

2024-25 School Report

Parkdale Primary

Date of Birth: 1929



**PARKDALE
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Learning to Love . Loving to Learn

Parkdale's Year

For more details on our teaching and learning topics, please visit [www.https://parkdale-primary.co.uk/{Year}/](https://parkdale-primary.co.uk/{Year}/)

Introduction

For the first time, we are trialling an end-of-year update to our community. We're a very busy setting and, while we try to share as much as we can, we're aware that there is a lot to keep up with.

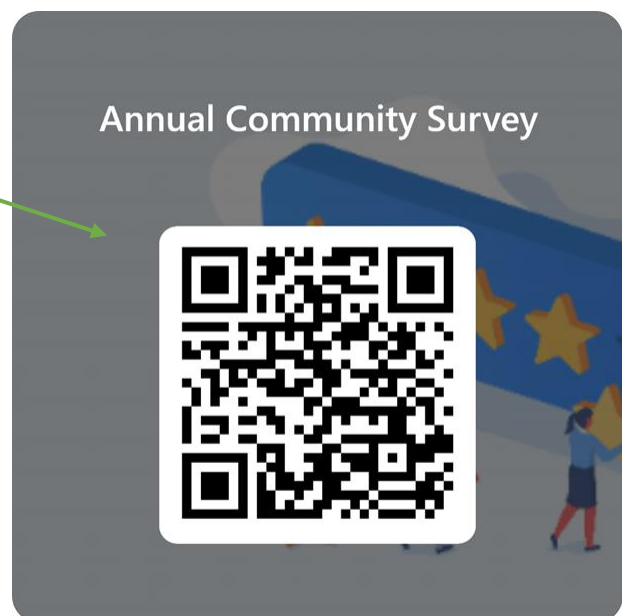
What follows is a report on some key events, news, initiatives, changes and for the year 2024-5. It's largely a celebration, but we've tried to be honest and reflect on challenges and things we'll aim to do better going forward. It's a long report, so it starts with a summary in case that's all you have the time or inclination for!

Feedback

Teaching staff put a lot of effort into reports to parents – we estimate 25 hours unpaid additional hours per teacher/ class. No one's complaining – we know we get lovely long holidays! We'd love to know how you feel about what you are sent and how you feel (y)our school is doing. We'd ask for a few minutes of your time to help us with this.

Feedback on our reports and on our year is very welcome; encouraged, in fact. We'd ask everyone to complete our end of year survey and feedback on your child's report. This, positive or constructive criticism, helps us to know if we're on the right track!

It's much, much shorter than in previous years – really!



<https://forms.office.com/e/2riPHYBm3j>

In Summary

| Category | Stars we'd give ourselves/5 | Notes |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Academic Outcomes | 4 **** | From very low starting points on entry, rapid and sustained progress to meet national averages by end of Reception and into KS1, well above national averages by end of KS2. We achieve this despite chronic under-funding and bucking all national downward trends post Covid. We're in the top 10-15%. We're not the highest, but we are proud to achieve our results without becoming one of those schools that just focuses on tested subjects and 'hothouses' children. |
| Behaviour | 4 **** | Not the five stars it would've been a few years ago, but still very good. More challenging post-Covid – we still have cohorts who missed large parts of their early experience of school and some of the socialisation that happens then. A small number of children present persistent challenges and we have to do more and more to manage these. There's marginally more minor disruption in class – though still very extremely rare – possibly a result of there being fewer extra adults to support these days. The vast majority of children are outstanding and are recognised as such by anyone who visits and everywhere we go. Behaviour continues to be a large factor in why we remain a school people want to send their children to – we've got large waiting lists for transfers from other schools into all of our year groups – and where people want to work. |
| Attendance | 3 *** | A concern. Hovering around national average and likely to be a problematic challenge at Ofsted. While many children have outstanding attendance, too many are persistent absentees and take unauthorised holidays. Particularly concerning in Nursery and Reception. |
| Curriculum Offer | 5 ***** | As wide and varied as it gets. Broad and balanced with an emphasis on whole-child development not just test results. Strong on physical activity, creativity, digital technology and developing outdoor education. A focus on wellbeing and mindfulness that is possibly unique. |
| Enrichment | 5***** | A wide range of extra activities, clubs, visits and residential experiences. Unusual in offering weekly outdoor education to all. Possibly unique in the weekly and daily enrichment and active times. We'd like to be able to afford to have a specialist running sports clubs again, but we can't! |

| | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| Special Needs Provision | 3 *** | <p>An area we're having to work really hard on as more and more children with highly complex needs enter the school. Like many schools, we have not been able to keep up in terms of resources and facilities. SEND funding is in crisis nationally and we are at the sharp end of this. We cannot meet needs as well as we'd like. We no longer have the capacity to support children at risk of falling behind as well as we once could. We don't have the money and don't have the staff. We try incredibly hard though! 5 stars for effort.</p> |
| Pastoral Care and Wellbeing | 5 ***** | <p>We are unusual as a primary in having a dedicated pastoral team. They have a huge caseload as almost 50% of our children have some social or emotional vulnerability. We would always like to offer more, but within the constraints we operate to, we offer a high level of service that increasingly has to provide services, sadly no longer available outside of school; counselling, therapy, mental health support, parenting support, support for young carers, support for families in crisis. We check in globally on every individual's wellbeing every term and intervene with every single negative flag. We think we're unique in this.</p> <p>Our behaviour systems are supportive not just punitive and we have numerous children with personalised plans to support them socially and emotionally. Bullying is rare; when it happens and we're made aware of it, our anti-bullying procedures are highly effective and considered exemplary practice.</p> |
| Community Engagement and Communication | 4 **** | <p>Something we've worked very hard to improve this year. We try to make the community involved in school through high levels of communication and consultation, both of which we're seen as 'unusual'. We have deliberately set out on a journey this year to increase the number of celebrations and events families are invited in for and aim to increase this further.</p> <p>Senior Leaders are accessible and available outside at the start and end of every day and we think this is pretty rare.</p> <p>We've worked hard to be inclusive and are again unusual as a state maintained school in celebrating Eid and other festivals, making sure our collective worship is multi-faith (including none) whilst still maintaining the Christian foundations we legally have to.</p> <p>We work tirelessly to support good causes, globally and locally, this year from War Child, Children In Need, our continual support of Hope Nottingham to smaller things like the choir going out to sing in residential homes at Christmas.</p> |

The Detail

Academic Outcomes

The key reportable measures continue to be strong.

GLD – Good Level of Development is the measure at the end of Reception, percentage of children at expected levels all-round. Increasingly, our cohorts arrive with us at very low baselines and with low levels of 'school-readiness', especially if they haven't attended our own nursery. This year, we projected 50% GLD, but actually achieved 67, in line with national average and very historically typical for Parkdale.

Phonics Having projected around 50% of Year One children to meet the standard, the outcome was 77%, which is around national average. This represents outstanding progress for this cohort from their starting points.

MTC As every year, our reportable figure (72%) was well above national average (29%) and represented our highest ever score in the 4 years of this test.

KS2 Our results were significantly higher than national average in all subjects and in the key measure of 'Combined' – pupils achieving at least expected in all of Reading, Writing and Maths. This has been the case for at least the last ten years.

Behaviour and Relationships

There continue to be high expectations, but with a lot of support to meet those. We remain unusual as a primary school in having a pastoral team who can offer a lot of emotional support, friendship building, life-skills and someone to talk to.

Our most recent Ofsted graded us Outstanding for Behaviour and Outstanding for Personal Development. We think that things we have introduced since then make that even stronger. Data – incidents, exclusions etc strongly supports this. Similarly, anecdotal 'evidence'. Visitors, supply staff, quality assurance colleagues from the Trust, volunteer helpers, people we meet when out and about... all comment on the positive behaviour and how it compares to other schools. It's not perfect – children and adults can all make mistakes and none of us are perfect - and it's getting harder and we face more challenging behaviour from a small minority, but genuinely none of us know a place where it's as good! It's the reason most often cited by the numerous people who have children on our lengthy waiting lists. That and our reputation for inclusion and happy multiculturalism.

We've recognised some hotspots or flashpoints, the key one being football at play times. We doubt there's a school in the country that doesn't have this to contend with. Rather than ban football, as some have, we've taken what we think is a very 'Parkdale' approach and decided to organise it and get staff out doing extra duties to properly ref and supervise. It's a bit of extra work, but it's gone really well and we're glad we did. We're seeing fewer fall-outs, injuries and problems coming back into class.

