

# Sir Charles Parsons School

Westbourne Avenue, Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 4D

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and other leaders are very ambitious for the high achievement of the students. Leaders check on the quality of teaching extremely effectively and this has ensured that students have made continued and increasing progress since the last inspection.
- The highly effective governing body makes an admirable contribution to the leadership and vision for the school. To realise this shared vision they are seeking to further develop sixth form provision with a partner secondary school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. They are very happy about their children's progress and the quality of support that they receive.
- Rigorous systems to check on students' progress ensure that anyone who falls behind can catch up quickly. This leads to a high proportion of students making better than expected progress in English and mathematics and in their personal development.
- Students across the school achieve outstandingly well in English. Progress in communication is of a very high quality because of skilled use of signs and symbols. The most able make excellent progress in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Teaching is outstanding. Very well-planned and often exciting activities engage students in their learning.
- Teachers very skilfully use assessment to help students engage with their learning. However, at times some students are less clear of the quality of their work and what they will learn next.
- The behaviour of students is exemplary. They work hard and live up to the high expectations set for them to ensure that their behaviour is outstanding. Students truly enjoy being in school and say they feel safe, secure and cared for well.
- High quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures students' personal development is outstanding.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students gain a wide range of qualifications and benefit from life skills courses that promote independence, self-confidence and well-being. This means they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons across the whole school. The headteacher accompanied an inspector on a learning walk.
- An inspector also met with eight students to talk about their work and experience of the school.
- The inspectors met with a number of staff, including the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with teachers from the partner secondary school, a representative from the local authority and governors of the school. A telephone conversation was held with a practitioner in social care who regularly works with the school.
- The inspectors looked at the work of the school, including students' behaviour, and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, self-evaluation and the school's system to check on students' progress. The inspectors examined students' work in different year groups.
- The inspectors looked at the school's recent parental questionnaire and held telephone conversations with parents. The inspector took account of the 10 parent responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sir Charles Parsons School provides for students who have a statement of special educational needs for severe, complex and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school caters for students aged 11 to 19 years and supports students from across the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
- Over two thirds of students are disadvantaged, those supported by the student premium, a much higher than average proportion. The student premium supports those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of students are White British, although there is a significant proportion of students, almost 22% and close to the national average, coming from ethnic minority backgrounds where English is not their first spoken language.
- There are significantly more boys on roll than girls and a small number of students who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school works in partnership with Walker Technology College to provide education for some of its sixth form students, including work experience.
- The school and the two classes at Walker Technology College do not enter students early for examinations.

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

- Ensure that all students know how well they have done in a subject and what they will need to learn next.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm, passion and energy. Together with the leadership team and governance of the school, he provides a clear vision for the school's continuous improvement.
- Senior leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate and they have a very strong focus on teaching and learning. They are highly effective in their use of external expertise to ensure continued improvement. For example, the high quality training for teachers on observing each other's lessons to improve their teaching, has led to greater sharing and understanding of outstanding practice.
- The leadership team works closely with the governing body and is purposeful in its actions to improve the quality of teaching. It makes sure that what is learnt from monitoring teachers' performance is used to determine the training and salaries staff should receive.
- Leaders have a very effective system for monitoring students' progress. This ensures that students' achievements are assessed regularly. This system is of an extremely high quality when checking on students' targets in their individual education plans.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects which interest students very well and ensures that they want to learn. This supports students' outstanding achievements, their physical skills and their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Activities, such as a ski trip to Poland help to promote students' social and cultural development exceedingly well.
- Senior and middle leaders have a very strong impact on students' outstanding behaviour through their positive encouragement and consistent systems for managing behaviour.
- Safeguarding meets requirements, with much effective practice strengthening the high quality of care and support for students and their families.
- Disadvantaged students now achieve as well as their other students in literacy and numeracy and sometimes better. Leaders spend the student premium funding wisely. They have identified that intervention programmes to develop literacy and numeracy skills have led to greater student confidence in applying these skills in other subjects.
- Leaders at all levels promote tolerance for all students and help them be very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Students say that staff make sure they know the difference between right and wrong, and the excellent relationships promote a good understanding of equality, different beliefs and issues of discrimination.
- The school, together with the partner secondary school, is very effective in monitoring and evaluating students' progress, attendance and behaviour to ensure that all students are achieving well at this alternative provision. Links with the wider community are excellent and work experience places for older students are very successful. Careers guidance is of a high quality and ensures that students have a realistic understanding of what is on offer for them.
- The local authority provides effective challenge to the school and has recently worked with governors to identify new models of leadership to support succession-planning to maintain high standards and sustained capacity for continued improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a passionate commitment to the school and students. They provide excellent support and know its strengths and weaknesses very well. Governors are fully involved in checking on teaching and behaviour and looking carefully at how well students are doing. They understand the use of data and know how the school compares with similar schools.
  - Governors make highly effective use of performance management to improve continuously the outcomes for students. The governors ensure particularly that the management of the headteacher's performance has an exceptional impact on school improvement.
  - Governors regularly access training to ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements. Financial management is good. Governors have used additional government funding considerably to improve the learning needs of those for whom it was intended.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. High expectations, excellent reflection on attitudes towards learning and highly positive staff role models are supporting students' outstanding behaviour in school and

at the college.

