

Welcome to Parrs Wood

Community • Creativity • Achievement



Welcome to Parrs Wood, one of Manchester's most successful schools for students in years 7 to 13.

Our ethos is achievement, celebration and reward. We are proud of our strong tradition of academic success and service to the community, as recognised by Ofsted.

The team of experienced teachers, support staff and student leaders are at the core of our success. We set high expectations for behaviour, challenge students in lessons and promote independent study. We are relentlessly dedicated to improving our school and ensuring our students realise their true potential through excellent teaching, learning facilities and pastoral support.

As the biggest school in Manchester, our facilities and size enable us to provide a curriculum that allows everyone to make excellent progress regardless of their background, and as you read this prospectus, we hope to demonstrate to you our genuine belief in young people's potential.

We promise to provide students with opportunities to continue confidently onto university and apprenticeships, or enter the world of work and ultimately make a positive contribution to society. This pledge is underpinned by our

association with the Greater Manchester Education Trust (GMET), membership of which benefit us with greater resources and leadership.

Together, community is one of our core values. We are proud to be a truly comprehensive and inclusive school that is multi-cultural, multi-faith, with students in a broad range of ability levels. At the heart of this, we recognise that working in strong partnerships with parents is key to building positive relationships that ensures all our children are safe, happy and will succeed.

I remember my own school days as some of the best of my life, and it is with that vision I lead Parrs Wood, providing you with the confidence that your child's education and future here is a sound investment in them.

I look forward to welcoming you into our school community.

Mark McElwee, Headteacher

Parrs Wood High School

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What Ofsted says about our school:

‘Has maintained a good quality of education’

‘Staff set high expectations for pupils behaviour. Despite this being a large school, staff make sure that all pupils are known as individuals.’

‘Pupils are pleased to be part of a culturally diverse and caring community’

‘Effective leadership and Safeguarding’

‘Strong community spirit’

‘The school is ambitious for all pupils. Staff are determined that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), gain the knowledge and skills that they need to thrive in their future lives.’

‘Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and they present information clearly, and use strategies to help pupils to learn and retain their knowledge well.’

‘The following comment from one parent typifies their views: “The school tries to find ways in which each pupil can shine.”’

‘Pupils follow a very well-designed programme of lessons and activities that promote their personal development. Pupils’ understanding of issues and opportunities in the wider world are enriched by many outside speakers.’

Our values

The School focuses on the core values set out by GMET:

Community - we value one another

Creativity - we embrace change

Achievement - we expect excellence

GMET schools hold themselves to a duty to educate, develop and safeguard students as they would their own children, to secure the highest quality educational experience for all.

We aim to enable students of all backgrounds to acquire the belief that they have the potential to make a positive difference to their lives, and to the lives of others. We aim to support them to develop resilience, independence and the ability to work collaboratively with tolerance and respect, celebrating the diversity within our society.



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Getting started at Parrs Wood

Applying to Parrs Wood

Admission to Year 7 begins in the autumn term, whereby you will receive information on how to apply in accordance with the current Manchester City Council policy via the Manchester admissions office.

You will be asked to rank the schools in order of which ones you would prefer your child attends, the deadline for which is 31st October. Parrs Wood is a hugely popular school, but by selecting us as your first choice you are likely to secure a place.

Visiting our school

Of course, we know you will want to get a feel for all your different options. We want people to come and visit us because it's the best way to get a feel for our dynamic and diverse students, see our expert staff in action and get a sense of the scale of opportunities available.

We regularly host Open Mornings and Evenings during the autumn term, however if you are unable to attend these, we always welcome requests to arrange a visit at a mutually convenient time.

Transferring to Parrs Wood

Thanks to strong links with our local primary schools, we have a well-established induction programme for new students. A range of events and personal interviews, including the opportunity to spend a full day at school in the summer term, ensures the transfer to our school is smooth and free from anxiety. As parents, you will be invited to an Induction Evening, offering the chance to meet our staff and answer any questions you may have.

On the page opposite are a few statements from our current Year 7 students around their experience of moving from primary school to high school and what they have enjoyed at Parrs Wood during their first year.





