Summarised inspection findings

Parkhill Secondary School

Glasgow City Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

Parkhill Secondary School is a non-denominational local authority special school, located in the east end of Glasgow. All the young people attending the school have a range of significant additional support needs, arising mainly from a learning disability, global delay and autistic spectrum conditions. At the time of the inspection, there were 52 young people attending the school. In September 2017 most pupils lived in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. Attendance is generally above the national average, and there have no exclusions at the school in the past four years.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:
- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- There is a very inclusive ethos in the school, which has been noted and positively endorsed by community partners and other visitors to Parkhill. There are also extremely positive relationships between and amongst young people and staff.

- Almost all young people are happy, confident and engaged in their learning. They enjoy their learning experiences, and take pleasure in having success and making progress with their education. They understand the purpose of their learning. They are developing their social skills in classes with their peers and also with those from other schools who attend and participate in the Enterprise Academy activities. Helpfully, they are being given opportunities to develop their independent living skills.

- Young people are becoming increasingly responsible and enjoy having the opportunity to lead learning in the school. They would benefit from further opportunities to lead learning in classes and by being encouraged to give their opinions on what they are learning. Young people are active in classes and can contribute to the life of the school in a number of ways. Areas of responsibility include, for example, house captains and vice captains, and leaders of learning who are 'champions' for particular aspects of the curriculum, such as literacy and numeracy. There are also opportunities for young people to become members of groups and committees such as the pupil council. A few young people have been trained as reading tutors and successfully mentor children at a local primary school, recommending books for them to read. This has helped young people to develop their social and work-related skills, and has been well received by the primary pupils.

- Teachers and support staff work well together to help young people to get the best out of every learning opportunity. They know young people, their needs and their backgrounds very well. Staff help each other to stay up to date with current information about young people. Whilst pace and challenge in most lessons is generally appropriate, teachers should continue to ensure that lessons are appropriately planned to differentiate work for all young people in an effective way.

■ There are specialist nurture facilities, enhanced by a whole school nurturing approach in which staff have been trained. This approach is a particular strength of the school and contributes positively to the overall ethos of inclusion. Similarly, the school's focus on the Career Education Standard (3-18) has ensured that lessons are now more carefully focused on developing young people's skills for learning, life and work. Partners agree that young people are now much more ready for the world of work due to this enhancement to the curriculum and how it is delivered.

■ Overall, staff are keen to ensure that their approaches work well for young people. Teachers are working well together to develop an agreed approach to make learning and teaching more consistent across the school, with common structures to lessons. Almost all teachers are using formative assessment techniques in their class. Similarly, almost all teachers are using plenaries at the end of lessons to ensure that young people can review what they have learned during a lesson. These have the potential to be extremely helpful for learners, but more work requires to be done to make them as effective as possible.

■ Teachers use a range of different methods of assessment to ensure that young people are learning appropriately. These assessments are helpful when they report on progress to parents, although more information about the degree of progress being made by young people could be included. Senior leaders are aware that there is a need to assess initiatives more fully to demonstrate measureable impact. For example, exploring how the Enterprise Academy is impacting on pupil wellbeing as well as on their attainment and positive destinations.

■ Assessments are providing increasingly reliable data for teachers and senior leaders to be able to demonstrate what young people have learned in lessons across the curriculum. These assessments include observation, summative tests and self-assessment by young people. Diagnostic testing gives staff feedback about how successful their teaching has been.

■ Teachers have increasing opportunities to moderate their assessment standards with others. Where possible, this is done within departments to improve consistency. The school also has an agreement with two similar local special schools to meet regularly and moderate standards with each other across curriculum areas. Teachers report that this is particularly helpful for them and there are plans to develop this further. Some staff take part in curriculum meetings which include teachers from across the authority and it is anticipated that these will become increasingly helpful.