- Relationships are excellent between staff and students. Students are warmly welcomed each day, are happy to be there and ready to start their learning. Parents praise the communication and close working relationships they have with the school. Parental comments include, 'My son has very complex needs which affects his behaviour. The school's awareness of this means he is closely monitored to ensure the safety of others and him. Communication is excellent supporting excellent relationships with parents.'
- Staff are highly skilled in maintaining a positive atmosphere at all times. This is because they use skilled techniques to ensure that students are calm and stress free. In discussions, parents, staff and students speak extremely positively about the excellent standard of behaviour in school. Students take great pride in their work and are keen to share their work with teachers and others in the class.
- Conversations with students reveal that they have a very secure grasp of what constitutes bullying. They report that there are very few incidents of bullying and harassment. Students speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or concern. They demonstrate an excellent grasp of how to avoid risk and danger.
- Attendance is above average. This is because of the highly effective engagement with families, therapists and social workers.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Risk assessments are rigorous to ensure that students' individual needs are taken fully into account for any activity or visit.
- Through the curriculum, they learn how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school, including when attending work experience. Students were able to explain about using computers safely, not giving out their address or going off with strangers when out in the community.
- Older students in the sixth form have an excellent curriculum that covers safety extremely well. For example, the first-aid lessons provide students with skills that prepare them better for situations they may face in the community.

### The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching over time in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is outstanding and never less than good, ensuring that all groups of students make excellent progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations and help students deepen their understanding through exciting tasks, in order to make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. In a science lesson, a teacher used a task with keys and locks which illustrated very well how enzymes work. Students had a better understanding that enzymes have different shapes that allow molecules to fit in.
- Outstanding teaching has been achieved through a commitment by all staff to continue to develop and share their practice. Observing each other teach has raised staff expectations further for high quality teaching and learning.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge enables them to question and challenge students very effectively. They rigorously check students use their individual targets to focus on their attitudes, skills and behaviour for learning. However, sometimes they do not make it clear to students what they have learnt in the subject and what they will learn next.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught extremely well. The teaching of English typically engages students in the use of signing and symbols and for some communication aids. Teachers' very effective skills support communication and the high quality use of information and communication technology (ICT) supports students' learning outstandingly well.
- Excellent levels of support in literacy ensure that students can complete their task, offer their views and make the very best progress they can. Literacy skills are promoted very well across subjects.

### The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- As a result of their special educational needs and disabilities, most students' attainment is below national expectations when they start school. However, students' progress across year groups, in a wide range of subjects is consistently outstanding, as shown by school records. Inspection evidence shows that achievement in English and mathematics is outstanding.
- All groups of students, including the most able, disadvantaged students and those who speak English as

an additional language, achieve outstandingly well.

- The most able students make excellent progress in reading, writing and numeracy. This is because of teachers' high expectations of students and the very effective challenge they provide as a result.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is similar to that of other students in the school. This was very evident in an English lesson, for example, where students in Year 8 were involved in a role play of Macbeth to develop their language and literacy skills. All groups in that class achieved equally well, because of their excitement of being in the role and the high expectations of the teachers for them to act out the feelings of the characters based on what they had learnt in a previous lesson.
- Students make better than expected progress in reading. This is because they frequently read in school and skilled staff support them well in developing their communication and reading skills.
- Older students are well equipped for their future lives through a wide range of work and community experiences. Their independence, social and work-related skills are well developed through a well-chosen range of activities. They achieve well in the alternative provision.

### **The sixth form provision**

**is outstanding**

- Leadership and management in the sixth form are excellent. Leaders are ambitious to provide the best opportunities possible for the students in their personal and academic achievements. This is seen in the excellent commitment to provide mainstream education for the most able students. This supports them exceedingly well to grow in self-confidence and self-reliance and is providing them with skills they can use in their future employment.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Relationships between students and staff are outstanding and staff have an excellent understanding of students' individual needs. They are supported very well in their lessons and in their free time. Students get on exceedingly well with staff and know there is always someone to talk to.
- Progress is outstanding. This is seen in the excellent achievement in English and mathematics made because of the high focus on these areas. The most able students gain considerable confidence in their abilities to study GCSE and AS-level courses.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes are excellent because they are highly engaged in their activities and very respectful of the teaching staff. They are particularly encouraged to work independently and monitored closely on using safe practices in the practical areas.
- Students undertake well-planned work experience to ensure that they learn the skills they will need in their future employment. This is supported very effectively in the curriculum through life skills courses, such as hair and beauty, that develop their social skills and understanding of work situations extremely well.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131987
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	449540

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	52
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ashley Ferguson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Sharing
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 295 2280
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