INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Sheldon School
Chippenham

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Thank you for requesting information about Sheldon School. The school is a professionally rewarding and enjoyable place to teach. Standards of achievement and behaviour are very good and are supported by high expectations. The professional development of teachers and support staff is a school priority and newly qualified teachers in particular enjoy an excellent induction programme.

Although the school is already successful, we are committed to improving all aspects of our work. An important part of that improvement is the appointment of talented, committed teachers and support staff who enjoy working with children. We value all aspects of a teacher's work, including their role as a tutor and their involvement in providing extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, but above all, their expertise and commitment as subject specialists.

Location

Sheldon stands in an attractive parkland site on the edge of the rapidly growing market town of Chippenham, surrounded by beautiful countryside. There are good rail and road links to London. Teachers enjoy living in the town, but others find the journey from Swindon, Bath or Bristol convenient. The school is only 5 minutes from junction 17 on the M4. The area offers a rich diversity of cultural and leisure facilities with plenty of relatively affordable housing.

Pupil intake

The school draws pupils equally from the town of Chippenham and from the villages around. We have a strong reputation and, in an area well-served by secondary schools, places in Year 7 are usually oversubscribed. Sheldon is genuine comprehensive: our intake is well-balanced both socially and academically.

School population 2019/20

In September 2019 the school had just over 1700 pupils on roll. 280 pupils are admitted into Year 7 each year and placed into ten tutor groups. The sixth form is very well-established and is one of the largest in Wiltshire, with approximately 350 students on roll. We hope to see this rise towards 400 in years to come.

Staffing

There are currently 123 teachers (with a full-time equivalent of 113) and 88 non- teaching staff. The school is firmly committed to providing development opportunities for all staff and staff continually comment on the quality of CPD that is offered. A performance management review system is well-established and part of Sheldon's culture; through it, training and other professional opportunities are embedded in the school development plan.

Structure and organisation

The academic organisation is based on eleven faculties and they have considerable autonomy in the management of day-to-day affairs. The curriculum is structured to allow extensive setting on a subject basis. Tutor groups are mixed ability. Tutors and the head of year stay with their groups from Year 7 to Year 11. In the sixth form we have separate Year 12 and Year 13 tutor groups. All tutors have regular timetabled one-to-one interviews with

their pupils, supporting and monitoring academic progress as well as providing care and guidance.

The curriculum

All the core and foundation subjects are taught at Key Stage 3, where our broad and balanced curriculum reflects the value we place on all subjects. At Key Stage 4, the majority of students follow nine or ten GCSE subjects. A vocational pathway provides opportunities for less academic pupils. The sixth form programme comprises an extremely wide range of A Level courses – 40 on offer for 2019/20 - and Sheldon students have a proud record of progression to top universities, as well as higher level apprenticeships.

Examination results

At GCSE, there has been an improving trend since 2012 with strong outcomes in English and maths, supported by excellent results in the options subjects. The new Basics figure is healthy at 75% grade 4 and above in English and maths and our Progress 8 figure is positive. After another good set of A level results in 2019, we were delighted to see three students progress to Oxford and Cambridge universities, but were equally pleased that from the 167 students, 98% of them left us with at least two A Level qualifications and at 92% at least three. Our value added figure was extremely positive, placing us in the top 20% nationally.

Links with parents and the community

The school is popular with parents, who are very supportive. They have plenty of opportunities to be involved in their children's education – parents' evenings and parent year forums are well attended. Sheldon seeks to reach out to all areas of the Chippenham and North Wiltshire community, and there are extensive links through our Sheldon Associates, Work Experience providers and many others.

Accommodation

Faculties are based in distinct suites of rooms. In specialist areas like science, design technology and the arts, accommodation is modern, purpose-built and attractive. The quality of general teaching rooms is very good and improving. Because we recognise the link between a high-quality teaching environment and improved learning, we have a comprehensive rolling programme of classroom refurbishment. In the last eight or nine years

we have built a new refectory, extended learning support classrooms, a large reception, medical space and a new diner. We were delighted to add a purpose built dance studio and mini lecture theatre in March 2018 and we are excited by the transformation of our library into an even more vibrant learning space. We are not stopping there, however, and are continually working to enhance our already excellent facilities.

Enrichment

A wide variety of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils and staff. Sheldon is known for its sporting excellence (we regularly win county and district competitions and have representatives in national squads). Drama, music and dance have high profiles and excellent productions. Clubs and societies meet at lunchtime and after school. We have exchange trips to France and Germany; other European trips for history, geography, PSRE, art and sport; field trips, residential visits and outdoor pursuits; and sixth form expeditions which have been to Tanzania, Namibia, Borneo, the Himalayas, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Botswana Zanzibar, Cambodia and Vietnam. In 2014 we joined the Bath-Suzhou Partnership and each summer we host 20 Chinese students for the whole of the summer term. This has also enabled a cultural visit to take place in the past two years when in excess of 50 students have had the opportunity to see the many sights in Beijing, Xi'an, Yiwu and Shanghai.

Achievements

Sheldon has a long record of success and in the days of specialist status was awarded three categories: science, languages and sport. We also have SportsMark Gold, ArtsMark Gold, the Healthy Schools Award, the Design Mark and in 2014 achieved the International Schools Gold Award.

Finally, I joined Sheldon as headteacher in September 2012. This is my sixth school, second as a headteacher, and it is a huge pleasure and privilege to be leading such an excellent establishment. We are determined together, however, to make it even better. I hope you'll be tempted to join our exciting, friendly and rewarding community. Good luck with your application.

Neil Spurdell
Headteacher
February 2020