

# Park Lane Learning Trust

Park Lane, Exley, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9LG

**Inspection dates** 2–3 March 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Since 2013 leadership has, until fairly recently, been in a state of confusion and turmoil. Not enough attention has been given to making sure that pupils achieve even expected progress.
- Over time, leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, have had an inaccurate and overoptimistic view as to how well pupils are achieving. This has limited the school's capacity to rapidly improve outcomes.
- Teaching is inadequate. It is currently not strong enough to help pupils make up for the poor teaching they have received over time.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly and this is having a significant impact on their progress.
- Due to a narrow and inappropriate key stage 4 curriculum, too many pupils, including girls, the most able, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make sufficient progress.
- Outcomes are inadequate and have been in decline for a number of years. The numbers of pupils achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is consistently below the national average.
- Poor pupil behaviour, coupled with teachers' inconsistent use of the school's behaviour policy, means that many pupils do not make progress as fast as they should because of low-level disruption in lessons.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has started to make a positive difference. Due to his clear and forensic analysis of the school's weaknesses he has effectively rationalised the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders, started to tackle weak teaching and begun to improve the accuracy of teacher assessments.
- Staff and governors have confidence in the acting headteacher and senior leaders. As a result, staff morale is improving and governors are now receiving useful headteacher reports on the school's progress.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are well aware of the various types of bullying and are confident that leaders and managers will deal with it effectively.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well. Pupils have opportunities to learn about other cultures, get involved in fundraising and take part in theatre productions.

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that improvement is driven forward rapidly by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders focus more on their strategic roles and are capable of delivering the improvements necessary
  - developing robust systems to accurately check and evaluate the school's work, especially in relation to pupils' progress, and ensure that these outcomes are used consistently by all leaders, including middle leaders, to make rapid improvements
  - continuing to develop the curriculum, particularly at key stage 4, so that all pupils can achieve and succeed
  - making sure that governors fulfil their statutory duties and develop the confidence and capability to challenge school leaders on the progress current pupils are making, including those pupils who benefit from additional funding, in order to help accelerate their progress.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so it can rapidly improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - pupils' presentation of, and pride in, their work improve
  - teachers check pupils' learning carefully and quickly tackle misconceptions when they arise
  - teachers effectively use assessment to plan lessons so that pupils, especially the most able, are suitably challenged
  - all teachers follow the school assessment and feedback policy to make sure that pupils know how to improve, and ensure that feedback has the intended impact.
- Improve the behaviour and attendance of pupils by:
  - making sure that all teachers follow the school behaviour policy and consistently apply high standards to stop low-level disruption affecting learning
  - continuing to develop strategies to improve attendance and reduce the number of exclusions
  - improving the quality of multi-agency work so that plans have clear measurable targets to improve the behaviour and attendance of vulnerable pupils, and it is clear how other professionals and agencies will be held accountable for their work in supporting these pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Since the time of the last inspection, leadership and management have been in a state of turmoil and uncertainty. This turbulent context has led to pupils' outcomes declining rapidly in 2014 and getting even worse in 2015. Few pupils are achieving their full potential, staff morale has been low and the quality of teaching is inadequate.
- The scale of this improvement task is far bigger and more difficult than the acting headteacher first anticipated. There are deeply entrenched weaknesses in the school that have not been tackled by previous leaders and managers.
- There is a limited capacity to improve the school as leaders and managers are overstretched. Due to the need to make financial savings, senior leaders are too involved in operational day-to-day matters and this is taking their attention away from focusing fully on rapidly improving the school.
- The acting headteacher is in the process of rebuilding a new culture and ethos within the school, one in which high expectations are demanded of both staff and pupils. He now has a clear and accurate understanding of the significant challenges the school faces. Actions have already been taken to rationalise senior leadership roles and responsibilities, and to tackle poor teaching through performance management.
- The acting headteacher is well supported by the executive headteacher. As a result of this, staff morale which had hit rock bottom, is now improving. Governors and the trust have confidence in the headteacher and better systems are starting to be put in place to carefully check the progress pupils are making. Despite some signs of improvement, there is still a long way to go to help current pupils accelerate their progress and make up the lost ground due to poor teaching over a prolonged period of time.
- Too many middle leaders are not effective in making sure that teaching is of a high standard. Within departments, and across the school, there is too much variability. Much depends on luck as to whether pupils experience lessons that are challenging and engaging. Often feedback to pupils does not follow the school's marking policy. Feedback is extremely inconsistent ranging from detailed and helpful, as in the case of art and design, to non-existent feedback, and middle leaders have not been successful in tackling these glaring discrepancies.
- Some parental feedback confirms that they too have concerns about the progress their children are making, and also have concerns about the quality of teaching and behaviour.
- The curriculum has, up until very recently, been too narrow. Decisions made by leaders and managers over a longer period of time have had a severely negative impact on pupils' outcomes. This led to poor choices regarding early entry in GCSE examinations and unqualified teachers delivering courses they were not capable of teaching. Current leaders have put a stop to this.
- Current leaders have taken emergency measures to tackle these curriculum deficiencies and most current Year 11 pupils are studying GCSE history or geography in one year as a way of creating a more broad and balanced curriculum for them. However, despite these valiant efforts, predicted outcomes for 2016 are likely to be far from where they should be given pupils' starting points.
- The curriculum is more effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Year 8 pupils are developing their understanding of the importance of fair trade. Charity fundraising events help pupils appreciate the difficulties faced by poor women in Africa. There are a number of opportunities to develop social skills including trips to Blackpool for hard work and effort and theatrical performances such as 'Beanstalk'.
- Pupils are developing their understanding of democracy. The school held mock elections during the time of the 2015 General Election and the school council is helping develop their understanding further. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE) lessons and numerous posters around the school stress the importance of tolerance and respect for others, and discussions with pupils revealed that they are being well equipped for life in modern Britain. Improved careers information advice and guidance have led to a significant increase in the numbers of Year 11 pupils following suitable pathways, given what they have achieved, once they leave school.
- The local authority has accurately identified the key issues facing the school. Senior officers played a key role in brokering the support currently being provided by a local outstanding school. There are signs that this support is starting to have an impact. Other support has been provided by another local school which provided some useful external feedback on the quality of feedback and marking in the school.

