

Park Lane School

Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8JR

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leaders, managers and governors maintain ambitious aims and the school's outstanding effectiveness. Their vision has very positive influence in every area of the school's work and drives continuous improvement. However, governors understanding of how progress is analysed is limited.
- Leaders inspire staff who go about their work with absolute determination and with the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in classrooms and around the school at all times of the day. Challenging behaviour is exceptionally well managed by staff and behaviour improves rapidly as a result.
- From early years to the sixth form, pupils thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer, including their experience of learning. The outstanding extent to which they are supported, have their needs met and are taught contribute significantly to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- In all that is taught, teaching is outstanding, tackling with determination and expertise the vital aspects of learning that pupils need to acquire at each stage of their development. Every opportunity is maximised so pupils at the outset gain the skills of independence and communication to move successfully to the next stage of learning.
- Pupils are happy, secure and very well stimulated by all their school experiences, learning extremely well.
- From their different starting points, pupils including those who are disadvantaged, make rapid progress. Almost all pupils make the progress expected by the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. At each of these stages a large proportion of pupils make much more than the progress expected.
- The curriculum is thoroughly well developed to meet the needs of all pupils and offers them work and activities that are interesting, enjoyable and an extremely good preparation for the future.
- The excellent opportunity for pupils in Key Stage 4 and sixth form students to continue their education at Macclesfield Academy and Macclesfield College, makes a significant contribution to their maturity and experience of the wider world.
- The leadership and management of early years are outstanding. The quality of teaching is excellent and children make very rapid progress from their starting points and are very well prepared to start Year 1. They thoroughly enjoy their activities in the classroom and outdoors even though space outside restricts scope for children's free movement.
- An outstanding sixth form ensures students continue to attain excellent results. The sixth form is exceptionally well led and managed. Teaching is of the highest quality and the excellent programme of work and activities means students are extremely well prepared for the future.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, taught by seven of the school's eight teachers. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors in two observations.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector spoke to a group of pupils and listened to a small group of others reading.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school's documents including information on pupils' progress, the school development plan and policies and procedures for child protection and the safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 12 parents who completed Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View.) They also considered the school's survey of parents' views. The views of the 33 staff who responded to their questionnaire were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties which adversely affect their physical abilities, speech, language and communication. Many pupils also have additional health complications. In addition to their learning difficulties, an increasing proportion of pupils have differing degrees of autism. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is well below average as is the proportion new to speaking English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school is on the campus of the Macclesfield Learning Zone, which includes Macclesfield Academy and Macclesfield College. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are based in Macclesfield Academy and a few join academy students for some lessons. Sixth form students are based in Macclesfield College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the area for outdoor activities in the early years so that children have greater scope for movement and choice of activities.
- Develop governors' capacity to analyse and question leaders' data on pupils' progress by deepening their understanding of the system used to track pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Senior and middle leaders are very highly motivated and also very effective in their roles. This influences most positively the commitment and hard work of all staff. In particular, the leadership of early years provision and also that of the sixth form is outstanding. Middle leadership has also had a significant impact on improving provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is exceptionally well planned across the curriculum.
- Outstanding effectiveness in all leaders' endeavours makes a very significant contribution to advancing equality of opportunity for all. Leaders' values and actions tackle discrimination very effectively and ensure the school has a high reputation among parents and in the community. The arrangements leaders have for safeguarding and keeping pupils safe are robust and meet requirements. The local authority is confident in giving only light touch support to this consistently outstanding school.
- Senior leaders are very rigorous and constant in checking the quality of teaching, pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Their detailed knowledge of teaching drives teachers' and their assistants' continued professional development. This culture of on-going improvement in teaching has built up substantial expertise in meeting the diverse needs of pupils and also in response to new demands such as the increasing proportion of pupils with autism spectrum conditions.
- Leaders have ensured the assessment of pupils' progress is robust, accurate and thoroughly analysed. Copious data is used throughout the school to plan for pupils' progress and for whole-school improvement.
- Leaders' intimate knowledge of teaching and their firm grasp on the detail of pupils' progress very effectively drives their management of teachers' performance, which leads to the fast rate of improvement across the school.
- The additional money from the pupil premium is spent with very good effect to increase disadvantaged pupils' access to the full range of curriculum experiences, such as resources to support school visits, residential trips and after-school clubs. The provision of new equipment and digital technology has widened the scope for disadvantaged pupils to communicate, learn and progress more effectively.
- The physical education and sports premium pays for specialist teaching and a higher level of physiotherapy. This has a significant impact on primary pupils' physical development, interest and confidence in team games and sports. It has also improved expertise among staff in teaching physical education.
- The curriculum is an outstanding programme of work and activities extremely suited to pupils and their diverse needs. The emphasis on developing pupils' communication, literacy and numeracy is excellent as is the impact on their physical, personal, social and emotional development. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this prepares them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school's high reputation and longstanding success is precious to governors. They have an ambitious vision for the school and clear aims. As a result, there is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school maintains all its outstanding strengths and also a culture of continuous improvement.
 - The very good mix of expertise, interests and enthusiasm provided by governors ensures they are very effective in gaining knowledge and understanding of the school's work. They make good use of the headteacher's regular and detailed reports and set these against what is found out from their planned and focused visits to the school. They give close attention to the regular reports of how leaders spend the pupil premium and check carefully that this has had a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Close attention is given to reports on the quality of teaching. Governors are rigorous in checking that the improvement of teaching is being managed effectively and that teachers and their assistants are being professionally developed and rewarded appropriately in relation to their effectiveness. Likewise, the reporting of pupils' progress is carefully scrutinised, although the extent to which governors can challenge the information is limited by their restricted understanding of the system used to track progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It does not take long for pupils to understand and accept adults'

