

Parkside Community School

Address: Boythorpe Avenue, Boythorpe, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2NS

Unique reference number (URN): 149370

Inspection report: 9 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Over recent years, leaders have improved the way they promote the importance of school attendance. As a result, attendance has markedly improved to be close to national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistently close to national averages. Leaders put in place effective measures to support pupils who struggle to maintain regular attendance. Leaders work well with parents and carers to develop effective support that helps these pupils attend regularly. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced remarkably over recent years.

Pupils live up to leaders' expectations that they respect each other and work well together in a positive learning community. They understand and follow the established routines at school. Pupils typically work hard in lessons. Social times are pleasant occasions during which pupils enjoy each other's company. Antisocial behaviour, including bullying, is rare. When necessary, staff correct pupils clearly and consistently follow the behaviour policy. Leaders have put effective measures in place to support pupils who find regulating their emotions and behaviour difficult. This includes those who sometimes demonstrate extreme behaviour. As a result, the number of suspensions has dramatically reduced over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

There is a well-designed curriculum in place. Curriculum plans are logically organised so that pupils can build what they know and understand over time.

Over recent years, leaders have improved the quality of teaching. Pupils generally experience effective teaching across the curriculum. However, because these improvements have only recently embedded, the impact of these changes is not consistently evident in pupils' achievement.

Staff demonstrate the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum accurately. Similarly, staff expertly adapt learning activities to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Well-trained additional adults assist teachers well to support the needs of pupils with SEND. However, at times, teachers do not choose learning activities that are sufficiently challenging for some pupils. When this happens, some pupils do not explore the curriculum as deeply as they could.

Staff typically check what pupils know and remember and provide timely support when necessary. At times, however, staff do not notice when a pupil forgets or misunderstands key knowledge.

Leaders quickly identify and put generally effective support in place for pupils needing extra support to read, write and use mathematics fluently. The support for pupils to improve their handwriting, however, is at an early stage of development.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have well-established approaches to identifying the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Starting when pupils are in primary school, leaders precisely learn about pupils' needs. Leaders put support and resources in place prior to pupils' arrival in Year 7 to ensure that pupils with SEND arrive confidently and make a positive start to secondary education. Working with parents, carers and external specialists, leaders provide helpful guidance and training for staff to understand pupils' needs and how best to support them. Leaders recognise when pupils' needs change and ensure that support is altered when necessary.

Leaders and staff share the commitment to enabling disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to social care to overcome barriers and thrive at school. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Similarly, leaders use additional funds effectively to provide any necessary support. Disadvantaged pupils achieve results at the end of Year 11 in line with national averages. Similarly, most disadvantaged pupils develop their interests and talents by taking part in clubs at school.

When necessary, leaders use alternative provision appropriately to support pupils' needs. They build effective partnerships with alternative providers and work in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the previous inspection, the school has joined Embark Trust. Shortly afterwards, the new headteacher established a new leadership team, which began to make the successful improvements at the school. Trustees, governors and leaders have effective processes in place to ensure they accurately understand the quality of the school's provision. Governors and trustees are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have the skills and commitment needed to meet their statutory duties. They provide leaders with the necessary support and challenge. When an area of the school falls short of their high expectations, governors and trustees hold leaders accountable and improvements are made.

Leaders have built an effective team of teachers and support staff. Staff share leaders' moral purpose and vision of the school. They are highly positive about the leadership of the school. Staff value the professional development that leaders put in place. For example, as a result of their training, subject leaders are gaining the confidence and skills needed to make further improvements. Similarly, staff appreciate how leaders give them the time needed to embed new practices within their teaching before introducing something new. Staff feel that leaders support staff well to maintain reasonable workload.

Leaders place a great focus on developing partnerships with parents, carers and members of the community. Parents are generally positive about the work of the school. For example, most parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel that their children receive the support they need to succeed.

The school's personal development programme supports pupils' preparation for life as young adults effectively. They are well equipped with the values needed to make positive contributions to society. This includes living in a diverse community. Pupils happily accept the different beliefs and lifestyles of the people around them. Staff ensure that pupils learn the key elements of British democracy. For example, pupils have opportunities to practise democratic processes such as voting in elections and serving in the school's pupil parliament. Similarly, pupils know the importance of serving others, such as through charitable fundraising.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They know how to eat well and understand the need to exercise regularly. Staff ensure that pupils learn how to maintain positive mental health. Pupils know that mental health is something they can improve and what to do when feeling low or anxious. Pupils also understand the features of positive and healthy relationships. For example, pupils learn about respect and consent. They are well prepared to keep themselves safe at home, in the community and when online.

