

Inspection of Park Lane Academy

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

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Stuart Hillary. This school is part of the South Pennines Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Alison Black, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lisa Fathers. There is also an executive headteacher, Kash Rafiq, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to behave and achieve well. However, the expectations for pupils' achievement have not been realised, as reflected in published outcomes since the last inspection. Too few pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make expected rates of progress by the end of key stage 4. Over time, the proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE qualifications in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, has remained very low.

Leaders have improved the standards of behaviour since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from calm, settled classrooms, where routines are well embedded. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are commonplace. Pupils attend school regularly. Pupils are happy, polite and respectful. Bullying is rare, and pupils feel safe at school. They have access to trusted adults, who provide guidance and reassurance when matters arise.

Pupils' wider development is well supported through the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. A range of extra-curricular opportunities are on offer. Pupil leadership roles are both popular and active. Pupils receive appropriate career advice. Nevertheless, many leave school without a sufficient range of qualifications to ensure that they have a broad range of options for the next stage of education, training or employment.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has not secured improved outcomes by the end of key stage 4, despite the recent implementation of strategies to improve the quality of education. In 2024, for example, the proportion of pupils securing passes in GCSE English and mathematics was approximately half the national and local average.

The school has ensured that pupils benefit from accessing a broad curriculum. They study a range of subjects in line with the ambition of the national curriculum.

Leaders have carefully considered curriculum design. In some subjects, staff typically use their expertise to implement the curriculum effectively. However, inconsistencies in curriculum implementation persist in other subjects, due to variations in approach.

The school has implemented an appropriate programme to support pupils who are not fluent readers. While some of this work is new, it has gained traction rapidly, ensuring that most pupils who need appropriate help receive it.

Since the last inspection, much work has taken place to strengthen the quality of the school's offer to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are some signs of improvement. However, this work remains unfinished. While pupils with SEND are clearly identified, some staff are not using the information to support pupils' acquisition of knowledge effectively to help these pupils to achieve well.

The quality of the work that pupils produce in lessons is showing early signs of improvement. Nevertheless, the tasks they are given do not always match the goals of the school's intended curriculum. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning were an issue identified at the last inspection. This remains inconsistent. This hinders the progress that pupils make in their learning.

Leaders have successfully improved the day-to-day standards of behaviour. Pupils behave well throughout the school and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They attend school regularly and leaders support those whose attendance dips.

Pupils receive strong support in their wider development. The school has an appropriate PSHE programme in place. Pupils learn about the risks they may face in life, as well as covering statutory topics, such as relationships and sex education. The school has a broad offer of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to take part in. The elected pupil 'Prime Minister' plays a crucial role in making decisions that impact pupil life at school. Trips and clubs, such as visits to the coast, are popular.

Pupils receive appropriate careers guidance, which starts in Year 7. They gain valuable insights by attending apprenticeship and alumni days. Pupils receive support in understanding recruitment processes, such as through participation in mock interviews.

Leaders, including those from the trust, know the school well. They are committed to its long-term success. They are aware that academic outcomes must improve and have begun to support and challenge leaders in this regard. Leaders have the necessary capacity to further improve the school and have already achieved success in key areas. Notably, they have improved the standards of behaviour and enhanced the provision for pupils' personal development. Early signs of progress are evident in their efforts to improve the quality of education.

Staff recognise the improvements already made at the school. They say that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. Staff told inspectors that they enjoy working at the school and are supported well by senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Over time, pupils have not achieved the qualifications that they are capable of attaining in external assessments, such as GCSEs. This reduces pupils' options when moving on to the next step in education, training or employment. The school should improve the quality of education offered for pupils throughout key stages 3 and 4, to ensure that pupils receive the support needed to achieve better academic outcomes.

- The quality of the implementation and delivery of subject curriculums is variable. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should. The academic progress they make is not as strong as it should be. The school should further develop staff subject expertise so that the intended subject curriculums are delivered consistently well.
- The school's inconsistent approach to assessment is not supporting pupils to make the intended progress. This means that some pupils have unidentified gaps in learning that are not addressed or resolved before starting new subject content. The school should ensure that assessment is linked to the content taught and is used effectively to identify and close gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some staff do not fully use the information provided to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that, on occasion, pupils with SEND are not fully supported to access and understand the important knowledge content. The school should ensure that staff use the precise information shared about each pupil with SEND effectively to allow these pupils to access learning fully and thrive.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143115
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10346607
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lisa Fathers
CEO of the trust	Alison Black
Principal	Stuart Hillary
Website	www.parklane.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South Pennines Academies Trust.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO, trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, careers, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff formally and informally throughout the inspection. Responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff, pupils and parents were considered by the inspection team.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Yvonne Bootman	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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