

Welcome to Park Primary School - we hope that the information here will support you to decide whether Park Primary School will prove to be the right place of learning for your child.

In addition to us conducting a few tours, where it has been possible to do so, we have compiled a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) which we think may answer some of the burning ones that you may have. If, having read these, you still have queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email info@park.newham.sch.uk FAO Mrs Ttoffali re YR 2021 and we'll get back to you as soon as it is possible to do so.

What is a primary school?

We cater for children from Reception (ages 4-5) through to Year 6 (ages 10-11).

We also have a Nursery known as Little Park; this is based at St Matthew's Church at the end of Matthew's Park Avenue (the road on which the main school entrance is cited). There are 15 hour and 30 hour places for children; these places are available in the term after they turn 3 years of age (by way of an example if your child turns 3 in February they would be eligible to start in the April after the Easter Break).

How many children are in a year group/ class?

We are a 3 form entry (FE) school which means we have 3 classes in every year group. Classes have a capacity of 30 and we are usually full. In Reception there is a class teacher and a learning support assistant (LSA); there may also be other adults working in the class who are supporting children with additional needs. Despite the school being relatively large, with over 600 children on site, it has a great sense of community and therefore there is a much smaller, friendlier feel than you might expect.

What makes Park, Park?

Park is a very special place. It is a place of learning for all which values positive relationships. There is a deep and rich culture of aspiration, confidence, creativity and care.

We focus on the above values because we truly believe that children need to: dream big; believe in themselves; think and act creatively in order to problem solve today and in the future and, most importantly, we believe that everyone needs to care. If we all care about what we do and how we do it, we will not purposefully let ourselves or each other down.

At Park, one day in every ten is a CAT day. Essentially, a CAT day is the statutorily awarded time, which teachers are entitled to, in order to plan and prepare for their lessons. Whilst the teachers plan and prepare in their year group teams, the children are taught by specialist teachers of drama, Spanish and musical appreciation and a Park created subject called Thinking Through Texts which is essentially a rich approach to text analysis through philosophy, questioning, debate and oracy.

In our opinion, we are a genuine Community School; every day we thank the community for the children that we are blessed to work with and they thank us in return for the care that we offer. There is an open approach to problem solving and a transparent pathway to all staff; because of this, issues are dealt with as and when they arise and thus the Complaints' Procedure is very rarely required.

Why do you have a focus on Outdoor Learning, inclusive of Forest School?

At Park we highly value Outdoor Learning. Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes discovery, experimentation, learning about and connecting to the natural world, and engaging in environmental and adventure activities and play. Research shows that we, especially children, benefit from being outdoors and being immersed in nature. Outdoor learners become problem solvers, risk takers and are better able to manage life's stresses. Outdoor learning aims to develop a sense of place, leading to greater engagement with the community and an appreciation of the opportunities available to live, learn and work in the local area.

Forest School is a child-centred, inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supportive risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. It is based on the Scandinavian open air culture and takes place throughout the year in all weather conditions. 'There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing' is our Forest School mantra. Our Forest School sessions take place in a safe and tranquil wooded area in nearby West Ham Park.

How does Park's ethos affect provision in Reception?

Reception at Park is a place where curiosity, exploration, communication and creativity of mind are nurtured. Our intent is to deliver the Early Years Framework through engaging and enabling environments as well as through building exceptional positive relationships. Children learn in Reception through a balance of child-led free-flow activities, adult-led small groups and whole class carpet sessions. 'Free flow' is a term we use when the children can autonomously choose where to learn between the three Reception classrooms and the garden. We believe that much of a young child's learning comes from their active investigation of the world around them, this is why we aim to implement a love of learning and growth throughout each of the learning environments.

Children in Reception learn through play and this provides meaningful, rich learning experiences such as:

- building social and communication skills through role play;
- developing literacy skills through storytelling with small world objects;
- using their investigative and problem solving skills in block play.

We believe a balance of open-ended play and adult directed activities allows for children to see themselves as explorers: active learners with independent attitudes. Being an explorer teaches and inspires new skills and knowledge which extend the children's thinking, learning, speech and growth.

How is behaviour managed at Park and how are incidences of bullying dealt with?