■ Teachers are planning appropriately to organise learning opportunities for young people, whilst meeting their needs and taking account of their backgrounds. They work well with support staff to ensure that appropriate interventions are used to improve outcomes for learners. Every department produces a yearly plan and this informs termly plans, which include planning for skills for learning life and work, higher order thinking skills, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

■ Departments across the school track the coverage of experiences and outcomes for young people in their classes. They have differing approaches to tracking and monitoring, and it is not always clear whether or not individuals are making appropriate progress with their learning, particularly in the broad general education (BGE). Senior leaders have designed a spreadsheet to link departmental data about young people and bring it together in one place. Whilst this is to be developed further, it is a helpful step in rationalising the available data for each young person. They should continue with their plans to bring more consistency to departmental approaches to tracking progress and to clarify the degree of progress being made by young people.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

■ The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Most young people are making good progress in listening and talking, and reading, and satisfactory progress in writing. A few young people are making very good progress in developing their literacy skills. The majority of learners are making good progress in numeracy with a minority making satisfactory progress. In the senior phase, most are projected to gain good National Qualifications this session in literacy and numeracy.

Literacy and English
- **Listening and talking:** Across all stages, most young people are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all are able to follow instructions, with the support of visual prompts or gestures when appropriate. Most can listen well to each other and to staff, take turns in group discussions and use appropriate body language. Senior learners are developing their confidence in presenting ideas to others, for example by sharing aspects of their learning at assemblies or showing visitors around the school. With the support of targeted programmes, most young people are developing their confidence in talking about their feelings and emotions.

- **Reading:** Most young people are able to share and discuss text, and give reasons for likes and dislikes appropriate to their stage of development. Learners working towards achieving first level know the difference between letters and words, and use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. A few young people working towards achieving second level are able to read with understanding and expression, using appropriate pace and tone. They can make relevant comments about characterisation and use of language in different genres. Teachers should continue to reflect on their methods to support the development of reading skills for those young people who find reading challenging.

- **Writing:** Learners working within early level are writing in a variety of imaginary and real life contexts. They develop their ideas using a range of stimuli. The majority can use capital letters and simple punctuation. A few learners working within second level are able to create a variety of short and extended texts for different purposes, using appropriate vocabulary to suit the purpose and audience. Teachers should continue to develop young people's writing across all stages of the school. This includes providing more detailed feedback about pieces of writing to help learners know what they need to do to improve.

Numeracy and mathematics
- Based on the tracking evidence provided by the school, supported by inspection activities, overall young people in the senor phase are making better progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of young people in the BGE are also making good progress but can have difficulty in retaining the numeracy skills they have developed.

- Given the needs of learners, teachers place great emphasis on young people building numeracy skills which will support them with independent living. Therefore, young people spend a considerable amount of time working on number handling and developing their understanding of money. Most young people are adept at adding and subtracting up to four digit numbers depending on their stage. Young people across the school are also making progress in developing their knowledge of money and measurement at a level appropriate to their stage. Almost all young people are able to tell the time on an analogue clock when o'clock or half past, with most also able to recognise quarter past and quarter to the hour. At all levels, young people are building their confidence in recognising and describing two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects at a level appropriate to their stage. Most young people are able to convert successfully between millimetres and centimetres and can create pictures using symmetry. As appropriate, young people are also learning to use information handling skills, such as simple bar charts and line graphs, and interpreting charts and symbols.

- There are a number of examples of young people developing their numeracy and mathematics skills across other areas of the curriculum, often within real and relevant contexts. Teachers should now build on this by ensuring that all learning in numeracy and mathematics across the curriculum builds on prior learning, provides sufficient challenge and offers young people opportunities to apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts. This will support young people to retain, consolidate and apply their numeracy and mathematical skills.

Attainment over time

- In the senior phase, almost all young people are attaining a good range of National Qualifications and wider awards. Last session, more pupils achieved National 3 qualifications than the previous year, 13 young people attained a National 4 qualification and a few attained National 5 units. Overall, in recent years there is an increasing trend in the number and range of units, courses and group awards which young people are attaining across most curricular areas. Young people are attaining best in English, art, social studies, physical education and information communication technology. Senior leaders are aware of a few curricular areas which are performing less well, and should continue to monitor this to ensure improvements in attainment over time across all areas of the curriculum. Young people are also developing valuable skills for life and work, and gaining accreditation from a range of vocational courses, delivered through the school's Enterprise Academy. This includes qualifications in professional cookery, horticulture and administration.

