



**BE THE BEST
YOU CAN BE**

For September 2024 entry





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Ofsted report

"Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning at this school. Leaders understand the curriculum very well and how best to teach it." **Ofsted 2023**



WELCOME



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your family to Whickham School. We are a school at the heart of our local community that ensures that every young person develops into a well-rounded citizen who is able to make the most of their unique talents and abilities. This has enabled us to build an excellent reputation locally, of which we are very proud.

Our school is a happy community where we have high expectations of each other and work hard to realise our potential. Students learn to embrace challenges and develop the confidence to approach problems and new situations with a positive mindset. Our curriculum and pastoral care is underpinned by a focus upon ensuring our students are aspirational, respectful, resilient and

demonstrate empathy for others.

Standards are high and our students study a curriculum that enables them to develop knowledge and skills that prepare them well for higher education and employment. Academic achievement is important and we are proud of the success our students achieve, but we recognise success and happiness in life is much more than this. Whickham students access a range of exciting experiences that support personal development and develop the personal qualities that enable them to be people we are proud to know.

Behaviour is excellent and is a basic expectation of all our students. Our school community is built upon mutual respect and this

ensures good relationships. This is crucial in effective learning and the creation of happy students and staff. All students are expected to maintain high levels of attendance and meet homework requirements. This is fundamental to achieving a culture of success.

The relationship between school and parents and carers is important to us. We work closely with parents and carers to ensure that each young person is happy, safe and successful during their time at the school.

We look forward to meeting you when you visit our school.

Mr F. Turnbull
Headteacher



OUR VISION

Whickham, a school to be proud of at the heart of the community. Where learning is cherished in a safe, caring and supportive environment. A school where everyone is valued and inspired to be the best they can be.

In achieving this aim we ensure all students develop into well rounded citizens who possess the skills, knowledge and qualifications that will enable them to realise their full potential. Our curriculum and student support services focus upon developing the following qualities:

- **ASPIRATION** - Whickham students set aspirational goals that are ambitious and without limitation.
- **RESPECT** - Without compromise, Whickham students demonstrate respect for themselves, others and their environment.
- **RESILIENCE** - Whickham students persevere with challenges, especially when faced with setbacks.
- **EMPATHY** - Whickham students strive to be kind, caring and understanding of each other's feelings and needs.



EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

At Whickham School we have high expectations for all our students. We create an ambitious, but supportive academic environment which enables our students to thrive.

Students are supported in their journey towards academic success with high quality teaching and learning. Right from the start of Year 7 we ensure that we have a keen focus on the core skills of literacy and numeracy which underpin success in the wider curriculum.

A-Level results are amongst the best in the region and GCSE standards are consistently strong, significantly above local and regional averages.

Strong educational outcomes enable our students to experience exciting opportunities. The vast majority of our Sixth Form students go onto Further or Higher Education, many of them attending Russell Group universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Others follow apprenticeship or direct employment routes.

Scan for the exam results



OUR CURRICULUM

In recent years we have rethought our curriculum from the ground up to ensure that we have a well sequenced, purposeful and ambitious curriculum rooted in the local community.

Throughout Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum designed to develop deep knowledge and understanding in a wide variety of subjects.

Pupils study: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Music, Physical Education, a modern foreign language (French or German), Design and Food Technology, Computing and Art.

In addition to this formal academic curriculum we recognise the importance of ensuring our students develop into well rounded young adults and so we also focus on PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education).

In Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) all students follow a core curriculum of English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies and PSHCE. Students have some flexibility to start to specialise and students choose a variety of GCSE and vocational subjects which include a language and humanities subject.

Most of our students continue their educational journey into our Sixth Form for two years of advanced level study. Students choose from a wide variety of over 30 courses.

TUTORIAL PROGRAMME

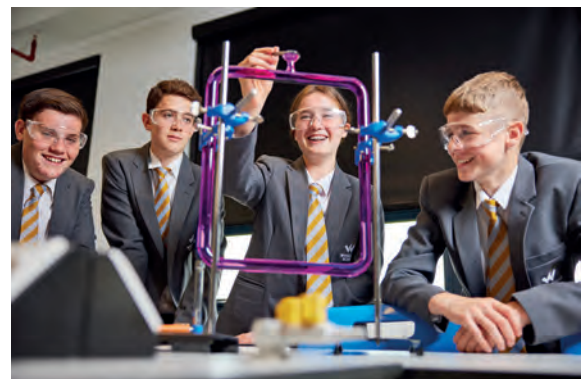
Students start every day with their form tutor who acts as a consistent point of contact and support. The form tutor helps to ensure students are ready for learning each day. Where possible students will keep the same tutor throughout Years 7 to 11. Our tutorial programme includes a weekly assembly and covers a wide variety of PSHCE topics.

