



# **Desborough School**

## **Information for Candidates**

Updated – May 2010

Desborough School is an 11-19 multi-cultural comprehensive school for boys in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. There are currently 939 students on roll, of whom almost 200 are in the Sixth Form. From September 2009, girls were admitted into Year 12 for the first time.

In September 2003 The School became a specialist Language College. Our newly refurbished Language Department opened in September 2004 and has enhanced the teaching and learning for our pupils as well as benefit the local community. In October 2005 the School was awarded an International School Award by the British Council and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). In November 2007 the Language College was re-designated. The International School Award has been extended to 31 August 2011.

In 2001, 2002 and 2003 we gained a DCSF School Achievement Award – public recognition of our continuing improvements. Since 1996 we have been recognised as an Investor in People – acknowledgement of the great emphasis we place on staff training and development. The Investor in People status was re-accredited in 2006 and this award was extended again in May 2009 for three further years. All colleagues joining our staff are provided with a comprehensive induction and mentoring programme. We have a clear line management structure that provides colleagues with support and opportunities for continual professional development.

In April 2006 the School was inspected by OFSTED and received an encouraging report. For each criterion considered by the team of inspectors, the School was judged to be either “good or satisfactory”. In March 2008 the Geography Department had an OFSTED subject inspection. In May 2009, the School had a full inspection which was satisfactory. The care of students and their behaviour were particularly praised.

Whilst we are justifiably proud of the achievements of our own boys, we also recognise the importance of collaboration with our partner schools. The School is part of a Federation of five comprehensive secondary schools in Maidenhead, together with a Special School. This commenced in September 2004 and has significantly enhanced the prospects of all our students as well as provided staff with opportunities to train jointly. The schools within the Federation co-operate in many ways, for example with regard to behaviour management. Some A/S and A2 courses are taught in a block in which any students from Federation Schools can opt thereby opening up a very wide post-16 curriculum.

### **Students' Achievements**

Students' achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways. We set and obtain very high standards in students' work, dress and behaviour. Great importance is placed on maximising learning in a stimulating, well-ordered and disciplined environment. The school is set on a course of sustained high academic

achievement. The average percentage of our boys achieving at least five higher grade passes at GCSE in 2008 was 63.4% and in 2009 was 69.5%. The value added scores for our Sixth Form place us among the highest achieving schools in Berkshire.

The percentage of boys who achieve 5 + A\*-C including GCSE English and Maths was 54.3% in 2008 and 55.1% in 2009. 94.3% of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-G grades at GCSE in 2008 and this figure rose to 97.8% in 2009. 100% of pupils achieved 1 or more grades at A\*-G. in 2008 and 2009.

A wide range of courses are offered in the Sixth Form and many of our pupils' progress to university. In 2008/2009 80.4% of students progressed to higher education institutions.

### **Property and Capital Development**

A recent major refurbishment programme is now complete. There is a completely renovated admission centre, staff room, Learning Resources Centre, Mathematics Suite, Business/Economics Suite, MFL Suite and Humanities Suite. This follows the opening in September 2003 of a new purpose built Music building, the opening in 2002 of a new English block, a new Drama Studio, extended accommodation for PE and a refurbished Art suite. The main school building was completely renovated in 2005. There is a current need to develop Science, Physical Education and ICT facilities further and this is recognised in the School Improvement Plan. The Sports Hall was refurbished in early 2008 and the dining hall in August 2008. The Sixth Form Common Room was renovated in Summer 2009 and three ICT rooms provided.

Desborough School has been included along with four other Maidenhead secondary schools in a Building Schools' for the Future submission in February 2010 for major capital expenditure in the near future and the result of this submission is awaited. An additional sum of £300,000 has been identified for capital projects in March 2010, including fencing, roofing and security measures.

### **ICT**

ICT is a key aspect of our work and the current aim is to extend better ICT facilities to all teaching areas. There are four ICT rooms in the ICT/Technology Building (called the Reynolds Building), one ICT room for the Business Studies & Economics Department, two specialist rooms within the Language College. Two further ICT rooms have been developed: one in the Sixth Form Common room and one adjacent to the Science Department. The School is working towards ICT Mark.

## **Pastoral Care**

Our pastoral system is recognised as one of excellence. It is based on the Year System and Pastoral Leaders work on a cyclical basis within each Key Stage. On entry to the School in Year 7, boys are placed in mixed ability tutor groups, and their Form Tutor remains with them for five years. Each Head of Year relates to an Assistant Head Teacher.

There is a pastoral programme that supports the boys' learning and which develops their life skills. We take great care to spot the potential of each individual, monitoring and recording his progress as he moves through the school and intervening if things begin to slide. We are committed totally to maximising the potential of each individual.

One of the Assistant Headteachers is working on a new system of pastoral support and intervention and working with a new team of staff to develop the School's work in this area. Significant changes were implemented from September 2009.

A member of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Ethnic Minority Achievement Service works in the School for three days a week supporting students and pupils with EAL and other language needs. This work is managed by the Language College Director and has been based in a dedicated room in the Language College from September 2009.

The School was awarded with a Health Schools' Award in March 2010.

## **Curriculum**

We teach the full National Curriculum and set pupils from day one according to their ability in all subjects except Art, Music, Drama, ICT and PE. We have a standard number of 189 in each year group and teach the boys in seven groups (eight for practical/creative subjects).

