



(Left to right) Bayley Siddall, Emma Shaw, Louise Shaw, Mrs Grewal-Joy, Annie Martin, Kiko Giles, Kyran Rampersad

“From day one my guiding principle has been that every student at Parkside should be given the standard of education and treated with the respect, care and empathy I would want for my own children. I regularly invite staff to reflect on their practice and our provision on that basis too. It is a powerful message to give to all those that work at Parkside and this baseline helps to ensure that we maintain the high standards we set for ourselves.” Kam Grewal-Joy, Headteacher

Parkside Community School is now benefiting from the huge changes made in the last 3 years. The school has made major improvements in all key measures, exceeding national averages and placing the school in the upper quartiles nationally across a number of areas. This academic achievement clearly challenged any negative perceptions which may have been held in the past by the local community due to the school's failure to meet the minimum standards expected of all secondary schools. The improvement journey which has resulted in the recent successes, has involved all stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to change the culture and ethos in the school. 2015 represented a real turning point for the school and an absolute validation of all the hard work.

Teaching & Learning

Improvements in teaching and learning have been at the core of the significant changes introduced at Parkside over the past three years. The introduction of non-negotiables for teachers and learners have brought about big improvements in the classroom. This has resulted in better progress and a more consistent learning experience for students. The school has worked hard to create a culture where staff are willing to share and improve their practice with others. Termly good practice sessions and the school's Teaching Leaders are used to support, celebrate and strengthen teaching across all areas. This has been instrumental in reducing within school variation and providing children with a more consistently good or better learning experience

Marking & Feedback

“Among the various means by which you have improved the quality of teaching, the use of MAD (‘Make a Difference’) time is motivating the pupils by helping them to understand what they have learned and how to

improve, which has increased their self-confidence and their aspirations to do well.” Ofsted 2015. A Teach, Review and Improve strategy has informed the way that teachers mark and give feedback to students. This has strengthened the dialogue between teachers and students. Its value and benefits are evident in the student responses and have led to an improved climate for learning. “Feedback from teachers identifies my mistakes, but then I always get the opportunity to make them right”. Year 10 student.

Leadership & Management

The clear and unequivocal drive and direction for improvement is now seen among leaders at all levels. Distributed leadership and shared accountability have been vital in securing and sustaining improvements. All leaders are required to be at least good in their own classroom so that they are able to confidently influence change and evaluate teaching and learning from observation and books. “I’m a big believer in walking the talk and leading by example. Leaders need to have clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities so that they are effective in improving the quality of provision in their respective areas”. Kam Grewal-Joy, Headteacher.

Attendance

Attendance was one of the areas the school had to improve urgently, although at the time it seemed that all that could be done was being done: free breakfasts; rewards; inter-form competitions; attendance panels, just to name a few. The Parkside Pickup was introduced by one of the senior leaders. The school minibus is sent out every morning to collect students at risk of not attending. The school’s Community Liaison Officer, an ex-Police Officer deployed to run the Pickup has strengthened the school’s existing work with the most hard to reach families resulting in improvements in overall attendance and a reduction in persistent absence rates.

Literacy

The school recognises that GCSE success is dependent on good literacy skills and has introduced a weekly stand-alone literacy lesson for all Key Stage 3 learners and a daily reading session for all year groups. Students at Parkside are now reading regularly and teachers have been effective in reviving children’s interest in literature and books. It is not unusual to see Year 10 buddy readers listening to Year 7 students read first thing in a morning around the school building.

Year 10 student said that “being a peer reader is great, I have worked hard to build a relationship with Jack and he tells me if he’s worried about something, I even help him with his homework sometimes.” Similarly, Year 7 student agreed, “peer reading really helps me. I can talk to Jordan about lots of things and I am a more confident reader. It is good to have someone who knows how to help me with my homework, because he has done it before.”

Parkside Parliament

Student feedback has regularly been used to shape and evaluate policy at Parkside, especially at a time of great change and transition. In line with the General Election in 2014, Parkside students also went to the ballot box to vote for their members of School Parliament with the best election campaigns and manifestos. The Parliament was created to provide students with opportunities to exercise responsibility, develop leadership skills and contribute to the life of the school. They are now a driving force in the school; willing to give their views to staff and Governors alike. They are managed by the Headteacher as they hold a leadership position in school and are regularly seen in the school canteen gathering the opinions of students on matters which concern them to bring to their monthly Parliament meeting.

“We are the future of Parkside and I will do my best to represent the views and wishes of my fellow students. I have already thrown myself into school life achieving a Librarian position. This role allows me to communicate with students of all ages; which is one of my strengths that I bring to the Parliamentary role.” Year 7 Parliament member.

Homework

The school has had to take a hard line on number of things with students, staff and parents. The online homework package introduced in 2014 allows staff, students and parents to see what is being set and when it is due. There is nowhere to hide now. Parents are sent alerts to their phones of what homework has been set and leaders are able to easily monitor the quality and regularity of work being set in their areas. For students who struggle to organise themselves make good use of the extensive homework clubs and study support sessions offered after school. A compulsory independent learning club (ILC) has been introduced with the support of parents for such students. Parents have found that as their child is now completing homework in the ILC there is less conflict and stress in the home.