Digital Learning

We are in the 2nd year of our 2023-26 Apple accredited school status. This recognises the positive impact digital technology has on our children's learning. We remain committed to the concept of 1-1 iPads to enhance and extend teaching and learning possibilities, while remaining strongly focussed on traditional methods too.

Artsmark

We are two years into a very rigorous process to become Artsmark accredited. This challenging accreditation depends on the arts being highly valued and embedded in our daily lives. We were delighted to be awarded Silver accreditation, the highest we could have achieved at this point in the journey. Next stop... Gold, we hope.

Creating Active Schools

We undertook to achieve Creating Active Schools accreditation and are making such good progress with this that we have been asked to be part of a study of outstanding practice by CAS themselves and also the University of Bradford Department of Child Development. The cornerstones remain: a commitment to at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily – on top of PE lessons; a commitment to being active in lessons with no child being made to sit still for prolonged periods; an expanding range of sports and other physical activity on offer; efforts to engage the community in physical activity.

Parkdale Pines

A long-held ambition to have a facility to further develop outdoor education was achieved with the opening of Parkdale Pines. All children have regular access to this and enjoy getting closer to nature, which all evidence suggests is great for their wellbeing. We recognise the challenge to keep this 'fresh' and make sure that we build on what children experience year-on-year, rather than just keep on repeating activities. There'll need to be some training and professional development for staff around this – few of us are Outdoor Ed experts. Yet.

Special Needs

We have a very positive reputation for our provision for children with special needs and/or disability. As a result, we receive a significant number of applications from outside of catchment for pupils with a diagnosed special needs, where families feel they will get better provision here than in their catchment school. We are grateful and appreciative of this. It does present challenges. We are home to an increasingly high number of pupils with complex and profound needs, some of whom in the past would have been likely to secure a place in a special school. These places are increasingly rare – there is a real shortage. We are delighted to welcome all children and will meet whatever needs we can. We have limits to our resources and facilities, so this stretches us. We're happy to stretch!

Parallel to this, there is a crisis in local funding for additional support. The system operates on a 'pot' for our local family of schools, based around Carlton le Willows. This pot no longer meets local needs, so bids for additional funding, for example to bring in 1-1 support, tend to be rejected where once they would have been successful. Even when successful, the amount of funding tends to be greatly reduced.

One consequence of the above means we no longer have the capacity to have teaching assistants to support in each year group or class. Some children who might once have had 'their own' TA don't get one. We recognise that this means some children who would benefit from extra adult support do not get it or do not get as much as we would like. This is a national issue – compounded for us by the funding formula (see elsewhere) – and we are campaigning vigorously about it to anyone who will listen.

Funding

We'll be brutally honest here. We're massively under-funded. Nationally and locally, our per pupil funding is right at the very lowest extreme. Your children each attract about £4,000. In some other schools locally, this can be as much as £5,000 or even £6,000. Multiply that by our 420 pupils (plus Nursery) and the shortfall is very substantial. We are campaigning about this inexplicable injustice too. We'd encourage our community to join us in contacting their local MP about both general and special needs funding.

It has been a real challenge to set a balanced budget for 2025-6 and we will in all likelihood be cutting some key parts of our offer.

Uniform

From September, we will be more diligent in applying uniform policy, which we realise has slipped since Covid. Feedback from families is that the community would largely like us to enforce the policy more rigidly.

In line with Government directives, we are actively seeking to reduce the number of compulsory 'branded' items – those with our logo. We will keep a small number of key items branded and offer the choice for more for the many people we know value and like the logo.

We have also, following consultation, introduced a recommended sustainable and ethical supplier for uniform.

Attendance

Attendance has been broadly just above national average, but still below national expectation. Nowhere has really recovered post Covid. We even expect more pressure on this going forward, particularly with regard to sanctions in the form of fixed penalty notices and full court prosecutions. We are aware of lots of the former and a few of the latter in our community this year. We take no pleasure in this and recognise it as a constant source of friction between us and families.