Boys study French, Spanish or German in Year 7 and have the opportunity to pick up a second or third language from Year 8 onwards. The languages currently offered are: French, German, Spanish, Italian, Urdu, Japanese, Arabic, Polish and Dutch.

Drama, Music and Art are studied by all boys in key Stage 3 and they are a most important feature of life in our school. These subjects continue to be popular within the options at key Stage 4.

All boys take PE for two hours per week in Years 7 to 11 and they have the opportunity to take the GCSE short course in Key Stage 4.

In Key Stage 4 all boys follow an English course which leads to 1 and in most cases 2 GCSEs in Language and Literature, a balance science course (Dual Certification), Mathematics, at least one modern foreign language, the GCSE short course in RE and ICT and three further subjects according to their preference. All boys have a cross-curricula lesson each fortnight which includes PSHE and Citizenship. More able boys study Physics, Biology and Chemistry as three separate Sciences. This option was introduced in 2006 and is taken up by just over thirty boys on average, and again in 2007 for a similar number of boys. Since 2008 numbers taking this option have risen steadily.

In May 2009 and 2010, pupils in Year 9 were tested using the National Curriculum Tests in English, mathematics and science. The Key Stage 3 curriculum lasts until the end of Year 9.

### **School Improvement Planning**

School development planning is central to our work and involves all staff. Each curriculum team has its own Department Development Plan (DDP) which reflects the agreed priorities for the whole school as well as initiatives emanating from the curriculum team. All curriculum areas are encouraged to develop international projects and activities.

### **School Meetings**

There is a cycle of meetings which is published in the Staff Handbook each year. This has been refined considerably to meet the changing needs of the school and to reduce the bureaucratic burden on staff to the bare minimum. There is a Staff Briefing every Tuesday and Thursday at 08.30, to which members of the teacher staff are expected to attend. An electronic version of the items raised at this meeting is distributed electronically to all members of staff by break time on the day of the meeting.

### **Assessment**

We have a computerised reporting system for all pupils and we are committed to making ICT a working reality for all staff in terms of administration. The school is currently introducing the use of SIMS Assessment Manager and electronic registration. Each year group has a Parental Consultation Evening once per year, short reports and long reports.

### **Student Voice**

We have an active School Council (called Student Voice) which provides a forum for obtaining boys' opinions on a wide range of issues. Developing the students' voice is a key priority for the immediate future.

## **School Ethos**

The staff room is a lively and sociable area of the school - Desborough members of staff are renowned for their team spirit and have a genuine sense of "family". Regular social activities are organised for the staff. The headteacher aims to reduce the bureaucratic burden on members of staff and ensure that the professional autonomy of staff is protected. Members of staff come from a variety of backgrounds and a significant number of members of staff have taught at the school for many years. This makes for a vibrant and varied team with a large range of talents and interests. Since 2005, the School has had very low staff turnover. Members of staff who do leave tend to go to promotions in other schools or to start their retirement.

## **Extra-curricular Activity**

The school enjoys a strong reputation for an extensive range of extra-curricular activities - these include school journeys and visits, overseas sports tours, foreign exchanges, school concerts and productions and a firm range of sports fixtures and activities. Members of staff supervise many games activities after school and at weekends. The School holds a Sports Day on a Saturday in July annually.

Our house system facilitates social interacting of boys of all ages in a spirit of healthy competition.

The amount of PE taught in school is relatively high, with the new statutory target of two hours PE in Key Stage 4 in place already. The School has a School Sports Coordinator who works in the PE Department part-time and spends two days per week in partner primary schools. The School holds Sportsmark in acknowledgement of the high amount of time devoted to teaching PE & Games in the curriculum and the range of extra curricular sport on offer.

## **Leadership and Management**

The School's Leadership Group consists of: Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, five Assistant Head Teachers (one of whom is the Language College Director); School Manager and Contracts & Finance Manager.

The Governing Body has 20 members from a variety of backgrounds and its diversity matches that of the School. There are currently no vacancies for members of the Governing Body.

Desborough School is a Community School. All but one of the secondary schools in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are also community schools.

The School has FMSIS from March 2010 in terms of its financial management practices.

### **Extended Services**

Desborough School was the first secondary school in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead to be an Extended School. A programme of close co-operation began in 2005 with Ellington Primary School in central Maidenhead. There is a programme of new activities before and after school. From September 2007 East Berkshire College, after closing its Maidenhead Campus, has been delivering a range of further and adult education Language courses in the evenings. This work is closely linked with that of the Language College.

The School provides language teaching to local secondary schools (e.g. Newlands and Altwood Church of England Schools). As part of the Language College, additional funding is used to provide teaching by Desborough School members of staff in partner primary schools.

The School works very closely with local Colleges of Further Education and Higher Education institutions. There are very close links with the University of Reading. The School receives students on the Postgraduate Certificate of Education Course from Reading as well as occasional Graduate Teacher Programme Trainees and Student Associate Scheme students in each summer. In 2008, an Advanced Skills Teacher from the School was seconded to the University of Reading on a School Teacher Fellowship funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

### **Conclusion**

There is inevitably a great deal one could say about a school. I have tried to summarise the main features of our School. I hope that you feel it is the kind of place where you would like to spend some of your career. If you require any further information, please look on the School's website ([www.desborough.org.uk](http://www.desborough.org.uk)) or e-mail the School itself ([info@desborough.org.uk](mailto:info@desborough.org.uk)).

Thank you for your interest in our School.

**Andrew Linnell**  
**Headteacher**