Samar, Year 7

I came to England 11 months ago from Sudan and I started my studies at Parrs Wood. When I first arrived at Parrs Wood high school, I felt extremely nervous and unsure of what to expect. Everything was new to me such as the big school site, the people, the lessons and even the way in which we learn. One of the biggest challenges I faced was the language. As a non-English speaker, it was difficult for me to understand what the teachers were saying or to talk with other students.

One thing that really helped me during my first year at Parrs Wood High School was the support I received from English as an additional language (EAL) team. They were supportive and understood the challenges I was facing as a new student who did not speak very much English. The support I received from the EAL team helped me improve my English skills by providing me with extra lessons and they always made sure I understood what was happening in my class, they have been so kind, patient and always ready to help.

At Parrs Wood High School, my favourite subjects are PE and Geography. I enjoy the PE lessons because I love being active and doing lots of sports and Parrs Wood offers just that with so many to choose from.



Heidi, Year 7

I chose Parrs Wood because it had great reviews and some of the teachers I know are here. There are many new and exciting varieties of lessons which I do now which weren't available to me in primary school and I have learnt a lot since I have been here. Art and Technology are my favourite new subjects as I have been involved in more practical parts of these subjects which I really enjoy.

It felt weird when I moved from primary school to secondary school, I came from a small primary school where the school had 280 students overall, so for me to come to a high school where there are 300 in just one year group felt scary, but there wasn't any need for me to feel like that as I have made lots of new friends and the staff have been really helpful in helping me find my way around. I also attended the summer school which was really fun and helped me make new friends and get to know my form tutor and head of year.



Jack, Year 7

I came to the schools open evening and I found that this was really good and useful. I got to see all the different subjects which are on offer and to see the school facilities which it has. I came from a local primary school, and I found that most of my class was also looking to come to the school which was good as it meant there was always someone around which I would know, however I have made lots of new friends during the year.

I love the PE lessons and having the use of the astroturf pitch and the school fields and learning lots of new sports. The school has given me opportunities to take part in lots of different enrichment clubs either during lunch break or after school, there are so many different clubs which you can join. I am excited to see the trip opportunities in the future. I know the school has a lot of different residential trips which are open to different year groups and I can't wait to take part in them.



Senior Student Leadership

The Senior Student Leadership Team (SSLT) plays a vital role in shaping school life at Parrs Wood High School, embodying our core values of community, creativity, and achievement in all they do. The SSLT show outstanding commitment by running regular meetings with our Year 7–10 Student Council members, giving younger students a voice and fostering a strong sense of community.

They lead a range of creative and impactful fundraising events to support meaningful charities which impact our school community each and every day.

They also take on full responsibility for planning and organising the Year 11 prom. Their support of the annual Sixth Form Senior Citizens Christmas party further reflects their dedication to serving others. Through these wide-ranging experiences, the SSLT has developed and demonstrated key leadership skills while setting a positive example for their peers and the wider school community.

Here's what some of our members of the SSLT had to say about their role and why they became an ambassador for the school.

Oscar Whalley

Firstly school is fabulous. The teachers, in subjects ranging from construction to Psychology have helped turn me from an under-achiever in year 7 to being an overachiever now that I am in year 11.

However school isn't just about grades, it's about having memorable experiences and making life-long friends which Parrs Wood has certainly helped me to do. I always had trouble making positive friendships in primary school, but once I joined Parrs Wood it was so much easier because there are so many different people to choose from since it is a large school.

Also, because people from so many different schools join Parrs Wood, people aren't just sticking to their primary school friendship bubbles and people are welcoming and happy to make new friendships. The school is also fantastic when it comes to enrichment clubs/ activities with over 60 to choose from, ranging from bands to origami where welcoming teachers enjoy having you attend.

One of my highlights at Parrs Wood has been the school trips. Every year there are numerous trips for all year groups. For example, I went on a trip to France and Belgium in year 8 to see the World War One battlefields, as well as a trip to Disneyland Paris, the Netherlands and Germany. I feel very lucky!