Residentials

We've continued to offer these, increasing in duration, from Y3 to Y6. We appreciate the costs are very high and have tried to give more advanced notice and opportunity to save. We cannot control the costs, but can get some savings with early bookings, which is what we are endeavouring to do more of. Surveys suggest that the great majority of families still want us to run residentials as a traditional and valuable life experience going through primary school.

Community Engagement

One of our key objectives this year has been to increase the number and variety of events to which families are invited. This will have looked different in each year group, but we are confident that we are offering more now and that this compares favourably with other schools. We are trying to be creative, fun and to get families more involved with school and their children's learning. We're always open to new suggestions as we'll be trying to take this even further next year.

Fun and Wellbeing

We want school to be fun. We want children to feel good about themselves and to feel secure. Let's look at each.

In our extended days, we build in time for extra-curricular activities and traditional games and play for all year groups right up to year 6. We deliver a programme of extra activities in school time, common to all Transform schools. Additionally and uniquely, we add another layer – our own Parkdale 30 Things, simple childhood activities for fun and relaxation. As previously mentioned, we also have the extra activity as a Creating Active Schools setting.

Children tell us they love sports and the arts. We 'over deliver' in terms of PE time and we continue to offer all pupils lots of access to music. Sadly, in some schools these are the things that get squeezed out for the 'tested' subjects, but we refuse to do that. The Transform Children's Charter, drawn up by Children's Parliament, insists that we offer the full range of subjects and as much enrichment as we can muster.

Our day also permits us to include plenty of 'downtime'. We have, in the face of some challenge from outside, resisted the trend to cut breaks and the length of dinnertime. We also include plenty of wellbeing activities, such as yoga, dance, relaxation sessions and more.

Each term, we ask each and every child about their wellbeing and pick up any individual who reports that they do not enjoy school and/or do not feel safe. We let all families of these children know and work together to try to resolve it.

Children can report any concerns to any adult, they can self-refer to the pastoral team and there are worry boxes – physical and digital - for them to pass messages to adults if they prefer that options.

School council reps pick up concerns from their 'constituents' and share them with senior leaders regularly.

Communications and Data

We've had to go onto a new information management system (Arbor) part way through this year. It's not been ideal to change mid-year. Some elements of our systems are still a bit 'raw', but rest assured that the key ones around Safeguarding and medical/accidents are smooth and intact. An example of a less well embedded new bit of software is that which track house-points. We've been in a bit of a mess with that and still need to resolve it.

Most families now have at least one contact registered on the Arbor app, which is now our primary means of sharing information. If you're reading this and aren't signed up, we'd really like you to!

For the first time, we have endeavoured to make the bulletin weekly this year. Many schools limit themselves to a monthly or half-termly newsletter, but we're trying to share as much news as and when it arises as we possibly can. We want school to be transparent and open. We hope you find it helpful, entertaining and that it helps you feel involved.

We've tried to be better at sharing dates ahead of time – sometimes something still catches us out and we announce it a bit last minute! Following feedback last year, we got next year's dates and INSET out as soon as they were confirmed and will try to keep improving in this respect.

Transition

We've long thought we could do a bit better with transition - make it smoother and more effective. This year, we've introduced a week of transition from the current class to the next one. All the evidence suggests this is better for children's learning and their wellbeing. We'll review this in September but hope it will have been a positive experience for all.

The Early Start – Extended Day

It's hard work to keep this going. Teaching staff and senior leadership all have a longer than standard day with an earlier start. It was really only introduced as a Covid measure, but each time we do a survey on it, the vast majority ask us to keep it. We'll be keeping it certainly for 2025-6 and hope our families will continue to find this option helpful.

Activity Clubs

In terms of number and variety, we have run more than ever this year, sporty and others. Nonetheless, the children tell us – via School Council – that they really miss the old multi-sports clubs. We'll ask the children more on this in their own end of year survey, review provision and look at this for next year.

The Library

It has been a long haul, but we finally got the new library up and running this year. The children have been making great use of it in school time. We realise we've fallen a bit short of our goal to make it a library families can use – we've had a few technical and staffing issues – but we'll try to do better with this next year.

Reports

In response to feedback last year – that reports were fine but could be better – we worked with a great focus group of parents and carers to revamp our report format. We've tried to focus on the things you told us in consultation that you really cared about. And, where the law would let us, to cut out the stuff you didn't!

