

Report summary for parents and carers on Park Lane Special School

Date of inspection: June 2025

Summary

Park Lane School provides a nurturing, inclusive, and supportive environment where pupils feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. Its strong, family-oriented ethos is evident in the trusting relationships between staff, pupils, and their families. Teachers and support staff know their pupils exceptionally well and carefully tailor learning experiences to individual needs. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in key areas such as communication, independence, and life skills. Older pupils leave school with relevant qualifications and are well equipped for their next steps.

Teaching is a notable strength. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and highly engaging, with staff using a wide range of visual strategies and tools to support understanding. Teachers and support staff maintain high expectations, and classroom routines help pupils to remain focused and, over time, to develop their confidence. Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and develop practical life skills such as preparing food, managing personal routines, and navigating road safety fostering greater independence as they move through the school.

The school building does not fully meet pupils' complex needs. Issues include poor acoustics, overcrowded classrooms, limited mobility space, lack of breakout areas, and loss of specialist facilities. Growing pupil numbers are increasing pressure on toilets and personal care spaces, with challenges expected to worsen with a 30% increase in pupils from September.

Pupil well-being is at the heart of the school's approach. However, many pupils face long journeys to school, often arriving tired or dysregulated, which affects their well-being and readiness to learn. Despite this, the school has appropriate arrangements to support their needs effectively.

The pupil support team works in close partnership with staff and families to provide timely, tailored emotional and therapeutic support. Interventions such as counselling, music therapy, and sessions with a therapy dog are well embedded in daily life. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary across the school, and pupils are confident in seeking help when needed. Safeguarding is robust and well managed, with strong systems in place and clear oversight from trained staff and governors.

Under the leadership of a forward-thinking and compassionate headteacher leaders have established a clear and ambitious vision centred on pupil needs, curriculum development, and staff growth. Strong partnerships with other schools and external specialists have supported professional development and informed reflective practice, helping the school move forward with purpose.

The school's motto is **imagine, believe, and achieve**. Under the current leadership, the school has adapted well to range challenges and is a vibrant, caring, and ambitious community where pupils are supported and encouraged to imagine, believe and achieve.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

R1 Continue to share effective teaching practices across the school

R2 Continue to refine systems to evaluate the work of the school

R3 Work with the local authority to address issues in relation to accommodation and pupil transport

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

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