



## Self-Evaluation Report: Park House Prep School

*Date: April 30th 2024*

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### 1. Introduction

Park House Prep School is an independent co-educational day school emphasising holistic education through varied curricula, including extracurricular activities and holistic learning initiatives like Farm School. The school is known for its close pastoral care and collaborative environment among teaching staff, assistants, and the leadership team.

This self-evaluation review was conducted between February and April 2024 as Park House Prep School invested in a new leadership team and aimed to refine its holistic learning mission for students. The document has been developed for two purposes:

- 1) to inform the writing of a new School Improvement Plan for 2024-25.
- 2) to provide parents with a snapshot impression of Teaching and Learning in lieu of an external Inspection Report

The evidence considered has been drawn from existing learning data collected during the daily operations of the school, supplemented by additional investigation and evidence collection where further understanding was required. An understanding of teaching and learning was developed through the triangulation of available data, with an effort made to accurately describe the typical strengths and weaknesses of the student learning experience.

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**LOCATION**

Park House, Montpelier, GL1 1LF

[See Map](#)

**SCHOOL HOURS**

Monday—Friday

8.30am — 3.45pm

**CONTACT**

[info@parkhouseprep.com](mailto:info@parkhouseprep.com)

+44 (0)1452 561179

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# Park House Prep School

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## 2. Leadership and Management

### Strengths:

1. A clear leadership hierarchy supports strategic planning and review of learning processes.
2. Effective collaboration among all school staff members promotes a cohesive educational environment in support of holistic learning.
3. Performance Management and Coaching Initiatives: A new initiative to establish staff-wide performance management and regular coaching meetings is set to enhance the school's capacity for self-review and continuous improvement.
4. Behaviour: The behaviour of students is generally excellent, contributing to a positive learning environment. Students report being happy and assert being proud members of the school
5. Support for TAs: The support for full-time teaching assistants (TAs) to complete the Apprenticeship programme, supports best practice in teaching and learning, fostering the development of a holistic learning community. This is a school strength.
6. Admissions: Senior Leadership's careful attention to the admissions process ensures that new students and the school community mutually benefit from new admissions.

### Weaknesses:

1. Tracking of students' learning is evident at the class level but requires a more thorough leadership oversight to include the assurance of student learning within, as well as between, key milestones.

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### 3. Teaching and Learning

#### **Strengths:**

1. Teaching and Learning benefits from how well each student is known by teachers and the Individualised pastoral care tailored to student needs. This is evident in the skillful management of specific needs of several current students.
2. Good use of technology integrating various learning environments and technologies.
3. Specialist Teaching: The use of specialist teachers from secondary school, especially in subjects like science and music, is a considerable strength, enhancing the depth and quality of education provided.
4. SEN Support: The involvement of a highly qualified SENCO in the prep teaching ensures rapid and expert support to teachers in managing SEN students.
5. Use of GL Baseline and Benchmark data allows tracking of progress across years and informs school judgement on the effectiveness of teaching and learning

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Enhanced Clarity in Learning Outcomes: There is a need, where possible, to identify and define learning outcomes for all sessions outside of the classroom to ensure that the educational objectives of these sessions are transparent and may be tracked and evaluated e.g. Taekwondo
2. Timetable Disruptions: The use of specialist staff who also teach at Wotton House can cause potentially minor disruptive changes to the timetable at the start of each term. Plans to avoid this and ensure that students and families have a clear understanding of the year-long learning structure are in development and sound.