HOMEWORK

The regular completion of homework helps students to consolidate their learning. Research evidence shows that students who complete regular high-quality homework make substantially more progress each year than those who don't. We support students in developing their independent study skills by graduating our approach, and the amount of independent study gradually increases from Year 7 to 11.

Both our school library and homework hub run each day before school, at lunchtime and for an hour after school so that all students can get the support they need to complete their work. Our achievement team will also help any student finding homework difficult.

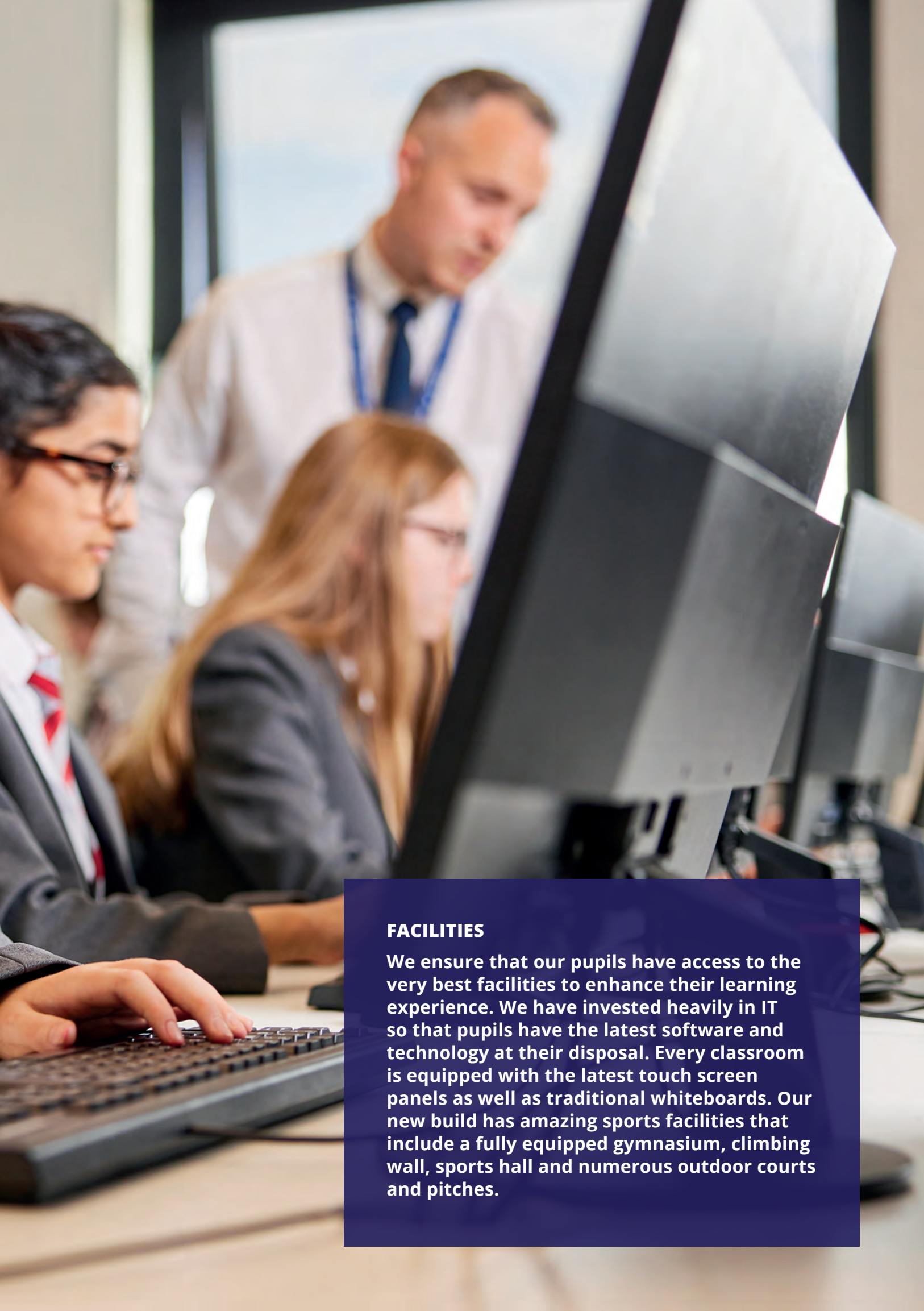
“Leaders have planned a high-quality curriculum. It is highly ambitious for all pupils.” **Ofsted 2023**



**BE THE BEST
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"Pupils behave exceptionally well at Whickham School."
Ofsted 2023



FACILITIES

We ensure that our pupils have access to the very best facilities to enhance their learning experience. We have invested heavily in IT so that pupils have the latest software and technology at their disposal. Every classroom is equipped with the latest touch screen panels as well as traditional whiteboards. Our new build has amazing sports facilities that include a fully equipped gymnasium, climbing wall, sports hall and numerous outdoor courts and pitches.