- Data provided during the inspection indicates that further work is required to improve confidence in teachers' professional judgements about achievement of a level in the BGE. Teachers recognise the need for continued opportunities for moderation, including with other local schools, to support this work. Senior leaders should now be more rigorous in their use of data to evidence progress in the BGE, including the impact of targeted support on young people's outcomes. It would be particularly helpful to look more closely at attainment over time, and to monitor the progress of different cohorts of learners, such as care experienced learners and those from areas of greatest disadvantage.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Supported by a wide range of initiatives, young people are achieving very well across the four capacities. They are making very good progress in building their confidence, taking responsibility and contributing to the life of the school. Learners take on a range of worthwhile roles including buddies, anti-bullying ambassadors, junior road safety officers, pupil council representatives, house captains and leaders of learning.

- Through participation in an array of personal achievement activities, young people develop important skills for life, learning and work. Supported by effective partnerships, young people engage in for example, enterprise workshops, work placements, employability training, residential trips, fundraising events and a number of sporting and physical activity lunchtime and after-school clubs. Young people and parents speak very highly of these opportunities and the positive impact this has on confidence, resilience and social skills.

- Young people gain a range of awards for their achievements, including Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and Caledonian Awards. Commendably, this session a number of young people are on track to gain a diamond Caledonian Award and a Duke of Edinburgh's silver award. The school also has four Eco-flags and is working towards achieving a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender + (LGBT+) award for its work in celebrating diversity and equal rights.

- Staff have started to track young people's achievements, both in and out of school. In taking this forward, they should ensure that achievements are progressive, and that any young people at risk of missing out are identified and supported to achieve to their full potential.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the additional support needs and socio-economic background of their learners. They work closely with parents and partners to provide tailored support for individuals. There is strong evidence of young people who have struggled to attend previous schools, making significant improvements in their attendance following admission to Parkhill. Attendance at the school is above the national average and there have been no exclusions at the school for the past four years.

- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is being used to support young people's wellbeing. Developments include improvements to the playground, after-school club funding, art therapy and a healthy eating programme. A new fitness suite is also being developed. There is evidence of these initiatives having a positive impact for targeted young people. For example, improving their self-confidence and relationships with others, as well as increasing their participation in playground activities.

- In 2018 all young people who left the school moved on to sustained post-school positive destinations. These included modern apprenticeships, further education, training and full-time employment.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - wellbeing

■ Positive relationships between staff and young people are a very strong feature of the school. Nurturing approaches are evident across all areas of the school and this supports young people to feel safe, valued and nurtured. Young people believe staff are welcoming, caring and approachable. As a result, young people are comfortable sharing any concerns that they may have about their education or any other personal matters affecting their wellbeing. This is supporting young people to maintain high levels of attendance, engage well in classes and improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

■ Social and emotional assessments are used effectively to identify barriers to young people's learning and influence wellbeing and assessment plans for all learners. Individualised health and wellbeing strategies and targets are in place for each young person. These are helping young people to engage better with their learning, manage social situations, cope with change, try new things and respond more positively when they are anxious or distressed. Staff now need to monitor young people's progress with their targets more carefully. Within the Thistle nurture base, young people are learning valuable skills to help them to be able to identify and talk about their feelings and how they can better self-regulate their behaviour if they become upset. Health and wellbeing lessons are developing young people's skills. They are learning to work with others in a classroom, build and sustain friendships, keep themselves safe and eat healthily.

■ The school has focused on improving young people's wellbeing as a key priority. It is spending their PEF allocation on this area through extra sporting resources such as a fitness suite and climbing wall, introducing a free breakfast club and by covering additional transport costs for young people, allowing them to participate in after-school activities. This is having a positive impact on young people's confidence, fitness, social skills and self-esteem.

The school provided the following additional evidence to support the inspection findings in relation to numeracy and mathematics:

- Mathematics department tracking information
- Mathematics department year plans
- Mathematics diagnostic testing data
- Further evidence of current attainment levels
- Analysis of SQA entries
- Evidence of learning about information handling

Practice worth sharing more widely

The emerging work of the school's Enterprise Academy which is supporting young people with additional support needs to develop skills for work.

The school's approaches to promoting and celebrating diversity through their work on LGBT+.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.