

Park House School

48 North Side, Wandsworth Common, London SW18 2SL

Inspection dates

4–6 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors ensure that all the independent school standards are met. They lead the school extremely well. Leaders' high expectations of all aspects of the school's work ensure that pupils receive an excellent education.
- Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements are strong and pupils' well-being is paramount.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum is bespoke to meet each pupil's needs. All staff, including therapists and tutors, work extremely well together to make sure that each pupil is supported to achieve the next steps in their learning and development.
- The quality of teaching is excellent. Staff are highly skilled and reflective. They are adept at making changes to their teaching strategies in order to meet pupils' ongoing needs.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Opportunities for pupils to learn about others and experience activities beyond the classroom are excellent. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of well-planned events and visits.
- Pupils make outstanding progress. Leaders have established assessment procedures that are used exceptionally well by all staff. This, together with high-quality teaching, enables pupils to achieve consistently well.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are very effective. Staff do all they can to help parents support their children at home and in the community. Parents are extremely happy with the progress their children have made since joining the school.
- Senior leaders are determined to ensure that staff are well cared for and that their well-being is supported. They are redefining the roles of middle leaders so that their work has an even better impact on the quality of teaching.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement plans to further strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they have an even greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school is led exceptionally well by a strong and determined team. Together with governors, leaders ensure that pupils receive an excellent education. They have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Throughout the school, there is a shared sense of purpose. All staff work extremely hard to make sure that every pupil makes excellent progress. Leaders have developed a 'What can we do?' ethos among staff. This means that all staff work together effectively to find new and different ways of helping pupils to achieve their goals. Leaders and other staff are highly ambitious for all pupils and never lose sight of their long-term goals.
- Each pupil has a personalised curriculum plan which is bespoke to their needs. Underpinning this is the focus on pupils' independence. Leaders and staff make sure that everything that pupils do in school will help them in the outside world and when they leave the school.
- Over the past two years, leaders have focused in particular on the curriculum for mathematics, science and English. Staff ensure that pupils' individual plans incorporate these subjects alongside their targets for communication, language and social skills.
- The way in which professionals work together to plan and monitor each pupil's curriculum is a strength. For example, the work of speech and language therapists and occupational therapists is fully incorporated into pupils' plans.
- Leaders make sure that the excellent provision in school is enriched by an exciting range of activities. Horse riding and skiing are just two examples of the activities that support pupils' wider development, their self-esteem and independence. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Staff skilfully integrate learning about different faiths and cultures into the school's programme of assemblies and events.
- Opportunities for professional development of staff are outstanding. Leaders have developed a culture where staff are encouraged to reflect upon and evaluate each other's work. This enables a consistent focus on pupils, their learning and their welfare. Leaders use training very effectively to ensure that all staff are highly skilled in meeting pupils' complex needs. Staff find the training and feedback from leaders valuable in improving their practice. The ongoing focus on supporting new staff to develop their skills and support pupils is very effective.
- The school has an early years department but at the time of this inspection there were no children in this age range on roll. Leaders have developed a vibrant early years provision, including outdoor facilities for the youngest children. Staff are trained to meet the needs of these children and demonstrate an understanding of the early years requirements.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. School improvement plans are focused not only on maintaining the high standards of education but also on making the work of the school even more effective. One of the focus areas this year is to strengthen the roles of middle leaders further so that their work has an even sharper impact on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

Governance

- The chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees demonstrate a very clear vision for the school's work. They are highly effective at continually improving the school and are determined to maintain the excellent quality of education for all pupils.
- Governors receive detailed reports from leaders about pupils' outcomes, well-being and safety. They use this information to inform their visits to the school and to challenge leaders, where necessary. Governors use their skills and expertise effectively, particularly to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, health and safety procedures, and the impact of leadership.
- Records of visits and meetings demonstrate very strong governance. These show that governors follow up on any issues swiftly and ask questions to gain a deep understanding of pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare and safety have top priority. The designated safeguarding leader ensures that the procedures to keep pupils safe are strong. When safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders address these swiftly and with rigour.
- Safeguarding is the first item on the agenda of every meeting that takes place in the school. Leaders have created a culture where everyone is vigilant and pupils are well cared for. Staff regularly review pupils' individual plans to ensure that their welfare needs are met.
- Staff are well trained on all safeguarding matters. Leaders ensure that all updates to legislation or local guidance are communicated to staff. Training is bespoke so that staff are equipped to meet the needs of all pupils, including the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with complex needs.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, leaders plan assemblies and group sessions which cover online safety, and relationships education. Staff incorporate safety into different activities, such as road safety on walks within the local area.
- Parents say that their children are safe in school. They value the close partnerships with staff to communicate information about their children's well-being.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It meets requirements and reflects the current legislation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- When pupils join the school, staff complete a baseline assessment of pupils' starting points. They look at pupils' communication methods, language skills, social skills and how they manage different situations. During the first few weeks at school, staff work closely with pupils and their families to ensure that their needs are well understood. This settling-in period is very well planned.