TRANSITION

The change from a small school to a large one, to a wider curriculum and to the responsibility of forming relationships with new friends and new teachers, is sensitively and effectively managed through a continuous programme of support.

We have developed an on-going transition programme from Year 6 onwards so that primary students are regular visitors to Whickham School. Students participate in a number of lessons and activities, including academic and summer schools which build confidence and familiarity. Each year,

students experience a range of transition activities. Students work with our Peer Support Mentors to get the student perspective on life at Whickham. Primary students have lunch at school and meet their Form Tutor and fellow students.



“Leaders use a range of highly effective strategies to support pupils’ mental health and well-being.” **Ofsted 2023**

PUPIL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

SEND

Students who may find transition a little more difficult have additional sessions prior to joining the school to allow them extra time to familiarise themselves with staff and their new surroundings.



The school welcomes students with disabilities. Wheelchair access is available in all areas, our new building and toilets have been adapted to provide appropriate facilities for wheelchair users.

The SEND Team (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is strategically overseen by an Assistant Headteacher and a SENDCO. The specialist SEND Team has 19 staff in total with a wide range of subject and SEND specialisms. They work across our faculties, providing a blend of one-to-one, small group and in class support and intervention.

The SEND Team has a close working relationship with our primary schools, holding regular meetings with parents, students and teachers, as well as a range of outside agencies, to ensure that students' needs are met. Students identified with SEND are assigned a SEND Key Worker, who will be the students' main point of contact and who will regularly liaise with parents and carers to ensure the best possible support is given.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We have access to a range of specialist mental health support, both in-school and working with external agencies. We have a dedicated mental health team in school, including a full-time psychotherapeutic school counsellor and mental health support officers. We also have a significant number of teaching and support staff who have undergone accredited youth mental health first aid training. We have forged excellent relationships

and work closely with a number of external agencies and counselling services, including Kooth, RISE, Bloom and Mind. If your child is struggling with anxiety, self-esteem, confidence or any other aspect of mental health, we will act swiftly to make sure appropriate, graduated support is put in place through our multi-agency referral process.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND CAREERS

We have a dedicated achievement team who are responsible for supporting all pupils in making strong academic progress. We believe that every student can and should achieve their full potential. We realise that at times, students will need support and intervention to ensure they do so. The achievement team exists to remove academic barriers to learning so that pupils can achieve their full potential. We have a range of tutors available as well as mentoring programmes to help young people learn. The achievement team also runs homework hubs where pupils can get support during lunch time and after school. We give pupils the opportunity to connect their in-school learning to the bigger picture through trips to universities, work sectors or guest speakers.

CAREERS GUIDANCE

All students in year groups 7-13 receive comprehensive Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to support their education and personal development so that by the time they are ready to leave Whickham School they have had the information and support necessary to move on to the next stage of their journey.

We have a dedicated careers advisor based in school who is available to offer personal one to one advice to your child at every step of their journey through school.

DIVERSE AND ENGAGING OPPORTUNITIES

EXTRA CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

A high proportion of students choose to take part in the rich extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school.

In addition to our extensive extra-curricular sports programme, our students can express and develop their talents in a wide variety of ways, including: dance, drama, music, art, textiles, media studies, public speaking, reading clubs, creative writing and in a host of other ways.

In performing arts, students have the opportunity to join weekly drama and music clubs, where they can work with upper school students in developing their performance skills. We host an annual school production where students can be part of cast and backstage crews. Our school band is made up of woodwind, brass and percussion players who rehearse together to perform classical and popular music to local audiences at school and in the community. We also have a rock band and school choir. In dance, students plan, rehearse and perform their own dance evenings and students have the opportunity to practise a range of styles, including work with professionals from external organisations.

Our art department holds a prestigious annual exhibition of student work and arranges a series of visits to local and national galleries, as well as inviting artists to visit Whickham and work with students.

We have a wide and ever-increasing range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including: Philosophy and Ethics, Rainbow Society, Robotics, Boxing, Chess and Science. We also invite guest authors into the Library to complement our Accelerated Reader programme.

We also have a partnership with NE Youth and from September 2022 will be running programmes looking at Internet Citizens, Life Skills and Financial Management.

THE WHICKHAM WAY

Many of our students write for and help edit our half-termly school magazine – The Whickham Way – a fantastic way to showcase all the wonderful things we do at Whickham whilst honing their journalistic writing skills.



High School Musical 2023 production.

“The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons. Pupils are encouraged to develop their confidence and resilience.”

Ofsted 2023

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Whickham School runs the acclaimed Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme at all three levels. This is open to students from years 9 to 13. As part of the rigorous programme they complete an expedition, carry out volunteering and, for the Gold award, organise and participate in a residential trip.

