



# Information about the Academy

## Our Context

Ansford Academy is a smaller than average academy serving a large rural catchment area in east Somerset. We have 600 students aged between 11 - 16. Our students predominantly join us from our 7 feeder primary schools, although we do have about 20 students each year from outside our catchment area. The academy has a fully comprehensive intake with prior attainment broadly in line with the national average each year. Our school deprivation indicator suggests that we serve an area of relative social advantage, but closer inspection shows several pockets of deep deprivation. On average 12.5% of our students are eligible for free school meals, and upwards of 20% are supported by Pupil Premium funding. We have a very low number of students from minority ethnic groups and average numbers of students with SEN support but above average numbers of students with an EHCP. Governors and staff share an absolute commitment to ensuring that all our students, regardless of background or ability, achieve of their best.

The Academy is located on the edge of the beautiful market town of Castle Cary. This is a vibrant community that, whilst being pleasantly rural, has excellent transport links to Bath, Bristol, London and the rest of the West Country.

## Our Vision



At Ansford we have high ambitions, not only for our own students but for all students in our local area and beyond. We are fully committed to working collaboratively with schools nearby and across the country to make sure our education system truly is self-improving.

We have a shared understanding of what we want our students to be like by the time they leave us through the concept of the 'Ansford graduate'. This forms the basis for all the work we do. At Key Stage 3 we have used the opportunities afforded by academy status to allow us to design a curriculum which enables our students to have a wide range of experiences, while developing the knowledge, skills and attributes that put them in the best possible position to be successful GCSE students. Our teaching and learning style, alongside regular coaching for each student, enables them to become independent learners, taking responsibility for their own progress. In the process they are preparing for education beyond 16 and, confident in their own self-awareness, able to make sound decisions about their future.

We are an inclusive school. For the last two years we have not permanently excluded any student. The Academy, in partnership with a nearby Special School established a base accessed by both schools' students designed to provide a point of transition and wider opportunity for students with more complex needs. This ground-breaking project is unique in the area.

We seek to create a culture of empathy, trust and belonging where individuals are valued for who they are, feel comfortable to be themselves and are inspired to explore the possibilities of who they might become.

## Unlocking potential and securing futures

In our fast moving and challenging world, a strong portfolio of qualifications opens doors and increases opportunities but does not guarantee success. We know that our students need to achieve their best academically because without this their choices diminish. Ansford students consistently achieve high standards across a wide range of academic and creative subjects.

What marks us out as different from other schools is that we have achieved our success without the use of excessive amounts of intervention in Year 11. We also offer a range of non-traditional courses such as horticulture. We have created a model aiming to equip students to be successful from the outset with support systems in place to help students through their journey.



After all, the qualifications a student gains are only a part of their story. What makes our students stand out from the crowd are their attributes and skills; that they are well-rounded, free-thinking and resilient individuals. It is important to us that we equip individuals to take their place in society, secure useful and rewarding work, form and maintain meaningful relationships and contribute to the local and global community.

## Laying the Foundations for Lifelong Learning

As a community we genuinely believe that every one of us, students and adults, are "Learning Together to Lead Our Lives". We want our students to see us learning and to realise that school years are only the start of the journey. At Ansford we have created a culture where ideas are nurtured and hard work is rewarded,



where students and staff are encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and apply their learning to new contexts and where there is a genuine belief that any one of us might hold the answer. We passionately believe that to be successful in their future lives, our students will need to be able to use their initiative and creativity to identify problems and design innovative solutions.

Growing up in a rural community such as ours presents our young people with many unique opportunities but also significant challenges. It is important that we work with them and their parents and carers to make sure they understand the full range of options open to them, whether that involves staying in and contributing to their local community, perhaps by forming their own business or relocating to another area to study at university or pursue an apprenticeship.

## Forming and Maintaining Quality Relationships

Care, support and guidance are real strengths of the academy. Students are organised into 5 year groups led by a dedicated team of Year leaders and tutors. In this small school every student is known as an individual and is encouraged to build strong working relationships with staff and their peers. We encourage each other to look for the good in every person and situation, to seek to build up rather than break down and to be not only aware of diversity but also open to the beauty it brings.

We believe that the school is a community with values of honesty and integrity because we know that these are the virtues that allow others to develop trust in us. We support high standards of behaviour and positive relationships through restorative justice principles and a highly effective rewards system, recognising though that students are also learning societal norms and will make mistakes. We want to make sure our students are able to form and maintain quality relationships because we know that these are vital for a happy life.

Stakeholders have commented that the Academy values students as individuals and supports them on their journey to becoming young adults.

## Working at Ansford

However, none of these things are possible without an outstanding staff team. It is a predominantly young staff, ambitious and committed, and we take their professional development seriously. A good number of staff have developed their careers here; others stay because it is a great place to work. They are well-supported by the management team and are encouraged to share best practice with each other. Our management policy is one of 'earned autonomy': staff who understand and work to our policies and values are given the freedom to excel in their work as autonomous individuals with light touch management and coaching. Our dedicated support staff are committed to the school and we are all supported by an excellent finance team.



We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or religion. We are also committed to the protection and safety of students. We expect all adults who work at the Academy to take full responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of students at the Academy.