

Material change inspection report

11 February 2026

Parkside House School

Station Road

Backworth

Tyne and Wear

NE27 0AB

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Inspection outcome

The school has submitted a material change request to increase the maximum number of pupils from 80 to 95.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 11, 12, 14 and 16

1. Leaders, staff and governors work well together to promote a vigilant and robust safeguarding culture. The safeguarding policy is clearly written, reviewed appropriately and reflects current statutory guidance. The proprietor provides thorough oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures, including by meeting with the safeguarding team, scrutinising documentation and checking the single central record of appointments (SCR) and recruitment procedures.
2. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained for their role. Leaders have expanded the safeguarding team in preparation for the proposed material change. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities meet regularly to discuss any emerging and ongoing safeguarding concerns and carefully consider the actions they take. They maintain timely and constructive links with local safeguarding partners and refer concerns to them when necessary. Leaders maintain clear safeguarding records that reflect the requirements of *Keeping children safe in education* (KCSIE).
3. Staff receive thorough safeguarding training, including at induction. For instance, they are provided with the latest updates to the 'Prevent' duty so that they remain alert to the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation. Leaders provide staff with specific training opportunities that extend their understanding and skills to manage circumstances relating to vulnerable pupils effectively. Staff receive training relating to low-level concerns and the school's whistleblowing policy. They understand how to respond to, report and record any safeguarding concerns.
4. Leaders promote a nurturing and supportive school environment that prioritises pupils' wellbeing. Pupils understand the importance of requesting help, if required, and know how to do so. For example, leaders remind pupils of the identity of members of the safeguarding team by displaying posters prominently around school. Pupils are provided with a suggestion box so that they can request support through this mechanism should they wish to do so.
5. Staff teach an appropriate personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. This helps pupils to learn how they can protect themselves by taking responsible decisions, including when online. For instance, pupils are guided not to share any personal information when using the internet and to be respectful and inclusive when using social media. The school implements a secure internet monitoring and filtering system that sends alerts directly to senior staff. Leaders investigate any alerts they receive appropriately and maintain clear records of the actions they take.
6. The school's health and safety procedures are thorough and effective. Leaders conduct regular visual checks of both school sites. They take prompt and suitable actions in response to any identified health and safety issues. Required regulatory checks are carried out systematically. The proprietor

provides ongoing oversight of the management of health and safety practices. The health and safety policy is implemented effectively.

7. Leaders implement robust procedures to mitigate the risk from fire. Evacuation routes are clearly marked. Pupils rehearse how to leave buildings quickly and safely in case of an emergency. A suitable number of staff are trained as fire wardens. Fire safety equipment is regularly checked and tested.
8. Pupils are supervised appropriately during the school day. Staff are approachable and visible when pupils arrive at, and depart from, the school. During breaktimes, a suitable number of staff supervise pupils and provide support if required. The current staffing levels are sufficient to ensure that pupils will continue to be supervised well should the proposed material change be implemented.
9. Leaders identify, mitigate and manage potential risks effectively. They implement detailed welfare plans to support vulnerable pupils. A comprehensive schedule of risk assessments covers both school sites and a range of educational trips and visits. Risk assessments are evaluated thoroughly and promptly so that they continue to identify and mitigate specific risks effectively.
10. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21

11. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks before adults begin working at the school. These checks are recorded on a suitable SCR.
12. Leaders with specific responsibilities for implementing the school's safer recruitment practices receive specific training for their role. They ensure that the school's recruitment procedures are thorough, managed competently and reflect current statutory guidance.
13. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

14. The premises and accommodation at both school sites provide suitable and well-maintained facilities. The accommodation provides sufficient capacity and space for the proposed increase in the maximum number of pupils.
15. Sufficient private and well-maintained toilet and washing facilities are provided for pupils.
16. The school's accommodation, on both sites, provides pupils with appropriate first aid, medical and therapy facilities.
17. The school's well-managed health and safety procedures mean that the premises and accommodation are suitable and well maintained. Leaders have implemented a clear procedure for staff to report any health and safety concerns. Those with designated health and safety responsibilities take prompt and effective action when any such concerns come to their attention.
18. Leaders ensure that acoustics and lighting throughout the school are suitable and maintained appropriately.
19. Leaders undertake regular and required checks relating to the quality and temperature of water. Suitable drinking water outlets are clearly labelled.

- 20. Pupils are provided with suitable recreational and play areas inside and outdoors.
- 21. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

- 22. A suitable safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- 23. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34

- 24. Senior leaders demonstrate secure knowledge and skills and discharge their responsibilities competently. School policies are reviewed promptly and implemented effectively. Leaders promote a consistently nurturing school environment that supports pupils' wellbeing effectively.
- 25. In advance of the proposed material change to increase the number of pupils, leaders have successfully implemented plans to refurbish existing classroom facilities to provide pupils with a broader range of vocational courses.
- 26. The proprietor, directors and governing committees provide thorough and robust oversight of the school's work. They have worked closely with leaders to prepare effectively for this proposed material change.
- 27. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Parkside House School
Department for Education number	392/6011
Address	Parkside House School Station Road Backworth Tyne and Wear NE27 0AB
Phone number	0191 216 1051
Email address	admin@parksidehouseschool.co.uk
Website	www.parksidehouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Mr Richard Power
Headteacher	Mrs Belinda Young
Age range	10 to 19
Number of pupils	80
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 May 2023

Information about the school

28. Parkside House School is an independent co-educational day school situated in two sites in Backworth, Tyne and Wear and Ashington, approximately 15 miles away from each other. The school educates pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially pupils who have behavioural and emotional needs and moderate learning difficulties. The school is part of the Acorn Care and Education group of schools who provide oversight of the management of the school. This group of schools is also known as the Outcomes First Group. The previous inspection of the school was by Ofsted. This is the first inspection of the school by ISI.
29. The school has identified 80 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
30. The school has identified that a very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).
31. The school states that its aims are to provide a high-quality education for pupils who have difficulties in relating to education or others within a mainstream educational setting. It endeavours to focus on each pupil's individual needs and to provide a safe, nurturing and supportive environment. The school aims for all pupils to grow to their full potential, and to prepare them well to make a positive contribution to society.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

11 February 2026

32. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

33. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- health and safety tours of both the Backworth and Ashington sites to determine if the school's premises and accommodation could accommodate an increase in pupil capacity from 80 to 95
- discussions with the chair and the regional director of the proprietor body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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