- Pupils' individual programmes are adapted each day according to their needs and achievements. Each pupil has a unique daily timetable. This includes opportunities to work individually with tutors and therapists and to attend group sessions with teachers for subjects such as English; mathematics; science; and personal, social, health and economics education.
- Pupils each have a tutor who works with them on a one-to-one basis. These tutors work through pupils' programmes very effectively, enabling them to master key skills and learn new ones. Pupils are given opportunities to generalise their understanding in a range of contexts, in different parts of the school and with different adults.
- Group teaching for mathematics and English is highly effective. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and a precise understanding of each pupil's next steps. Teachers work skilfully with other staff, enabling pupils to consolidate their skills in a range of contexts. Reading is taught very well. Staff use a variety of methods to support pupils' reading skills, including fluency and comprehension.
- The use of assessment is highly sophisticated. Staff collect information on pupils' achievements in every session. This is used exceptionally well by staff and leaders to identify precisely the next steps in pupils' learning and to address any gaps. This ensures that no time is wasted and pupils are extremely well supported to develop their communication, social and academic skills.
- Staff respond superbly well to pupils' interests because they have an in-depth understanding of each pupil's needs. Staff demonstrate consistently high expectations of pupils and work exceptionally hard each day to ensure that they feel safe, happy and make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's positive ethos enables pupils to thrive in a safe and welcoming environment. Staff ensure that pupils are fully involved in decision-making and that their ideas are listened to. For example, pupils chose which playground equipment they wanted leaders to purchase for the outdoor area.
- Pupils are expected to take responsibility and develop resilience in different situations. During the inspection, pupils helped staff in a range of activities, including preparing meals for lunch and arranging furniture for snack time. After one-to-one activities or at the end of group sessions, pupils are encouraged to tidy away the resources and show that they are ready to move on.
- The development of pupils' independence is a key feature of all that happens at the school. Leaders ensure that, as far as is practicable, all activities have potential gains for pupils' independence and future life skills. This year, all staff are working with the aim of providing 'just enough support', which emphasises the importance of empowering pupils to do as much as possible for themselves.

- Staff create a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem and to be proud of their achievements. For example, during the inspection, some pupils sang Christmas songs at the local train station to raise funds for charity.
- Staff ensure that pupils are taught about bullying and the forms it can take.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- From a range of starting points, pupils make very strong progress in managing their behaviour and in their social skills.
- Staff ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to work with others and develop skills such as turn-taking, sharing and waiting. Pupils are well supported with transitions between sessions. They respond very well to staff.
- Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour very effectively. All incidents, including times when pupils display challenging behaviour, are recorded meticulously. Leaders analyse this information and use it very well to inform any necessary amendments to pupils' individual behaviour plans. All staff are very well trained to support pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is considered as part of leaders' regular checks on pupils' learning and development. Pupils attend regularly and persistent absence is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- As a result of exceptionally strong teaching, pupils make outstanding progress in their learning.
- Leaders have created a book of case studies from the previous academic year. These case studies are compiled by all members of staff. They provide excellent examples of pupils' achievements in different aspects of their learning and development. These case studies not only demonstrate pupils' achievements, but also the high quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Visits to lessons, discussions with members of staff, scrutiny of assessment information and pupils' personalised plans demonstrate that pupils make excellent progress in their communication and social skills.
- Pupils develop their independence well over time. The focus on helping pupils to acquire 'skills for life' and to apply what they have learned in a range of contexts makes a difference to pupils' learning, self-esteem and access to the wider curriculum.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics. From their individual starting points, excellent teaching supports pupils to develop an understanding of number, shape and measure. Staff provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to learn practically and apply their understanding, such as in cookery sessions, for example.
- Pupils make strong progress in English. Staff use assessment extremely well to identify pupils' precise next steps. This supports the development of their reading and writing skills. Reading comprehension is well taught. Staff work closely with therapists to find the best ways to help each pupil to understand what they are reading.

- The school works closely with parents to support pupils to manage other important aspects of their lives. For example, some pupils find having their hair cut or visiting the doctors or dentist very challenging. During the inspection, some pupils were having their hair cut for the first time. Over the course of the year, staff worked skilfully with parents and others to support pupils to manage this.
- Pupils are very well supported for the next stage in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	134145
DfE registration number	212/6405
Inspection number	10055475

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	BeyondAutism
Chair of governors	Ian Hunter
Headteacher	Kieran Bird
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,395 to £65,350
Telephone number	020 3031 9700
Website	www.beyondautismschools.org.uk
Email address	parkhouseschool@beyondautism.org.uk

Information about this school

- Park House is an independent day school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. It is located in Wandsworth, although pupils are placed from a wide range of local authorities.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school opened in September 2017. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school is part of the charity, BeyondAutism. The board of trustees delegates governance duties to a governing body. The governing body also oversees Tram House School. The chief executive officer and deputy headteachers also work across both schools.

- Prior to September 2017, this school was called Rainbow School and catered for pupils aged four to 19. Rainbow School was inspected in June 2016 and judged as good by Ofsted. Rainbow School closed and split into two new schools, Park House and Tram House.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector held meetings with the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer and chair of governors. He held meetings with members of the senior leadership team. He met with two groups of staff formally, including therapists and middle leaders. He held a meeting with the site manager and toured the premises with the health and safety representative.
- The inspector visited all classrooms to observe pupils' learning. He was accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher on all of these visits.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and discussed pupils' progress with leaders. He looked at assessment information provided by leaders and reviewed pupils' individual plans, curriculums and case studies.
- The inspector spoke to pupils and staff informally in lessons and during breaktimes. He observed break and lunch routines and observed the start- and end-of-day procedures.
- The inspector met with parents as they collected their children and evaluated the seven free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The 30 responses to the staff survey were also considered.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including policies, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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