INTERNATIONAL VISITS

The school participates in a host of international visits each year. Students have visited Poland, Belgium, France, Germany, Iceland, Switzerland, Andorra, Tanzania, Uganda, Mexico, Morocco and the USA.

WORLD CHALLENGE

The World Challenge trips are 3 to 4 week expeditions which take place approximately every 2 years to remote locations in distant countries. They are open to students in year 11, 12 and 13. The venture is designed to let students develop their leadership qualities. Previous expeditions have been to Namibia, Ladakh in the Indian Himalayas, Mexico, Morocco, Bolivia, Southern Tanzania, Borneo, Eswatini, Mozambique and Nepal followed by Borneo in 2023.

What makes these trips unique is that the

students decide on the itinerary and organise all aspects of the expedition. They are responsible for booking transport, controlling the finance, securing accommodation, buying food and organising guides for the trek. They have to purchase equipment and the resources required for the project, and liaise with the community leaders or the teachers who they are working with.

All students fundraise over a period of 15 months to help meet the cost of this expedition.

These can be life-changing trips and are special in that they give the students an opportunity to go to places very few tourists get to visit, to experience life in a foreign culture, living with people less fortunate than themselves whilst providing much needed help for these people.

The life skills the students learn will not only aid personal growth, but can help secure university places and impress future employers. They talk in interviews about erecting houses for the homeless in the Andes, swimming with turtles and collecting their eggs for hatching on remote Pacific beaches, standing on top of the second highest road pass in the world, building classrooms in Africa or sleeping in hammocks whilst trekking through the Borneo Jungle.



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WHICKHAM SIXTH FORM

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SIXTH FORMS IN THE NORTH EAST

CURRICULUM

We are extremely proud of the strong academic progress our students make and the excellent grades they achieve. We offer a diverse and broad curriculum, with a variety of courses at A-level and Level 3 including BTEC. The curriculum is complemented by a range of additional study options including Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and Core Maths, as well as an array of enrichment opportunities.

FACILITIES

The Sixth Form is housed in a state-of-the-art Sixth Form centre which includes social space, computer suite, study area, conference rooms and a Starbucks cafeteria. The Sixth Form study block is accessible Monday - Friday 7am-5.30pm. It is also open on Saturdays in the run up to examinations providing a quiet and purposeful work space for students.

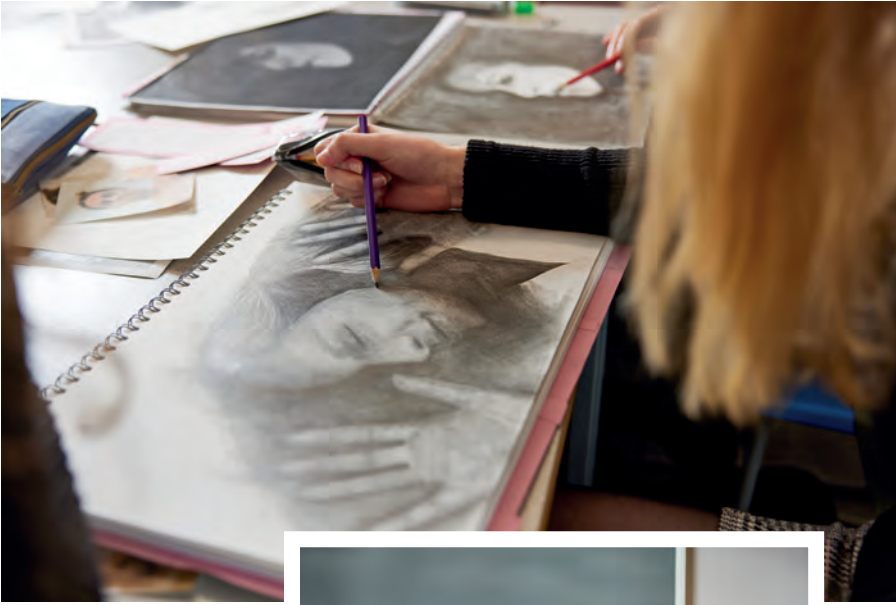
SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

There is a well-developed support system to prepare Year 11 students for post-sixteen life. Alongside this we invest a large amount of time in supporting students with their transition to university or employment after their Sixth Form studies.

ENRICHMENT

We have an extensive offer of enrichment activities designed to help develop students' wider interests and talents. This includes; Sports Leadership, Duke of Edinburgh, World Challenge, Debating and Peer Mentoring. We also run an annual Charity Week where the charity is selected by the incoming Year 12 students. They are responsible for the organisation, planning and delivery of fundraising activities which develops their skills and aids their transition into Sixth Form.





"Students in the Sixth Form are also hugely enthusiastic about their learning."
Ofsted 2023



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