expectations of them. They learn to settle, know and follow daily routines and engage purposefully in their work and activities rapidly. Very positive relationships develop with adults, out of which grow trust and confidence.

- Pupils arrive at their classrooms in a very good frame of mind and quickly engage in activities. This becomes clearly evident among the older children in early years and increasingly so as pupils move up through the school. There are adult qualities very evident in the ways pupils in Key Stage 4 and sixth form students approach learning.
- Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions very willingly. They make excellent efforts in communicating and concentrate very well on completing tasks. For example, they take great care with handwriting and are concerned to present work in their books in a well organised and neat way.
- The ethos of the school, whereby everyone is valued and respected, is very explicit in how pupils get on with each other. They are considerate and attentive to other's needs. Pupils help teachers out, which is part of them developing responsibility and independence. They help and encourage each other. A very good example of this was when two pupils were reading and one was using encouraging words and giving the other the confidence to keep trying with new and difficult words.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school and Macclesfield Academy are safe and secure places for pupils. Governors ensure that the health and safety of pupils while in school or away on trips are kept under close scrutiny.
- There are clear and very effective lines of responsibility and communication for safeguarding pupils, which fully meet requirements.
- Pupils are very closely supervised and taught to keep themselves safe. They avoid risks and making themselves vulnerable, particularly in their use of the internet. Pupils know bullying happens in a number of ways, how to recognise these and what they can do if they are upset or worried. However, pupils' outstanding behaviour and relationships with each other ensure they do not experience bullying in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching over time ensures that progress, as pupils move through the school, is consistently rapid.
- Expectations of pupils are very high and all staff have consummate expertise and extensive experience in meeting pupils' diverse needs. Their deep knowledge of each pupil gives staff confidence to challenge them effectively to high levels of achievement.
- Teachers and their assistants work together very effectively. Pupils' behaviour is managed outstandingly well. Classroom staff support pupils very effectively so that they are well settled and always ready for learning. Staff carefully coordinate their work with therapists so that pupils' wider needs are met. As a result, learning proceeds very smoothly.
- Thorough, on-going assessment is the key to realising teachers' high expectations and their precise planning of the next small steps in learning. Leaders have ensured teachers and their assistants are very well supported in carrying out accurate assessments.
- Staff are held accountable for their pupils' progress and respond very positively to this culture. Staff are also fully committed to improving the knowledge and skills and welcome the many opportunities for further professional development.
- On-going checks on what pupils are learning are detailed and precise throughout the school. The valuable information teachers gain from assessment is used exceptionally well for setting pupils, challenging targets and determining exactly what they should learn next.
- Each pupil's strengths are understood and these are developed rigorously. The teaching of communication, reading, writing, mathematics and the use of digital technology is pitched precisely so that pupils reach the level of skills of which they are capable.
- Pupils find lessons lively and enjoyable. The enthusiasm for learning ensures they are fully engaged in contributing and working hard. Pupils respond very well to questioning in class and the most able pupils are thoroughly challenged, for example when they are required to speak about their work to their classmates.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding in all areas of learning as a result of high-quality teaching and excellent, wide-ranging support provided throughout the school.
- Pupils' individual targets are challenging but support from staff ensure that they reach them. As teachers have refined their use of assessment and its analysis over the past three years, expectations have risen and the proportion of pupils making more-than-expected progress has steadily grown in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium making expected progress and more-than-expected progress matches that of other pupils and there are no gaps between the attainment and achievement of these two groups of pupils.
- Pupils quickly gain a means of communicating best suited to their capabilities. Many children in early years not able to speak or not yet having learnt to speak, learn to gesture, sign and use symbols to indicate choices and feelings at a rapid pace. This start to meaningful contact with others sets the scene for their rapid progress. An increasingly-skilled use of symbols for some pupils enables them to communicate at more sophisticated levels and thereby gain fuller access to everything the school offers them.
- Pupils have pictures and books from an early stage and listen with enjoyment to stories. As they get older they talk about the stories they have read or heard, developing very effectively their understanding of plots and characters. Many pupils link letters to the sounds they make and this helps them recognise different letters and the sound with which words begin. The most able pupils read fluently and have a good understanding of what has been read.
- Pupils are encouraged to write about their experiences and what they have read. The many opportunities to practise and perfect writing underpin excellent progress. Over time, those pupils who can manage a pen learn a very good handwriting style, write frequently and produce neat legible scripts of correctly spelled work.
- In mathematics, pupils sort objects by their colour, size or shape and learn to count these. They also know that numbers are more or less of, if objects are bigger, smaller, heavier or lighter. Some pupils use their number and counting skills to solve problems, working neatly using secure methods of calculating. They add using double digit numbers, know the face value of coins and notes, and plan a budget and the costs of shopping.