Early Years practitioners at Park build positive relationships with children, parents and carers right from the start, where children feel happy and secure in their environment and where everyone feels valued and listened to. Before children come into our care, parents and carers are the main facilitators in teaching children how to deal with behaviours and emotions; because of this, we view parents as partners and work closely with them. Negative language is not used and instead, specific, positive praise is used regularly throughout the day so that children learn what positive behaviour looks like and how this can help to build relationships. Very clear routines and boundaries are put in place so

that the children understand what is expected of them at all times. Through our school curriculum, we encourage opportunities to address the issue of bullying and help children to prevent bullying. We promote a supportive school environment where cooperation and consideration to others are important.

Through growing children's confidence, as we do, we create learners with a voice who are empowered to speak out when things are not right.

What is the school catchment area? Will my child get a place?

There is not a fixed catchment area for Newham schools. Places are allocated based on set criteria and distance between home and school. Each year admissions from different streets fluctuate based on the varying numbers of children between your address and school. Additionally there will be varying numbers in each year who may have siblings already in school.

The school finder on www.newham.gov.uk is helpful. We are a fully inclusive school and we are proud of the provision we make for all children.

Are there any after school clubs connected to Park? If so, which and how does this work?

Usually, we run a number of after school clubs which enrich our curriculum including sport, expressive arts, creative writing and many more. However, due to the current Covid 19 government guidelines, our after school clubs are all postponed for the moment. We hope that we will be able to run them safely soon. In line with government guidelines, we are still running our own Park Wrap Around Care which is a charged childcare provision for working parents. This includes Breakfast Club which runs from 7.30am and costs £3.50 a day and After School Provision which runs until 5.30pm and costs £9.50 a day. As part of this provision children take part in a number of activities such as games, dance, art and more.

Do the children get the opportunity to visit different places?

Under more usual circumstances, our curriculum is rich in educational visits and opportunity. This is limited currently for obvious reasons but we are doing everything we can to continue to ensure that we are rich in cultural capital. For example, currently in reception, the children are learning about people who help us; within a usual year we would have special visitors such as firefighters, vets, nurses and police officers. As these visitors are currently not able to come inside the school, we have arranged for zoom calls to ask them questions and will have a range of resources that are used by these special visitors to explore. If we cannot take a visit we'll try to make it come to us.

Under normal circumstances, the children will have a wide range of educational visits and experiences throughout their Park life. This includes visits to the theatre, museums, places of cultural significance and sports competitions. The highlight for most of our children are our residential visits to Fairplay Barge Haybay and Fairplay House in years 5 and 6, where the children are able to take part in a number of confidence and team building activities.

The playground is relatively small; what do you put into place to ensure the children can exercise safely with their peers?

Children will take part in PE lessons twice a week with one lesson being indoor PE and one lesson being outdoor PE. We use the multi use games area (MUGA) for ball games such as football, netball, tag rugby and handball. We use the large hall for gymnastics, dance and other elements of the PE curriculum which do not focus on ball activity. We do try to use West Ham Park as much as possible but this is restricted by the ratios which come into place as soon as you leave the site with children.

Under usual circumstances, we would offer a range of Park Clubs which would be a mix of physical, social and emotional learning activities; at the moment these are not running due to bubble restrictions.

How much homework are children given?

Children are not given a specific amount of homework every week but they are given learning to do at home; this is not made compulsory though as we do not want to create a context where families are in conflict over learning at home.

We try to get the children to a place where they see the additional value of the home learning and appreciate that if they do not invest the additional time they ultimately will be at a disadvantage daily (for example, learning common words, spellings, multiplication tables, number facts etc). If the motivation is right for engaging with the home learning then the learning itself will be better. If the question is 'Why are you doing your homework?' we wish for the answer to be, 'Because it is good for me and I want to learn'. We aim to move away from the answer being: 'because I will be told off if I do not'. This strategy underpins everything we do, a self motivated, self disciplined child will be an empowered and independent one.

We aim to create a delicious curriculum so we would like to create home learning opportunities which inspire the children to question, interrogate and dig deeper. There is a fine balance because if, through the eyes of the child, the home learning is a chore and boring it is not creating a positive environment where we can move forward effectively with future learning.

What does learning look like in Reception at Park?

In Reception at Park, as well as an emphasis on enabling environments including use of the outdoors, we believe in learning through play. We use the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) to support children's learning and development. There are 7 areas of development within this framework. We focus on specific parts of the curriculum each month and children are given the monthly 'next steps' to take home so they can continue this learning outside of school. These monthly next steps are worked on throughout the whole of Reception and vary from month to month. The Reception environments have been carefully facilitated with provision to meet children's interests and learning needs. The provision changes from week to week and almost always includes sand, water and playdough areas, 3 different role play areas such as home corner, space centre or pirate ship, a building and construction area, creative table and maths and literacy areas. Maths and literacy are also seen and encouraged throughout each learning area. For example, the play dough table may have a recipe for

reading, the home corner will have notepads to make shopping lists and the construction area may have rulers and numbers for measuring towers. The environments are facilitated so that the children learn in ways that are hands-on and purposeful to them.

