

KING EDWARD VI COLLEGE, STOURBRIDGE

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS FOR TEACHING POSTS

Stourbridge and the local area

Stourbridge is situated at the south-western edge of the West Midlands conurbation. It immediately adjoins the beautiful but relatively unknown rolling countryside of Worcestershire, South Staffordshire and Shropshire, but also has easy access to Birmingham (12 miles away) with its considerable facilities, both practical and cultural. Stourbridge lies only a few miles from the motorway network with easy access to London via the M42 and M40 and to the north and south-west via the M6 and M5. The town also enjoys easy access to the national rail system.

Formerly a market town of Worcestershire, Stourbridge became part of the Dudley Metropolitan Borough in the 1974 Local Government Reorganisation. The borough (population 305,600) was formerly a traditional manufacturing centre, which suffered heavily from the recession of the 1980s, but it recovered economically in the 1990s with the growth of service industries and an increase in managerial and professional jobs. Situated on the edge of the borough, where town meets countryside, the Stourbridge area is rich in historical and visual interest. The town has been a centre of glass production for nearly 400 years. Though the industry is now much reduced, a number of individual glass studios continue in the area. The Broadfield House Glass Museum is at nearby Kingswinford.

The town itself, while suffering commercially from the opening of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre four miles away, remains a popular shopping and commercial centre with a wide range of shops, the Crystal Leisure Centre and other local amenities. The historic town centre, which is a designated preservation area, has a number of elegant Georgian and Victorian buildings including the imposing Victorian town hall and the main hall and library of the college. The town and its suburbs are popular residential areas for people working throughout the Black Country and the West Midlands. There is a very wide range of local housing available, in town, suburban and country areas.

The college's foundation and its current status

King Edward's is a sixth form college within the further education sector. The College has ancient origins; the chantry school of 1430 was re-founded as a boys' grammar school by Edward VI in 1552; this in turn became a co-educational voluntary aided sixth form college in 1976.

In 1992, King Edward's was designated under the Further & Higher Education Act and its status was confirmed with incorporation in the 2001 Learning & Skills Bill. The college recently concluded the national area review process and will remain as an independent standalone sixth form college.

Achievement and attainment

The college is amongst the best performing sixth form colleges in the country. It has a consistent performance record and continues to compare well with other providers in most of the new performance indicators. The college's buoyant local reputation has always led to oversubscriptions of applicants for places usually by a ratio of 2 to 1. Unfortunately, there is no prospect of accommodating all who would wish to come, since the college occupies a restricted town centre site. King Edward's success is securely founded on excellent 11-16 partner schools, committed, well qualified staff and open, highly responsive students who are a delight to teach.

With a firm market niche, the college's recruitment base is sound. Within the locality there are two FE Colleges and one tertiary college which complement our provision with their courses. Although the FE colleges are much larger, their A level entries are smaller, so King Edward's is able to achieve greater economies of scale. This is an important edge, given that elements of competition continue even in the current era of collaboration. Further competition comes from local schools with sixth forms, of which there are four in the Dudley Borough, two in Hagley in North Worcestershire and one in South Staffordshire. In recent years King Edward's has grown substantially in student numbers.

Networks with other providers

The Principal is a member of several local groups: the Dudley Principals' Group, the Black Country Colleges and the Stourbridge Headteachers' Group. The strongest regional networks are the Association of Colleges' West Midlands Group and the Midlands Sixth Form College Principals' Group and at a national level support comes from the Sixth Form Colleges' Association and the Association of Colleges itself. The college is a member of the Maple Group of academic sixth form colleges.

Curriculum

Unlike most sixth form colleges, the college has hitherto had only full time students aged 16-19 and the curriculum has remained based upon academic GCE A levels. Within this part of the West Midlands, the college has established an enviable reputation as the main and the most successful provider of A level courses. A highly successful inspection was carried out by Ofsted in October 2017 with the college graded as good.

The college's curriculum covers 36 A levels. There is no separate GCSE repeat course, although retakes are provided to students who need them in mathematics and English. The College also offers a number of accredited courses in a particularly strong enrichment programme, which includes music, drama, sports, debating, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Finance Baccalaureate, the extended project qualification and work experience.

Style and ethos are as significant as subjects in the post 16 curriculum. The approach has been to give students increasing responsibility for their own learning as they make the transition from school to the pre-university stage. The result is students displaying openness and commitment which are major factors in achieving the academic atmosphere and results for which the college is well known.

The college buildings

The college occupies a compact site at one end of Stourbridge High Street. The integrated bus and rail station is at the other end, only a few hundred yards away, and this proximity allows the college to draw from a wide catchment area which extends to Wolverhampton in the north, the edge of Birmingham to the east and to Bromsgrove, Worcester and Kidderminster to the south. As well as the main site, the trustees own ten acres of playing fields a mile away.

The buildings on the main site vary in age, the oldest dating from the nineteenth century, but the majority of the classrooms were built during the last century, with a major development during the 1980s and a further two in the last few years: a dedicated mathematics block opened in September 2013 and the Frank Foley block, completed in November 2014, offers outstanding accommodation for students of dance, drama, graphic design and computing.

Student support and welfare

The college places high priority on pastoral guidance. Each student is allocated to a student support tutor who provides guidance throughout the student's two years at the college. The arrangements are managed by the Assistant Principal (Student Support) who is assisted by six lead tutors. The college takes its responsibilities for safeguarding the welfare of its students very seriously and it expects all staff to share its commitment and to take responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of students. All new staff will be required to provide up-to-date disclosure and barring clearance (if subscribed to the DBS 'Update service'), or to undertake a new check before taking up employment. Offers of employment are conditional on the satisfactory provision of references and criminal records clearance through the DBS.

Quality improvement

It is the college's policy to improve continuously in its ability to meet the learning requirements of its students. From this it follows that every area of college activity must have clear standards and be open to scrutiny and review. It is, therefore, necessary for the person appointed to support the philosophy of continuous improvement.

Equality and diversity

King Edward VI College celebrates diversity and aims to recruit from as diverse a range of staff as possible. Please complete the equal opportunities monitoring form as fully as possible so that we can monitor and improve the implementation of our equality and diversity policy. The answers you provide in this section will be treated in the strictest confidence. They will only be used for statistical monitoring except in the case of disability which will be used to identify reasonable steps we can take to help you through the selection process. This form will be separated from the application form before the short-listing and interview process begins and will not be available to the selection panel, or to staff should you be appointed. We appreciate you may be unfamiliar with divulging this type of information and give our assurance that only the HR Manager has access to this information for monitoring purposes only. For confidential advice please call the HR Manager on 01384 398127.