### ■ The governance of the school

- Governors and members of the trust accept that the school is not currently achieving its vision of seeing pupils 'believe, achieve, succeed'. They are not effective in challenging leaders and managers. Governors have not been effective in questioning information they have been provided with. Consequently they were extremely surprised when outcomes in 2014 and 2015 plummeted.
  - Governors are aware of how additional funding is being spent. However, they do not have a clear understanding of how this large amount of money is impacting on the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making, nor whether pupils in Year 7 are catching up quickly enough.
  - Governors are not fulfilling their statutory duties. Important policies on the school's website, including those related to equal opportunities, anti-bullying, and teaching and learning are either years out of date or missing, as in the case of the information report evaluating the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
  - The quality of information governors are receiving is improving. The acting headteacher has started to provide useful written reports detailing the progress the school is making. Governors are starting to develop a better understanding of the issues the school faces and how they will be tackled.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are effective policies and procedures in place to corroborate that individuals are safe to work with pupils. Regular training is in place to ensure that staff are kept up to date on the latest safeguarding guidance.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching is not of a consistently high quality to help pupils make rapid progress and catch up on lost ground. Teachers' expectations are often exceedingly low and pupils are unclear as to what it means to be an effective learner. This is reflected in the fact that in some lessons poorly presented work is allowed to go unchallenged over many months. Too many teachers accept work that is scruffy, inaccurate and contains countless spelling errors that are allowed to persist.
- Pupils cannot communicate, write or apply mathematics as well as they should and so many pupils lack confidence. This is because few teachers insist on pupils correcting misspelt words and there are missed opportunities to practise and reinforce mathematical concepts and skills in other subjects, particularly science.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough on whether pupils actually understand what they are learning. The quality of questioning is weak across the school and does not allow teachers to check whether pupils have misconceptions that need addressing. In several lessons observed, pupils were unclear as to what key terms meant and so their progress was significantly hindered.
- Over time teaching is not challenging enough. As a result of this, the most-able pupils in particular are not making the progress that they should be. The quality and quantity of homework is inconsistent across the school. Pupils in Year 11 told inspectors that they do not expect nor receive regular or challenging enough homework. Attitudes to learning are generally poor and a significant number of detentions are given for homework that is set but not completed.
- Leaders and managers have put in place a range of training and support sessions to help teachers improve their teaching. Clearer guidelines around planning have been put in place. While there is clearly a will to improve, it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Too many pupils do not attend school on a regular basis despite some indications that attendance has recently started to improve. Overall absence rates and persistent absence figures are shockingly high. The attendance of particular groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and girls, is even worse.
- Fixed-term exclusions are way above the national average and permanent exclusions are nearly 10 times higher than national figures. There are early signs that leaders and managers are starting to get to grips with this and there are signs of some improvement.