We didn't quite get the attainment levels for the subjects to drop in as we hoped, so the teachers have had to hand write those in, which doesn't look quite as nice – hopefully, we can fix that for next year. Mr Hillier's handwriting remains very scrawly, but he's really tried his best!

We're hoping you will see reports that are more personalised and meaningful to you and your child. We estimate that teaching staff put a minimum of 30 hours unpaid overtime, mostly at home in the evenings and weekends, into a class set of reports, so we'd really appreciate feedback on whether it's worth it.

Environment

We are lucky to have such wonderful grounds and a relatively modern building. There is much to be very proud of. We have been working very hard to try to make our classroom and corridor environments much tidier and purposeful. We can see a lot of progress on this and mostly everywhere is looking good.

We'd hoped to have the Hall renovated this year, as it looks a bit dated and unloved. We have this in hand, but it's a big, complex job involving many different trades. It has taken longer than expected to get viable quotes together, but we're getting there. We would expect to get this work done in 2025-6 now rather than this Summer holiday as originally planned – a bit disappointing, but not a disaster.

Outdoors, we were been disappointed not to get the old playground picket fencing and gates to the 'quiet playground' replaced as planned. Similarly with the trim-trail, which the children have really missed. All of this was scheduled (and paid for) for February half-term, but our supplier went into administration. We are sadly left thousands of pounds down, but have all these projects re-scheduled with another company for the Summer Term.

Sustainability

We have been something of a leader or pathfinder in this respect. We were early to get our Climate Action Plan written and in place - all schools nationally have to have one by the end of this year - and we have been called on to support other schools on matters 'green, both in terms of practicalities, systems and developing the curriculum. We've worked with some significant national partners on this.

We've had lots of successes, but not hit all of our targets – our energy efficiency certificate seems to show us as actually having got worse, which is rather frustrating! We've not achieved what we set out to do in reducing the amount of school commutes (staff and pupils) by car and we've not managed to plant the hoped-for 'green barrier'-hedging to mitigate exhaust fumes - along Cliff Road

Competitive Sports

As well as our inclusive clubs, we have continued to run competitive sports teams. Our Year 5/6 football 'a' team had a great season; they won their section of the Gedling PSFA League, qualifying for the Champions Cup. They were unfortunate to get knocked out of this on penalties in the ¼ final. They also reached the semi-finals of the Nottinghamshire County Cup.

Our girls team this year was more of a 'work in progress' with fewer experienced players. They still played a full Gedling PSFA League season and in the Transform girls' festival of football and have made great progress.

The football successes rather delayed the start to the cricket season, so we've not competed at the level we'd have liked to. We've played some Quick Cricket tournaments and inter-house matches, but none of the 20 over hard-ball matches we'd have like to have got in against other schools which take their cricket seriously. We've focussed very much on development ahead of next year. That said, our year 5 team have still reached the County finals!

We have started to work closely in partnership with Table Tennis England, our goal to become a real hub for this fantastic sport. Year 6 enjoyed league competition, followed by a knock-out cup to find our champion. Selected year 5s have attended an early-morning talent development academy here and we hope to have them in competitive action, team and individual, on a local, regional and maybe even national level next year

Attendance

| | |
|---|---|
| Attendance Overall | |
| 95.3% | |
| Authorised Absences: {Attendance: Authorised Count} | Unauthorised Absences: {Attendance: Unauthorised Count} |
| | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Categories are those set by the Department for Education. | |
| 96% or higher | Good attendance |
| 91% to 95% | Room for improvement |
| 90% or lower | Persistent Absentee – a cause for concern |
| 50% or Lower | Severe Persistent Absentee |

| Attainment | |
|--|--|
| Outcomes in nationally reportable measures. | |
| Reception Good Level of Development (GLD) | 66% - a shade below national and local averages. Good progress from baseline starting points |
| Year One Phonics Screening | 77% - a shade below national and local averages. Good progress from baseline over the year 92% passed by end of Year 2 – slightly above national average. |
| Year Four Multiplication Table Check (MTC) | 72% - significantly above local and national averages – top 5% of all schools |
| End of Key Stage Two (SATs) Combined Attainment | 75% - well above national averages, top 15% of all schools. Above average on all measures for all subjects. |