curricular work in history and English where they take part in creative writing on aspects of the First World War. Pupils feel safe and conduct themselves more maturely now. There has been a marked increase in the number of rewards and a significant decrease in the level of sanctions as a result. Pupils have a sound awareness of what makes a healthy diet, but they do not always take their own advice! They are given opportunities, through the school council for example, to take responsibility for wider involvement in school life but this aspect of the school's work is underdeveloped.

Attendance has a high profile in school and has improved by three percentage points since the previous inspection. However, it remains too low, mainly because of a significant number of pupils who miss school far too regularly.

Satisfactory achievement in both personal and academic terms demonstrates that pupils are prepared soundly for life after formal education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning has improved steadily since the previous inspection as a result of effective coaching and support from both senior staff and the local authority. It is now satisfactory overall, with some that is much better than this in both Key Stages. Where teaching is good or better, pupils respond positively to demanding questions from their teachers and are delighted when they recognise the progress they are making towards their learning targets. In an excellent Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were engrossed by some quite complex calculations and were keen to aim for even more challenging work. Where teaching is satisfactory, there is sometimes too much teacher direction of activities and there are few opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups, to find things out for themselves and to support each other in their learning. Furthermore, pupils are not required to take responsibility for their own progress and, as a consequence, are not always willing to take an active part in the lessons. However, teachers invariably treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and respect and most pupils have a high regard for the adults who work with them.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good elements. The range of options in Years 10 and 11 has increased since the previous inspection and there are now more vocational qualifications on offer to pupils. The school acknowledges, however, that the range of courses which appeal to the less able pupils, particularly boys, is not extensive. Much good work is being done to raise pupils' self-esteem and the school is working hard to develop pupils' aspirations about applying for further and higher education. Pupils respond well to the impressive curriculum in Key Stage 3 which enables them to transfer their skills from one subject to another. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but opportunities are sometimes missed in the wider curriculum to develop pupils' basic skills in these areas. Enrichment is provided through art, drama and music, which pupils enjoy and which support pupils' personal development positively. Education for safety is good and there are strong links with the police, who visit school regularly to emphasise how to stay safe and also the dangers of drugs. The school nurse makes a strong contribution to raising pupils' awareness of a range of health matters.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Adults have the interests of their pupils at heart and day-to-day pastoral care is good. There are many well managed and effective support areas to help vulnerable pupils, those with behavioural concerns, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and pupils new to learning English as an additional language. Welfare managers and progress leaders work closely together to identify where support is most needed and learning mentors work hard to remove barriers to pupils' progress. The quality of classroom support is good. For example, support teachers and the librarian worked very effectively together to help students develop their creative thinking skills during an outstanding Year 7 lesson. Attendance and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection as a result of the school's intensive efforts to promote them.

Academic guidance is better than at the time of the previous inspection but the quality of marking remains inconsistent. Some marking is superficial and pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are in place, are reviewed regularly and meet current government requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The inspirational headteacher leads by example. Supported strongly by the local authority and by Manchester Challenge, he continues to work tirelessly to empower both senior and middle leaders and, as a result, staff share the same clarity of vision for how the school should develop. They are totally committed to promoting equality of opportunity for each individual and they work hard to eliminate discrimination in all its forms.

Accurate and honest self-evaluation and the establishment of effective strategies to address the issues from the previous inspection have led to improvements in all four areas. The leadership recognises that more needs to be done if achievement is to accelerate further and if attendance is to reach the national average. Nonetheless, better use of assessment to plan learning has resulted in the setting of more realistic targets for pupils to reach and, albeit slowly, they are beginning to rise to these challenges.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion overall but has good links with local primary schools and provides tuition in modern languages for them. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are fully supportive of what the school is trying to do and hold the leadership to account with increasing rigour.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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**Overall effectiveness**

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for being so polite and kind to us when we visited your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came and talked to us on Monday lunchtime and to the budding actors and actresses we saw rehearsing 'Oliver' after school. We enjoyed our time in Parklands and would now like to tell you what we think about the school.

As you know, your school was given a Notice to Improve during its previous inspection. We are pleased to tell you that we now think Parklands is providing a satisfactory education for you and so we have removed the Notice. Your teachers have worked very hard to make the school better and you have played your part too. Your behaviour is better and, because teaching has improved and you are applying yourselves more to your work, you are now making better progress in lessons and are on course to reach some quite some challenging targets! We think the curriculum in Key Stage 3 is also helping to make sure that you can transfer skills learned in one subject to all the other subjects that you study. Your teachers, teaching assistants, progress leaders, welfare leaders and mentors look after you really well and they want the very best for you all.

Your headteacher and the other senior staff know your school well and they recognise that, although things are much improved, more still needs to be done to make sure that Parklands goes from strength to strength. We have talked to them and to your other teachers about this and we have asked them to give you more opportunities to practise your skills in English and mathematics in all your subjects. We have also asked them to encourage you to work in pairs and groups in lessons to find things out for yourselves and to help each other learn. We have asked them to give you more advice on how to improve your work when they mark your books and files. You have a key part to play in the most important improvement that we think should be made: those of you who do not attend school as much as you should need to realise that if you miss school too much, you will not make progress in your studies and this may have a negative effect on your future when you leave Parklands. Please take your teachers' advice about the importance of good attendance!