Leaders have embedded highly effective pastoral care at the school. Staff are readily available for pupils throughout the school day. When facing turbulent times personally, pupils greatly value and benefit from the support that staff provide. Leaders have built strong partnerships with external agencies and community groups to provide support targeted at pupils' individual circumstances. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff ensure that pupils have lots of opportunities to develop understanding of the spiritual and cultural sides of life. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in the extra-curricular activities linked to the performing arts. Pupils proudly speak of their participation in 'Parkside's Got Talent' and the choir's performances at local venues.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Because teaching is better, pupils' achievement is improving. However, overall outcomes in national tests are not consistently close to national averages. In contrast, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are consistently in line with national averages.

In books and responses in lessons, pupils show more consistent achievement than in national tests. Further work is needed to ensure that pupils typically achieve what leaders intend. When pupils are given tasks that are not challenging enough, they do not reach the high levels of success that they could. Teachers' adaptations in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities help these pupils to learn well.

Pupils' understanding of the foundational skills of reading, writing and mathematics is improving. Pupils who join the school with underdeveloped reading skills are well supported. They learn what they need to become fluent, confident readers. Because leaders are still

developing their support, pupils with less-well-developed handwriting continue to struggle to write clearly.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school's caring ethos is evident as leaders and staff greet pupils at the start of the school day. Pupils appreciate how leaders and staff take the time to get to know their individual circumstances and enquire about their wellbeing. They feel safe because staff are attentive to their experiences at school, at home and in the community. Pupils are confident that staff would provide support if necessary.

Pupils accept each other's differences and build positive relationships with their peers, staff and leaders. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by staff so that it stops and does not recur. In lessons, pupils typically focus on their learning and work hard. They delight in the many ways the school recognises and celebrates pupils' success. Similarly, pupils value the way leaders reward regular attendance. Pupils' attendance has improved markedly because they enjoy school and are well supported to overcome barriers to attending school.

Pupils benefit from the better teaching that leaders have put in place over recent years. In particular, teachers arrange learning activities that typically meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving. Results in national tests for some subjects improved to be close to national averages. However, outcomes in national tests for some subjects remain below national averages.

Pupils are grateful for the opportunities they have to develop their understanding of the wider world and the career opportunities ahead of them. Leaders arrange for pupils to engage regularly with universities, employers and alumni who have been successful in their chosen careers. As a result, pupils have high career aspirations and nearly all make positive next steps into education, employment or training. Pupils also gain a lot from the educational visits to places of national and international interest, including trips abroad.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff match learning activities to what pupils need to learn next, including ensuring more challenging learning activities for pupils who are ready to explore what they are studying with greater sophistication.
 - Leaders should continue to refine the way staff help pupils who have underdeveloped handwriting.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Embark Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matthew Crawford, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David King.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the trust leader, trustees, the chair of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, volunteers at the school, parents and pupils during the inspection.

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.

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision, which is unregistered.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. The school joined Embark Multi Academy Trust on 1 April 2023. In November 2023, the headteacher joined the school.

Headteacher: Andrew Kelly

Lead inspector:

Al Mistrano, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Teresa Roche, Ofsted Inspector

Debbie Ridley, Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Whitney, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

572

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

600

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

51.92%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.37%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.41%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	31.5%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23		45.3%	

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	41.0	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.8	45.9	Below
2022/23		46.3	

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.39	-0.03	Below
2022/23		-0.03	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	24.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23		25.2%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23		35.0	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23		-0.57	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	24.4%	53.1%	-28.7 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	25.4%	53.1%	-27.7 pp
2022/23		52.4%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.6	50.4	-12.8
2023/24 (final)	30.7	50.0	-19.3
2022/23		50.3	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.72	0.16	-0.89
2022/23		0.17	

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022 leavers (revised)	85%	93%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.9%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.8%	8.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	28.4%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	34.2%	25.6%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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