Amelia Ahmed

I've been at Parrs Wood since the very first day of year 7 and my favorite thing on that first day is still the same thing as it is now and it's the diversity. The mix of different cultures and backgrounds creates a vibrant community where everyone can learn from each other. This variety makes Parrs Wood a lively and interesting place to be, and very unique from most schools.

My absolute favourite subject is English Literature. I just love writing, talking, analysing characters and themes and the true meaning behind a text or story helps me understand the world around me better. It sparks my imagination and makes me think outside the box and understand how particular people, places and feelings are portrayed in a certain way; but there is a deeper meaning behind it.

Speaking on behalf of my year, I think everyone has grown so much academically, personally and mentally. For my own experience at Parrs Wood I've learnt that there's so many qualities people can offer and skills they can exceed in and there's some they can't and that's so normal; and the broad curriculum of GCSE subjects help you try find out what your best interests are.

It might be that you exceed academically; it might be that you exceed more practically and hands on however either one has so much value in our everyday life and Parrs Wood has all that to offer!

Charmmy Lui

Parrs Wood High School has given me many opportunities to explore my abilities. Teachers are very supportive and encouraging. Among all the subjects, my favourite is maths, because I always feel successful when I find out the correct answer with my solution. I have chosen Geography, German, Music and Computer Science for my GCSEs. These subjects have given me life-long skills that I will be able to use in my future life.

Through participating in the SSLT and Peer Mentoring programme, I learned that every student has their talent, but they only need opportunities and encouragement to reveal their potential. The most remarkable trip I have attended was a German Exchange programme with Otto-Herne Gymnasium. Through this programme, I not only gained the opportunity to spend time with a German family to expand my German knowledge, but I also gained a life-long relationship with my German family, with whom I will still keep in touch with.

I have been part of the Student Leadership team since I joined this community, and I am glad that I am still able to contribute to our community in my final year of high school. Through SSLT, I have had the opportunity to communicate with younger students, help them voice their concerns to our teachers and contribute to a safer, more cohesive school environment. My favourite part of being a Student Leader is witnessing the passion and willingness of younger students to raise money for charity, as they strive to create a more inclusive and compassionate society. Parrs Wood High School takes care of us and the whole local community.

A day in the life of a Parrs Wood student

“It’s difficult to tell people what a normal day looks like because no day is ever the same. Even lessons vary so much because the teachers are so great at helping us to learn in different ways.”

Sorcha, Year 8

Starting your day

“One of things I love is that as soon as you walk in you can feel the enthusiasm. The number of students means that there’s a real energy at Parrs Wood that you don’t feel at other schools.”

Peter, Year 9

Every school day starts with Registration in our tutor groups. Once a week this time is used for assembly, and at other times we have lessons from the Personal Development Curriculum, where we can discuss issues such as healthy lifestyles, careers and current affairs.

Lessons

Your child’s learning experience will be different than at primary school. They will have more teachers because they are subject specialists and expectations are higher, but there is nothing to be worried about; they will be supported every step of the way.

“I particularly enjoy Science lessons because they are so different to my primary school. There is much better equipment here so the practical lessons are interesting.”

Emily, Year 11

As students get older, they have more control over the subjects they learn and are given more freedom to explore independent learning and work in teams, crucial skills for thriving in the real world.

“When selecting my options in Year 9, I wasn’t quite sure what I wanted to do in the future. Fortunately, you get a lot of choice at Parrs Wood so I was able to keep my options open by making a broad selection. In addition to the core GCSE subjects I selected Ancient History, Business Studies and Computer Science.”

Richard, Year 10



**Timetable:
a typical day**

8:35
Students
Arrive

8:40
PCD /
Assembly

9:00
Humanities

10:00
Maths

11:00
Break



Enrichment

Our enrichment offer is unmatched. Being such a large school, we are able to offer over 50 clubs. The range of activities is always changing and is led by what students want. If they want to set up a new one, then we'll help them to do it.

"I helped set up the Origami club, and I'm also a member of the Film club, Choir and table tennis. I also play for the school football team. I found it a great way to make more friends and relax whilst doing something I enjoy."

Mahmood, Year 7

Extended learning (homework!)