The early years provision is outstanding

- The early years staff team look after children and promote their learning expertly. They are highly motivated and sharply focused on providing the range of experiences and challenges underpinning children's development in all areas of their learning. Teaching is outstanding, setting very high expectations and engaging children intensively in work and activities.
- Staff are very attentive to children and constantly engage them in learning. Thorough planning of daily activities means not a minute is overlooked in terms of its potential for children to make progress in all the areas of their development.
- Children's behaviour improves dramatically in the setting. They are not all settled when they start Nursery but soon settle extremely well, and demonstrate outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Staff support children exceptionally well and ensure they are kept safe. Close contact with parents keeps them very well informed of their children's progress and communication with parents is very effective in encouraging them to support learning at home.
- The leadership and management of early years are outstanding. Assessment on entry and also on-going assessment is extremely thorough. There is exceptional rigour in gathering evidence showing what each child knows and can do and the progress they have made from their starting points. The record kept for each child is detailed in evidencing each small step of progress. The accuracy of assessment is assured through strong links with neighbouring special schools and exercises across schools checking the accuracy of assessment judgements.
- Children thoroughly enjoy the variety of activities indoors and outside and thrive on the high quality of interactions with adults. Their individual needs are met expertly and staff apply consummate skill in supporting learning.
- Outdoor space is limited although what is available is well developed for a variety of appropriate activities. However, children are not able to move as freely in space as they might and scope for some more challenging physical activities for children are restricted.

- Children make significant progress in communication, personal, social, emotional and physical development and this ensures they are very well prepared for entry into Key Stage 1.

The sixth form provision**is outstanding**

- Outstanding leadership and management maintain excellent sixth form provision which is highly effective in preparing students for the future. Students benefit enormously in personal development and maturity from having their own facilities, working in Macclesfield College and being alongside other young adults. As a result, their achievement is outstanding.
- The curriculum is an excellent combination of relevant study which provides a good range of accreditation and builds very effectively on students' earlier achievements. Students are offered many opportunities through their work to apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills. They carry this out in the context of real life, everyday matters and by working in the community. Students benefit from activities such as planning a shopping trip and buying goods on a budget or seeking and using information to organise travel. There is much more in students' work and activities that greatly assists them in becoming independent, responsible individuals and this develops their interests and talents exceptionally well.
- Teaching is outstanding. It is thoroughly planned, drawing upon rigorous and accurate assessments of what each student knows and can do. Teachers and their assistant have high expectations of their students. Their considerable expertise is applied very effectively to ensure new knowledge and skills are securely learnt before students move on to the next stage.
- Teaching engages students to an excellent extent. They value and enjoy learning and benefit from the very good relationship with adults and each other. Students feel safe and staff are thorough in ensuring students stay safe. Students conduct is outstanding and they show a high regard for each other, meeting the college's high expectations of how they should behave.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111508
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	448139

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tandy Palmes
Headteacher	Lorraine Warmer
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2009
Telephone number	01625 384040
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