

KIRKBY STEPHEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL



A co-operative Academy

A learning community committed to success for all



Information Pack for Applicants

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A learning community, committed to success for all

Kirkby Stephen Grammar School is a fully comprehensive school which serves a wide catchment area of 400 square miles and provides education for about 390 pupils between 11 and 19. There are 79 students in the current Sixth Form. The school has, on average, one pupil per square mile of catchment area and draws many pupils from small villages and isolated farms. We are attracting an increasing number of pupils from the North Yorkshire area. Having such attractively small numbers enables us to provide for our students in a personalised way, within the family ethos we enjoy.

In the centre of the Upper Eden Valley, Kirkby Stephen is a thriving market town of some 2,500 inhabitants. It lies amidst some of the most splendid scenery in the North of England. Despite its sparse population and relative isolation, Kirkby Stephen has easy access to the M6 and A1 via the A66. This gives simple, quick and convenient routes to the Lake District and the rest of the country. Kirkby Stephen also lies on the Settle-Carlisle line – one of the most spectacular rail journeys in the world.

Our school occupies a prime site just two minutes walk from the Market Square and is set within extensive grounds and playing fields. The classrooms boast unparalleled views from every window.

In previous years, the school has consistently been graded as “good” or “outstanding” in Ofsted Inspections. Our most recent inspection was in September 2017 and the overall effectiveness of the school was judged to be “good” in all areas (see copy of report attached or on website). The inspection reflects the uniqueness of the school, the high quality teaching and personal care, and the huge range of extra-curricular activities and experiences available to all students. The inspectors found that “Positive relationships between staff and pupils are the backbone of this school. Mutual respect and care resonate throughout the school. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Pupils achieve standards that are above average in a range of subjects”.

In August 2011, the school converted to Academy Status – the first converter co-operative Academy in the country. The greater independence and freedoms offered by Academy Status are being explored.

The school aims to provide a safe environment and to foster co-operation between home, school and the local community; to provide a happy but challenging atmosphere in order to equip pupils to respond to new opportunities in an ever changing society; to widen cultural horizons and to promote learning of all kinds including high academic standards and personal development for pupils of all abilities.

KSGS has always been the focus for much of what goes on in the community. The school was designated a specialist Sports College from September 2003 and we have been successfully hosting the Eden School Sports Co-ordinator Programme from September 2004. The Eden Valley Sports Partnership is an integral part of the school delivering a wide range of sports and activities to a number of primary schools throughout the Eden Valley. We are the provider for most facilities that sporting and other groups seek to use.

A Senior Leadership Team, consisting of the Head, two Assistant Headteachers and Business Manager, leads the school through its planning, monitoring, reviewing and day-to-day management. The SLT is well supported by Subject Leaders and Key Stage Co-ordinators.

Our academic results have shown real improvements. KS3 results are consistently high and our A-Level results are also outstanding, with excellent value-added figures from GCSE.

THE CURRICULUM

There has been much curriculum development over recent years; annual intake is either three or two forms, depending on numbers. Each year group of children is placed in mixed ability House groups for pastoral and teaching purposes. Setting exists for English and Maths from year 7, and in Science from Year 8. Special Needs provision is in the form of classroom support or withdrawal, and the work of the team of Teaching Assistants is highly successful.

At Key Stage 3, a broadly based curriculum is followed and all pupils study English, Mathematics, Science, Spanish, History, Geography, Music, Art, D&T (Product Design and Food Technology), Drama, ICT, Physical Education, Citizenship and Issues Values & Beliefs (IVB).

At Key Stage 4, all pupils follow Mathematics, English Language and Literature, two or three Sciences, PE, COPE, plus four option from a range of subjects including, ICT, BTEC Creative Media Production, Product Design, Food Technology, Spanish, History, Geography, Music, Art, Drama, PE and Business Studies.

In the Sixth Form we offer a good range of AS and A2 courses, some courses combined with Appleby Grammar School.

A 25 period week operates with four lessons in the morning and one in the afternoon.

PUPIL WELFARE

There is a strong and developing House system. For pastoral purposes the school is divided into three units: the Lower School includes pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, the Upper School years 10 and 11, and the Sixth Form. Under the guidance of Key Stage Co-ordinators, form tutors play an active role in the academic and personal development of pupils. Rewards and Sanctions have been reviewed regularly and a very successful system introduced.

STAFFING

Our full-time equivalent for teaching staff is 23.68 this academic year and all teachers are highly qualified in their subject specialism. There is also a highly skilled team of teaching assistants led by a SENCO, who support pupils with SEN very effectively. In addition, the school has a full range of administrative and technical support staff. In all, there are 56 colleagues, full and part-time, employed by the school.

The staff are a very hardworking, close-knit team whose main focus is every child and who are totally committed to the further development and improvement of the school.

THE SCHOOL SITE

The school is surrounded by extensive playing fields, has a sports hall, gymnasium, a dance studio, hall, and three floodlit top class tennis courts. We also have a floodlit multi-purpose all-weather pitch. Additional buildings have been added to provide a new Library, foyer and reception and office accommodation, extended DT workshops and art studios. Facilities within the teaching areas have been updated. Science, ICT and the Food Room have all been upgraded. Two peripatetic music rooms have been completed in recent years. Student toilets have also been refurbished recently.

The school has a strict no smoking policy on the site in line with current legislation.

ACTIVITIES

The school is the focal point for the community, and staff are very much involved in the cultural, sporting and social activities of the area.

A Parents, Teachers and Friends Association meet regularly, planning and organising a variety of fund-raising and other events and is a great support to the school.

There are a number of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils and also regular educational visits abroad and residential field trips. We have been awarded the full International School status from the British Council. We have a strong link with a school in the Czech Republic and there are also links with South African schools. The school has an excellent record in both team games and athletics with a wide range of fixtures. The pupils are fully committed to extra-curricular activities despite the problems associated with transport in a rural area. There is an effective School Council which meets with the Headteacher.

THE SIXTH FORM

There are currently 61 students in the Sixth Form and this number is steadily growing. It represents a significant staying-on rate and is a vital element of the school. We are the smallest secondary school in Cumbria with a Sixth Form. We welcome several students from other schools, including some from North Yorkshire.

The students study a full range of 'A' level and AS/A2 courses. We have developed close links with Appleby Grammar School for shared subjects.

Sixth Formers play an important role in school life; they are represented on the School Council, run coaching and buddy clubs for younger pupils, and assist at major school and community functions.

We rely significantly on the contributions made by the Head Boy, Head Girl, and Senior Students - Sixth Form students chosen by their group as their senior school representatives. They help run the House system and also meet regularly with their Head of Year and the Headteacher.

The rural nature of the area means that we have to be especially pro-active in trying to broaden the horizons and experiences of all students, including sixth formers.

Further information about the school is available on the school website at www.ksgs.cumbria.sch.uk .

Mr G J Hartley
Headteacher

January 2018

Enc OfSTED Report 2017