Extended learning is a key part of every student's learning experience and is used to consolidate and further develop learning that takes place during lessons.

Most of our students' extended learning tasks are posted for them online. We ask parents to check this regularly to monitor their child's progress and to be able to discuss their learning with them. We encourage students and their parents to communicate with their subject teachers and Form Tutor if there are any problems.

"I'd be lying if I said I liked homework! However, the school carefully manages how much we do so that we don't burn out. We're given extra work that links closely to reinforcing what we've done in class – it's never set just for the sake of it."

Esme, Year 10



"With GCSEs around the corner, we work very hard. However, the school is great about helping us to do other things that break up the learning. I really enjoy being a member of the cricket and table tennis teams, especially when we were Manchester champions and runners-up in the whole of Lancashire!"

Saraf, Year 11



11:20
Science

12:20
English

13:20
Lunch

14:05
French

15:05
End of
School Day

15:15
After School
Clubs

Reasons to choose Parrs Wood

We regularly ask for student, staff and parents' opinions about the school to find out what they think.

Here are some of the reasons they gave when asked why they think local families should choose to join them in the Parrs Wood community.



Our Size

"There's a friend here for everyone because there are so many people."

Year 11 Student

Benefits of Diversity



"It is great to be able to meet so many new people, who share different backgrounds and are accepting of everyone else."

Year 7 student



Celebrating Success!

"There is a concerted effort to celebrate and reward success, such as the postcards teachers send us based on our child's achievements, the Reward Points system that can be swapped for items or star of the week award."



Fantastic Facilities

"There are a wide range of sports facilities and so much green space for us to use."

Year 10 student



Broad Curriculum

"There is a path for every child, thanks to a huge range of subjects – many more than in most schools." Parent



Successful Sixth Form

"Provides continuity of a quality education if students want it." Staff



Rigorous Academic Approach

"Children are pushed to be the best they can be."

Parent



Mr McElwee's Assemblies!



Extra-Curricular Activities

"There are lots of clubs to get involved in so it's easy to find people with common interests." Year 7 student



Excellent Relationships

"The teachers really care about us."

Year 8 student



High Expectations

"Behaviour blueprint and sanctions policy make people very aware of what is expected of them." Year 10 student

"Behaviour policy prepares you for being an adult: polite, good manners." Year 11 student



Inclusive & Welcoming

"You feel safe at Parrs Wood because everyone is accepting of one another."



Enrichment

There's something for everyone at Parrs Wood

We offer over 50 lunchtime and after school activities. Whether your child is sporting, musical, artistic, looking for an extra intellectual challenge or simply wishing to find new ways to relax – there will be a club or activity to suit!

Drawing on creative talents

Through our Art club we host and organise exhibitions of students' work in school and the local community, including contributing to the annual Didsbury Arts Festival, whilst also supporting the costume, make-up and set design teams for dramatic and musical productions.

Dancing to their own tune

As a centre for musical excellence, we currently boast a Big Band, String Orchestra, String Quartet, Brass Group, Choirs, Steel Pan Band, Blues Band and a Jazz Band – all with opportunities to perform within school and the local community. Many will remember our Choir's iconic performance as part of Manchester's One Love concert.

Nurturing tomorrow's leaders

Our students have many opportunities to become involved in Student Voice, from representing their form or year group on the school council, to undertaking a leadership qualification, or becoming a peer mentor.



In the spotlight

Students have opportunities to take part in major school productions, drama workshops and regular theatre visits, and behind the scenes, we have our own student-led team that support every event.

Behind the camera

We have our very own production company, SHOUT, which lots of students take part in. They support our technical theatre team with our productions and events, but also have access to development opportunities off-campus, learning from professionals in theatre, TV, engineering and design industries.



This sporting life

With extensive, well-maintained facilities, our school boasts many Manchester champions, and local/ national representatives. We have teams and/or clubs for Football, Athletics, Badminton, Hockey, Cricket, Table Tennis, Cross Country, Trampolining, Rugby, Handball, Rounders, Ultimate Frisbee and Netball.

