

# Parkside Academy

**Address:** Greengate Street, BARROW-in-FURNESS, Cumbria, LA13 9BY

**Unique reference number (URN):** 142249

## Inspection report: 20 January 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.

## Strong standard ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is high and remains above the national average. Leaders analyse attendance patterns thoroughly and work closely with families to remove any barriers that might prevent pupils from attending school regularly. This work leads to sustained improvements over time. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend significantly better than their peers nationally.

Pupils behave very well. They are polite, courteous and consistently respectful towards staff and each other. Leaders have established clear and high expectations for behaviour, which pupils understand and meet. As a result, pupils show high levels of self-discipline. The school is a calm, orderly and purposeful environment where learning continues without disruption. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour is rare, and staff deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and trust adults to help them if they have concerns. They play well together at social times and move sensibly around the school.

Because of leaders' highly effective work to promote attendance and positive behaviour, pupils flourish and develop a strong sense of belonging.

### Early years

Strong standard ●

Children make an excellent start to their education in the early years. Children in the 2- and 3-year-old provision benefit from high-quality care and education that is carefully matched to their age and stage of development. Staff work closely with parents and carers to understand each child's experiences and starting points. This enables staff to build effectively on what children already know and can do.

Staff interactions with children are consistently expert. They model language skilfully and extend children's vocabulary through purposeful questioning. For example, children explain their ideas using the new words they have learned. Staff use precise vocabulary intentionally during activities and routines. As a result, children develop a broad vocabulary that they use confidently in their everyday talk.

The early years curriculum is well designed and builds children's knowledge systematically across all areas of learning. Reading is prioritised from the start. Children in Reception learn phonics securely and read books that are closely matched to the sounds they already know. This helps them to become fluent and accurate readers. Staff place a high priority on developing children's independence. Consequently, children quickly become confident in managing their belongings and making choices about their learning.

Children achieve well from their starting points. Staff act swiftly to support any child who needs extra help. This ensures that all children make rapid progress. Children leave the early years very well prepared for Year 1.

## **Inclusion**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders have created an inclusive culture where all pupils thrive. Staff understand the barriers that some pupils face and use this knowledge to provide well-targeted support. This helps pupils to access the school's ambitious curriculum successfully. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work closely with external agencies to give highly effective support to pupils who may be vulnerable. They also use alternative provision appropriately and check carefully that pupils who attend it make the progress they should and remain safe.

Leaders meet the needs of pupils with SEND with a high level of expertise. They provide staff with high-quality training, which helps teachers to adapt lessons effectively. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that support remains relevant and helpful. As a result, pupils with SEND learn key knowledge alongside their peers, develop independence and achieve well.

Leaders use additional funding thoughtfully to remove the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. They check the impact of this support closely. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND take part fully in the wider life of the school, including the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities. Because of the school's highly inclusive approach, vulnerable pupils achieve well.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders have established a well-considered personal development programme that prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Pupils build secure knowledge across the relationships and sex education curriculum and develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, including consent. They know how to keep themselves safe, both in person and online. Pupils learn about diversity and gain a clear understanding of differences between people, including those of different religions and beliefs.

Pupils develop their character through an extensive range of meaningful opportunities. They enjoy taking part in the school's successful sports teams and singing in the choir. Leaders design purposeful experiences that broaden pupils' horizons. Older pupils speak positively about the residential visit to London, which develops their independence and teamwork. These experiences help pupils to build resilience.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access all opportunities. They remove barriers to participation so that every pupil benefits from the school's wide offer. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They can explain how values such as democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect apply in their daily lives.

Pupils value the leadership responsibilities available to them. They relish opportunities to become eco-warriors or school councillors. These roles build pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. Pupils are proud of their school and the opportunities it provides. The

school's thoughtfully designed programme helps pupils to become confident, responsible young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum, including in the school's published outcomes from national tests. They remember what they have learned in different subjects and are keen to learn more. Pupils are prepared suitably for the next stage of their education.

Pupils learn new knowledge over time and can recall what they have been taught. Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive effective support, which helps them to overcome barriers to learning. These pupils achieve appropriately from their starting points.

