

Park Lane Academy

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

Unique reference number (URN): 143115

Monitoring inspection report:

14 April 2026

At the most recent graded inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- 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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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.

Leaders and trustees are taking effective action to improve the school but continued work is needed to remove the requires significant improvement designation

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following evaluation areas:

- Leadership and governance
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching

■ Achievement

Leadership and governance

Since the previous inspection, there have been additional appointments to the school's senior leadership team. Further to this, the trust has deployed extra staff, including directors, in the school more regularly. These have strengthened the school's leadership capacity and ability to make improvements quickly.

The trust continues to provide a range of support to aid the school to make the changes that are necessary. Trustees know the school well. They have an accurate understanding of the progress made so far and ongoing priorities. Trustees scrutinise leaders' work to improve the school and provide them with well-judged support and challenge. Leaders at all levels are committed to making the school a 'beacon of excellence'. To this end, they have engaged the support of other trusts and external experts to accelerate progress in the school.

Stakeholders, including staff, pupils and their families, are positive about the school. They rightly consider this to be an improving school, as reflected in the stronger GCSE results achieved by pupils in 2025. Pupils recognise wider improvements in their day-to-day experience. Staff feel valued and trust leaders to consider their wellbeing, when making decisions that affect their roles. They have confidence in leaders to drive the further improvements that all recognise as necessary. This includes through further professional learning for staff, such as planned training intended to strengthen provision for pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

At the previous graded inspection, safeguarding was evaluated as being effective.

Inclusion

Leaders are committed to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and those who are otherwise disadvantaged. Leaders have reflected on historic weaknesses in provision for these pupils and taken appropriate steps to make necessary improvements. Many changes, such as the introduction of the school's alternative 'aspire', 'attain' and 'ready room' pathways, are in their infancy. These provide a nurturing environment and are supportive of pupils' wellbeing needs. However, the broader impact that leaders hope to secure is yet to be seen. This is particularly true in relation to how these pathways enable pupils to rapidly close gaps in basic skills, such as reading and handwriting, and accelerate their academic achievement.

The school has strengthened its processes to accurately identify barriers to pupils' learning, including SEND. Staff receive appropriate information about the needs of pupils, alongside strategies that they can use to support their progress and development. Staff are more aware of these pupils and their needs than was the case at the time of the previous inspection. However, there remains variability in how effectively staff use the identified strategies to support pupils in lessons. This sometimes results in provision that is not well

matched to the individual requirements of these pupils. While staff have received training, including in how to deliver targeted support through planned interventions, the quality and impact of this varies and has not secured consistently effective practice.

Achievement

Published outcomes in the most recent national assessments remain below national comparators in many areas. However, the results of pupils in 2025 did improve. In many measures, they represent some of the highest rates of attainment pupils at the school have secured. Some measures, such as Attainment 8 for disadvantaged pupils, are now close to the national average. The attainment of those pupils who attended the school throughout their secondary education has particularly improved, and these pupils are better prepared for their next steps in education or training. Leaders rightly acknowledge that there remains more to do to ensure that all pupils achieve highly across all areas of the school's curriculum.

Current pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge linked to weaknesses in curriculum and teaching over time. For some pupils, these limit their ability to access current learning successfully. Although targeted support is in place to address such gaps, including for those pupils who join the school part way through their secondary education, this remains a work in progress.

Curriculum and teaching

Leaders have a secure understanding of the standard of provision that pupils receive, including its strengths and areas that require further improvement. The school has reviewed its curriculum and continues to strengthen this further, such as by collaborating with other schools within and beyond the trust. Leaders implement flexible solutions to maintain a broad curriculum offer. For example, deploying staff from elsewhere in the trust to teach subjects that could not otherwise be offered. Curriculum plans are appropriately considered and ambitious, sequencing pupils' learning logically over time.

Leaders have implemented a number of changes to how lessons are taught in the school. These are well thought out and appropriate. When used effectively, they contribute to improvements in pupils' experience of education, with staff using secure curriculum knowledge to explain new learning clearly. However, the teaching of the curriculum remains variable and does not consistently help pupils to overcome barriers, such as SEND. For many pupils, gaps in knowledge, including in basic reading skills and mathematics for some, persist. In some cases, these gaps are not being closed sufficiently rapidly and impact detrimentally on pupils' learning. The school has not secured consistency in how its intended approaches are implemented by staff. For example, strengthening how staff check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly remains a priority for the school.

About this inspection

The inspectors carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005, and it was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require significant improvement following the graded inspection that took place in May 2025.

The school's previous inspection was carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the school's graded inspection have been cross-referenced to the relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the school inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the school's progress in addressing priorities for improvement since the school's previous inspection.

Since the school's graded inspection in May 2025, there have been a number of significant changes to the school. Several staff are new to the school since that time. This includes some members of the school's senior leadership team. The trust's director of education and other directors are also deployed routinely in the school to support the principal and other leaders. Additionally, the chair of the trust has changed, with the current vice chair acting as interim chair.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, including the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with groups of pupils and staff. The lead inspector also met with trustees, including the interim chair of the trust, to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection.

Lead inspector

Thomas Wraith	His Majesty's Inspector
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Team inspector

Steve Shaw	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Cox	Ofsted Inspector

About this school

School capacity	600
Number of pupils on roll	480

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