- Work with multi-agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are protected is not robust enough. Plans put in place to help vulnerable pupils lack clear measurable targets and there is a lack of clarity as to how other professionals or agencies will be held accountable for their work in supporting these pupils. Despite these poor-quality plans, inspectors found that leaders and managers within the school are successful in supporting and protecting vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils do not have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, both emotionally and physically. Pupils, especially those in Year 10, have a poor understanding of how to be successful learners.
- Careers information advice and guidance have recently improved. More pupils are following suitable pathways into employment, training or education. Older pupils confirm that they value the advice and information provided, and have secured places at a local college once they leave school.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate because of the high incidence of disruptive behaviour over time.
- Some pupils behave well in lessons and do as their teachers request. Too many pupils do not. Pupils often demonstrate poor attitudes to learning. Pupils often take little pride in their work and can often disrupt the learning of others, so slowing their own progress and that of other pupils. Some pupils are impolite and talk over teachers when they are trying to teach.
- Teachers do not tackle poor behaviour in a consistent manner. There is a mismatch between the school policy and practice. Some teachers allow pupils to swing on their chairs and wear their coats and bags while the lesson is taking place. Other teachers are quick to address this and impose their own higher standards of behaviour and expectations.
- Pupils are confident that if they or their friends experience bullying then it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying including cyber bullying, homophobic bullying and racist bullying. Leaders and managers have improved the recording of bullying incidences and are able to convincingly demonstrate that reoffending rates are low.
- There are effective links between school and alternative providers including Calderdale College and Calderdale Pupil Referral Unit. School leaders regularly check pupils' attendance and progress. Some, but not all, pupils have significantly improved their attendance and progress while at these alternative providers.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are inadequate**

- In 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, slumped to 29%. The most recent results in 2015 witnessed a further decline to 13%. Too many pupils, especially girls, the most able, pupils who have special educational needs or disability failed to make the progress they should have. At the root of the problem has been an inappropriate curriculum coupled with poor leadership and inadequate teaching over time.
- School leaders agree that outcomes have been inadequate in a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics, humanities and modern foreign languages.
- Over time, leaders and managers have inappropriately entered pupils before Year 11 for GCSE examinations. This has not had a positive impact on pupils and the acting headteacher has now stopped this. However, the legacy of poor decision making around early entry means that outcomes for current Year 11 pupils are predicted to be lower than expected given their starting points.
- Over time, school leaders have been ineffective in closing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in a wide range of subjects. Significant amounts of money have had little or no impact on closing these gaps. In many instances, particularly in English and mathematics, gaps have grown wider. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils in 2015 achieved nearly two grades lower in English than others and in mathematics the gaps were even wider.
- As with other pupils, the most-able pupils underachieve over time because their progress is not checked accurately and the work they are given is not matched closely enough to meet their needs. The most-able pupils do not achieve the A\* to A grades they are capable of at GCSE in a wide range of subjects.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is significantly below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

- Leaders are starting to put into place arrangements that are aimed at improving the accuracy of teachers' predictions. This includes the use of some external checks made by staff from a local outstanding school. However, this is at the very earliest stage of development and so the impact is not measurable.
- At key stage 3, current assessment information suggests that more pupils are on track, albeit from a very low starting point, to make better progress. However, there is still widespread underachievement particularly in Years 8 and 9.
- Given the evidence gathered from direct lesson observations and detailed work scrutiny, inspectors were unconvinced that there are currently signs of sustained improvement across the school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107561
<b>Local authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012818

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	443
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Hill
<b>Acting headteacher</b>	Jonathan Brownlie
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 362215
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.parklanelearningtrust.org">www.parklanelearningtrust.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@parklane.calderdale.sch.uk">info@parklane.calderdale.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–6 March 2013

## Information about this school

- Park Lane is a learning trust. The trust is comprised of the Crossley Heath School, Huddersfield University, Together Housing and Calderdale local authority.
- Park Lane Learning Trust is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school uses Calderdale's Pupil Referral Unit and Calderdale College to provide alternative off-site provision for some pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching and learning walks, some of which were undertaken jointly with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors carefully scrutinised pupils' work over time including in English, mathematics, history, art and design, and science.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including the acting headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. Inspectors met with a group of teachers, including newly qualified teachers. They also met with the chair of the trust and three members of the local governing body. Inspectors also met with officers from the local authority and the director of children's services.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during formal interviews, during lessons and informally at lunch and break times.
- Inspectors considered a large range of documentation related to the school's work, gaining the school's view of its performance and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, pupils' behaviour over time and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors analysed the 21 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account school parental surveys.

## Inspection team

Philip Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Young	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicholas Whittaker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Ofsted Inspector

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