An academic boost

Weekly revision and catch-up sessions are available for most subjects, and for our GCSE students we organise booster sessions ahead of their exams throughout the Easter holidays.

Best of the rest...

SHE / Chess / Taekwondo / Boxing / Mathematics / Public Speaking and Debating / Architectural / Origami

Speaking to the world

In our Languages Club, students have a safe space to gain extra speaking practise, or learn another language outside of lessons, all the while learning about that country's culture from native speakers.



Beyond the school gates

We have strong local, national and international links for residential trips, offered to students at all stages throughout their school life. This includes cultural exchange opportunities and subject-based expeditions, as well as cinema and theatre trips.

Students benefit from numerous educational, community and business partnerships that enrich the curriculum and provide opportunities for personal development.



Year 10 Student Profile

Building skills to target gold

"One of the best things I've experienced at Parrs Wood is the Duke of Edinburgh programme. To achieve the various awards you have to do a series of challenges that become increasingly more difficult. I accomplished the bronze level, in part by doing 30 hours of volunteering and completing a hike in the Peak District that included wild camping.

Taking part has really pushed me to do new things, particularly taking on leadership roles. The pressure is quite

stressful, but I'm pleased to have proved to myself that I can do it. I'm looking forward to doing the silver and gold challenges now!

The programme has shown me that being successful might not be easy, but it's worth the hard work. In the future I plan to become a carpenter and, thanks to the school's support, I've taken on more projects in Design Technology to help achieve my future ambitions."

A school for everyone

We have a strong commitment to inclusion in our school. We want staff and students to be active participants in all areas of school life, using their skills and experience to make sure everyone feels comfortable and supported.

This support takes many different forms, including:

- In-class support
- Individual support
- Group work
- Differentiated curriculum
- 14-19 Optioned pathways
- Access arrangements for exams
- Multi-agency advice
- Counselling

Our Values

Parrs Wood's values are British Values:

Rule of Law - the need for rules to make a happy, safe and secure environment to live and work.

Democracy - a culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Mutual Respect - understanding that we all don't share the same beliefs and values. Respecting the values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing our own on others.

Individual Liberty - protection of your rights and the right of others you work with.

Tolerance - everyone has the right to practice their religion or hold their own beliefs free from prejudice or discrimination.

'FRED'

Through a fictitious character, FRED, we ask our students to ask themselves what they should do when faced with everyday challenges. To promote equal opportunities, self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence, 'FRED' asks them to consider the impact of their behaviour on others through principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality and Dignity.

Peer Mentoring

The Peer Education Project promotes fellow students as a resource for their peers, and the whole school community. Our project has taken different forms over the years from Anti-Bullying Counselling to a health drop-in centre. With the aim of reaching fellow students in need of help, mentor training is provided to allow our Student Leaders to assist in lessons, tutor time and exam revision.



Parent partnership

As a parent or carer at Parrs Wood we will support you to play an important role in your child's education. We believe that their success depends on an effective partnership between students, parents and staff.

Local Academy Committee (LAC)

Our LAC is made up of educational specialists, parents, teachers, local council members and representatives from the community. The academy committee is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. Parent Governors bring views of the parents, but act as individuals (not as delegates for the parents), with equal status and voting rights as other governing body

Leaders from school and GMET work with parents to:

- strengthen the home school partnership
- give the opportunity to question leadership teams
- contribute ideas for improvement
- be part of the future development of Parrs Wood and GMET.

Interested in becoming a Parent Governor, a member of the Parent Forum or more active in the PTA?
Please see our website for more details

Parrs Wood PTA

As a parent or carer you are automatically a member of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This provides the opportunity to promote the interests of students, meet other parents/carers, create links between home and school, and participate in the school's decision-making process. The money the PTA raises also provides considerable financial support to the school and our students.

Active Parents

We provide a programme of activities and courses to develop relationships between home and school. Courses include:

- 'Get Cooking' - engaging with your child's learning through cooking
- 'Parenting your Teen' - offering a practical and friendly resource to aid the transition into adolescence
- 'BOOST' - providing tips in mental wellbeing for mood, thinking, relaxation, assertiveness, motivation, confidence and sleep.





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