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## 4. Curriculum and Enrichment

### **Strengths:**

1. Diverse and engaging study programmes promote active learning.
2. Emphasis on reading for pleasure, with structured book selection within each child's developmental zone.
3. Phonics taught through discreet instruction and intervention strategies.
4. Progressive writing curriculum that revisits and enhances writing skills, integrating grammar and punctuation learning through various text types.
5. Integration of Specialist Knowledge: Plans to integrate science and computing/AI masterclasses during EOTC activities will further enhance the use of specialist knowledge and ensure a relevant modern curriculum
6. Curriculum Review of 2024: The 2024 curriculum review provides a clear pathway for students through Prep School and into Wotton House Secondary School. The decision to identify and map defined strands from Year 5 to Year 11 gives clarity and focus to the planned curriculum.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. Core academic areas e.g. Mathematics can risk insufficient learning time especially where students follow a flexible week.
2. Global Citizenship: global citizenship, an explicit element of the mission statement, was not observed as an intentional learning outcome in a sufficient number of teaching sessions.
3. Continuity and Progression: The curriculum lacks a clear and coherent progression across year groups in some non core subjects, for example Digital Literacy and Global Citizenship, resulting in gaps in students' knowledge and skills.
4. Objective Evidence of Teaching Quality: There is a need to develop more objective evidence of the received curriculum through schemes of work, class work scrutiny, and student feedback.

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## 5. Student Progress and Achievement

### Strengths:

1. High student engagement and passion for learning.
2. The school excels in personalising care for each student, ensuring that their unique needs and abilities are addressed. This personalised approach helps in maximising student potential and achieving good progress for individual students.
3. Students at Park House Prep School demonstrate resilience and success when moving between classes and year groups. This may be attributed to the low barriers created between classes and the strong relationships of the community.

### Weaknesses:

1. Tracking student progress in some subjects requires more frequent use of systematic data and evidence-led teaching and learning. Enhancing these areas will help ensure smoother transitions between years, terms, and teachers. The lack of systematic tracking of learning milestones affects the visibility of student progress for school leadership and those assuring the curriculum.
2. Termly reports are currently overly reliant on subjective teacher assessments and lack rigorous reference to learning data. This makes it difficult for parents to compare comments between subjects and teachers. This reliance on subjective assessments hinders evidence-informed discussions about student progress between home and school.

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## 6. Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

### **Strengths:**

1. Exceptional pastoral care is evident with individualised attention to student needs.
2. Staff commitment extends beyond academic responsibilities, enhancing the school community.
3. SEN Support: The involvement of a highly qualified SENCO in the prep teaching ensures rapid and expert support to teachers in managing SEN students.
4. Small Team Dynamics: The relatively small team of staff work very closely and support each other effectively.
5. Management of pastoral issues benefits from teachers' and leadership willingness to speak personally with parents at the earliest opportunity. This proactive approach ensures most issues are resolved efficiently and to the benefit of all.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. Training and Professional Development: To maintain quality as the school numbers grow and new colleagues join the team, there will be a need to formalise and standardise the pastoral training process.
2. Written Communication with Parents: Written communication with parents regarding both pastoral and academic concerns can be improved to prevent misunderstandings and ensure better support at home. This issue has been identified by school leadership and will be addressed.
3. External Links: Due to the small size of the team, structured peer support and a diversity of opinions are less accessible. Supporting colleagues to establish connections with other local schools would be advantageous.

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## 7. School Improvement Plan

### Future Actions:

- Strengthen the tracking of student learning and outcomes, incorporating benchmarks against external standards.
- Ensure a balanced curriculum that enhances both core and other skills.
- Regular reviews and updates to teaching practices should be more widely used, based on objective data and feedback.
- Overhaul termly reporting to include objective measures of student performance to facilitate clearer communication with parents.
- Prep Specific School Improvement Plan: Developing a specific school improvement plan for the Prep School will strengthen strategic focus and effectiveness in addressing unique challenges and opportunities.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Park House Prep School is effectively delivering its learning mission, providing a high quality of education throughout the curriculum with numerous instances of excellent practice. The new School Plan will drive improvements toward a consistently excellent student experience, ensuring that all students benefit from the best possible educational opportunities and holistic development. This self-evaluation recognises Park House Prep School's commitment to providing a nurturing and holistic educational environment. To sustain and enhance improvement, the school should adopt more structured approaches to curriculum balance, data usage, and systematic tracking of both academic and pastoral care aspects, thereby enhancing its educational offerings and student outcomes effectively.

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