What do parents have to say?

Twice a year, we ask parents and carers to complete our ParentView questionnaire. This helps us to gather feedback about our practice and identify areas where we can develop further. It is also another avenue for parents to communicate their thoughts and ideas if they have not already spoken to us directly. Where concerns are raised, we contact parents and carers for further information or clarification in order that we can meaningfully review our practice and make changes if appropriate or necessary. Findings from our ParentView questionnaires are shared on the school website and we capture actions arising from the questionnaires in our newsletters.

Take a look at our [most recent feedback](#) (October 2020). A full document will be added to the website in the next week capturing the comments that sit alongside the overall data. In the meantime, we have pulled together the [strengths of Park](#) that were identified by our families.

What does all of this actually look like?

Have a glimpse of Park life in [this video](#) made by one of our families, last year.

How are parents communicated with?

We share messages, letters and information with parents and carers using an app called Class Dojo. Additionally, we have a [weekly newsletter](#) which is published on our website.

Families of children in the Early Years (Reception and Little Park), and where appropriate families of children with SEND, are also asked to download an app called Tapestry. The purpose of this app is to share the children's learning at school with families at home and vice versa.

Do you have a uniform at Park?

The uniform is optional at Park. Being smart at Park is about attitude and approach. If families wish to send their child in uniform, they are welcome to do so; if they do not, then we ask that their child attends in practical, comfortable clothing which is appropriate for the season. Shoes need to be enclosed at the toe and no jewellery is to be worn other than simple stud earrings.

How do you help the children to settle into Reception?

We pride ourselves on having a detailed process that supports families and children transitioning into Park Reception. Below is a list of what we usually include as part of our transition process. Underneath this is a list of what we put into place this year to ensure this year's cohort of children were given the opportunity to transition as effectively as previous year groups, whilst taking into account the safety precautions.

To aid in transition from Nursery to Reception we usually:

- visit some nurseries to speak to key workers and continue to build relations with the children. Nurseries are encouraged to bring children for a morning or afternoon to familiarise the children with their new setting.
- make home visits. In the summer, two members of staff from Park Primary will make a home visit to allow parents/ carers to ask questions, complete administration paperwork and for the children to talk about or show their home. This is the first of two home visits. The second home visit will take place in autumn. This is when the class teacher and learning support assistant will be able to share information about the start of the term and their class.
- invite children and parents/ carers to 'Stay and Play' sessions for 1 hour every week in the Summer Term (May, June and July). This takes place after school. It is an opportunity to meet the other children who will be attending in September, talk to the teachers and access the provisions in each Reception learning area, as well as begin to form relationships.
- have a staggered entry to school in September for Reception children to enable the children to adapt to the new routines and for staff to make home visits in the afternoon.

To aid transition from Nursery to Reception this year we:

- talked to nurseries about the children coming from their setting through video calls, phone calls and emails.
- made and issued videos to our new cohort which allowed them to see Park's learning environments and meet the teachers.
- asked families to fill out a Google form which included information about their child.
- asked families to set themselves up on our Tapestry account so that children could begin to access some of our learning activities online from their homes in the Summer Term before starting Reception.
- arranged virtual 'home visits' with families and children to give parents/ carers a chance to ask questions and for the children to talk about or show their home and favourite toys virtually.
- asked parents to take clear photographs, using a phone or tablet, of some administration paperwork and upload this to the Google form which was sent to parents/carers by email.
- organised short 'Stay and Play' sessions in small groups of children where the children were accompanied by one adult.
- organised a staggered start for the children so they could gradually get used to coming to school.
- organised parents/carer meetings with the teachers after the first few weeks so that teachers could share how the children had settled into school

In order to place your child in a class, a variety of factors will be considered. Children remain in the same class for Reception, year 1 and year 2; at the end of year 2 they are mixed and are then in a class with different children for year 3 and year 4. The classes are mixed again at the end of year 4 and are then with a new mix of children in year 5 and year 6. We believe it is very important that the children build relationships across the community and the mixing of the classes is one way to achieve this.