Most pupils read fluently. Pupils develop secure knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics and use vocabulary well when talking about their learning. However, in some subjects, pupils do not make strong links with what they have learned before. As a result, their understanding is not as deep as it could be.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have taken sensible steps to improve curriculum design and delivery. Leaders have set out an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. They have thought carefully about the order in which learning is taught so that pupils build knowledge over time. Reading is a priority. Staff use phonics to help pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Most pupils read fluently.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to help pupils learn new ideas across subjects. They spot pupils' misconceptions quickly and address them. Teachers model new learning clearly and use questioning to check pupils' understanding. Leaders provide training that develops teachers' expertise, so staff have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum as planned. Teachers adapt their teaching to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the learning.

Teachers help pupils to develop their vocabulary and language, which supports their understanding across the curriculum. Overall, pupils learn well in most subjects. However, the activities that teachers choose are not consistently effective. Some activities do not help pupils to deepen their knowledge or make links with prior learning. As a result, some pupils do not develop secure and detailed understanding in a few subjects.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's context and its priorities for improvement. They are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve well and experience success. Leaders pay appropriate attention to pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or pupils who face barriers to learning. This helps to ensure that these pupils are fully included in school life and make steady progress. Leaders have identified suitable actions for further improvement.

Trustees and governors understand their roles and meet their statutory duties. They work with leaders to set the strategic direction of the school. Governors receive appropriate information and visit the school regularly. This supports their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, they provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

Leaders ensure that staff benefit from relevant professional learning opportunities. This training helps staff to develop their teaching practice. Staff feel valued and motivated. Leaders take reasonable steps to manage staff workload and wellbeing. As a result, staff support leaders' ambition to improve outcomes for pupils.

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

Pupils thrive at Parkside Academy. Staff are deeply interested in each pupil's needs and ensure that they feel safe and valued. Pupils who join the school at different times settle in quickly. Staff help them to make friends and develop a strong sense of belonging. Pupils know who to talk to if they are worried. They are confident that adults will deal with any concerns well. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with swiftly when it happens.

Pupils are happy and flourish at school. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and to each other. They enjoy their learning and talk positively about their lessons. Pupils' attendance is high, reflecting their enjoyment of school and their strong sense of belonging. They enjoy playing with their friends at breaktimes.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils sing in the choir, play in sporting teams and take on responsibilities such as becoming eco warriors or school councillors. These experiences help pupils to grow in confidence.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum. Children in the early years make an excellent start to their education. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum and develop their knowledge in a range of subjects. Staff identify barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged extremely well. They make well-considered adaptations that help these pupils learn the curriculum successfully. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education and develop the attitudes and routines they need for future learning.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers design activities that help pupils to build depth in their knowledge across the curriculum.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Furness Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Simon Laheney, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jackie Arnold.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and several other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the trust leadership, including the CEO. The lead inspector spoke to the chair of the trustees and the vice-chair of the local governing board. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout. They also spoke to some parents.

Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered and one unregistered alternative provision. There is provision for 2- and 3-year-old children at the school. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Anthony Costa

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### Lead inspector:

Mark Hazzard, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Emma Jackson, Ofsted Inspector

Keith Wright, Ofsted 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 20 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**281**

Close to 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: 272

### School capacity

**300**

Close to 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: 300

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**42.03%**

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: 26.3%

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

**3.91%**

Close to 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: 3.5%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**14.95%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 15%

### **Location deprivation**

**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**

#### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	61%	61%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	71%	62%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	56%	61%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	59%	60%	Close to average

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	74%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	79%	75%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	65%	74%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	64%	73%	Below

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	73%	72%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	79%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	71%	72%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	72%	71%	Close to average

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	74%	73%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	75%	74%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	71%	73%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	77%	73%	Close to average

## **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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	54%	46%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	64%	47%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	53%	46%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	50%	44%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	63%	62%	Close to average

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	63%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	63%	62%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	58%	60%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	59%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	59%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	68%	58%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	63%	58%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	69%	60%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	61%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	68%	59%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	67%	59%	Close to average

### **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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	54%	68%	-14 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	64%	69%	-6 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	53%	67%	-15 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	50%	66%	-16 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	63%	80%	-17 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	81%	-8 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	63%	80%	-17 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	58%	78%	-20 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	78%	-11 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	78%	-6 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	68%	78%	-9 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	63%	77%	-15 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	69%	80%	-11 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	81%	-8 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	68%	79%	-11 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	67%	79%	-13 pp

### **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (2 term)</b>	4.1%	5.2%	Below
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	4.0%	5.5%	Below
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	3.6%	5.9%	Below

## 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 (2 term)	10.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.6%	16.2%	Below

## 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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