



Candidate information pack

Primary Teacher

A Flavour of School 21

On a good day School 21 is an extraordinary place.

Walking around this 4 to 18 school that opened in East London in 2012, you will feel a spirit of creativity and the buzz of exciting learning. With oracy woven into our DNA, there is talk going on – talk in interactive assemblies, exploratory talk in the classrooms to deepen understanding, coaching conversations in which young people share dilemmas or wrestle with ethical issues, Harkness discussions or Socratic seminars teasing out scientific concepts or the causes of great historical events. You might see young children honing their story-telling skills, learning musical instruments, developing maths mastery or building a go-kart using a blend of physics, technology, maths and design skills inspired by our new Makerspace. In the Sixth form great A level teaching sits alongside students setting up a social enterprise to deal with homelessness in the local community.

Behind all these activities is a thoughtfulness from staff – no fixed way of doing things, a set of values shaped by the school community and a menu of teaching and learning strategies that provide a powerful guide. It is a place where teachers are empowered to get back in touch with what brought them into the profession – a spirit of enquiry, a sense of collaboration, a joy of working with young people, a belief in developing the whole child – knowledge, skills, qualities and values. It is a place where teachers enjoy sharing what they are reading, exploring big ideas, wrestling with the craft of the classroom.

In the last few weeks of each term something magical happens. The energy increases and students prepare themselves, often with painstaking focus, occasionally with a jolt, for: the Festival of Light (our 4 to 18 musical extravaganza); our Ignite speeches (similar to TED talks from children of all ages); our exhibition of beautiful work (showcasing the projects and products created by every class in the school that term); or our digital portfolio presentations (in which students narrate their story of learning in front of their coaches and external partners)

We call our approach, **an education of head, heart and hand**. It's aim: for young people to find their voice and change the world. And when this trio is in balance there is a kind of chemical reaction:

deep thinking + emotional intelligence + creativity = powerful learning

Not everyday is like this, of course. The staff body, to a person, is reflective and humble. There is a restless desire to improve, to get better at everything we do. In some areas we are just at the foothills of our understanding and the depth of practice we desire, in others we have growing expertise and the need to deepen the impact.

We know, for example, that we need to be more joined up – and in September 2022 we introduced a new whole school leadership structure that is still embedding. This is helping us to ensure there are stronger and common foundations and strong common 'golden threads' across the 4-18 journey. As part of this reshaping our Leadership Team has evolved to include three whole school Deputy Headteachers and a Head of Well-being and Inclusion who lead strategic areas across the 4 to 18 age range.

We know too that the expectations on teachers to teach ‘head, heart and hand’ – are often daunting and hard to do well. The leadership challenge has always been to bring together experienced and new teachers, a range of creative ideas and programmes, and the strong opinions of passionate staff into a powerful sense of direction.

We know there are new avenues to explore – for example, students taking more control of their learning, having more choices, and opportunities to lead.

We resist compliance cultures with a passion because we know how they can suppress the imagination and curiosity of children. The task for us is how we continue to get the right balance between a precious freedom to express oneself and knowing when a consistent approach is best for everyone even if it means not getting your own way.



School 21 is, and always will be, a dance between innovation and rigour. Between fresh waves of new thinking and embedding and strengthening existing practice. That dance means not choosing between either strong academic results as a passport to future opportunities or developing the whole child. Nor choosing between old clichés of progressive and traditional: we are unashamedly traditional in our belief in the foundations of literacy and numeracy and our expectations for professionalism, kindness and generous conduct. Yet, progressive in helping every child to find their voice, to be confident in their identity, and to start to find a sense of purpose in their life.

This is an exciting time to join School 21 to be key part of shaping the next decade for School 21.

Nicola Mason
Headteacher, School 21

Welcome to School 21

To join School 21 is to join a community of innovators - staff and students who want to do things differently.

Here we think deeply about how we can help students, who often battle the odds, live lives of choice, opportunity and power. We strive to give pupils the most challenging and exciting curriculum possible and we treat each other with respect, kindness and support.

We challenge ourselves to 'innovate with rigour' and we are looking inspiring and skilled teachers who can bring something special to the school and believe, like us, that we need to develop the whole child - heart, head and hand - if we want them to take on the world.

This is your chance to grow as a professional and as a person and there are many opportunities to do so: honing your craft as a teacher, developing your subject discipline, designing interdisciplinary projects or becoming a coach and mentor.

To help you decide if this is the school for you, here are a few things that we do at School 21:

- We provide tailored, sophisticated, collaborative professional development that gives you the chance to learn new skills and approaches and then embed them in your practice.
- We support you to collaborate between subjects, ages and approaches.
- We believe in developing the full potential of all members of staff giving regular feedback on all aspects of practice.
- We give you the chance to learn from leading practitioners.
- There are multiple routes for career progression.
- Our values of community, humanity, openness, excellence and responsibility guide everything we do.

School 21 is a different kind of school and we are looking for people who have a belief that more of the same is just not ambitious enough.

Nicola Mason

Headteacher, School 21

The Big Education Family

Big Education is a multi academy trust as well as a social enterprise. Our mission is for as many children as possible to be offered a Big Education - one in which children can flourish through the development of head, heart and hand. Our aim is to do this in three ways. To inspire through our thought leadership. To design schools, programmes and tools to support a big education. To grow and support communities of schools and practitioners who are striving towards a big education.

At Big Education we believe...

- In making a difference to the entire system not just our own schools
- In prizing distinctiveness and centres of excellence over uniformity
- In challenging not accepting the way education is done – in becoming the first place to go for rigorous innovation and new thinking
- Good exam results and a good Ofsted grade are a minimum necessity not goals of education
- The divide between progressives and traditionalists gets in the way of true innovation that has an impact: dogma of any kind is unhelpful
- Education is an intellectual as well as practical undertaking and needs a rich blend of both



Our community

School 21 is driven by values. We have spent a lot of time refining our values, delving into their meaning and making them the anchors for the actions of staff and students on their 4 to 18 journey.

Our values are:

- Excellence (above and beyond)
- Openness (reflect and grow)
- Responsibility (step up)
- Humanity (choose kind)
- Community (we build strong circles)



Community has become a value of increasing importance particularly during this extraordinary year of Covid. From the start of the school we have had dedicated staff who work on developing partnership in the community. Each of our small schools have developed positive and layered relationships with the parents and families.

- ❖ **Response to Covid.** Our response to Covid has deepened our support and connection with our families and community. We have provided financial support, a food bank, a range of vital supplies as well as support with home learning and digital equipment. We have developed both a layered on-line provision as well as personalised on-site provision. We have spent a lot of time developing our well-being support for both staff and pupils. The staff's belief in social justice and going above and beyond to support our families has been a striking feature of the school.
- ❖ **Anti-racist organisation.** We are proud of the work we are doing to become an anti-racist organisation. We have devoted time as a whole staff and in working groups to work through the often challenging issues involved in ensuring that we are making change in both a pro-active way and for the long term rather providing just quick or surface solutions.
- ❖ **Partnership with business and community organisations.** We are working with several hundred organisations to enrich the student experience. We have reinvented work experience with students working in the community once a week from year 10 on rich problem solving problems. We have forged great partnerships with some of the big creative organisations on the Olympic Park such as the London College of Fashion.

The Big Education Family



School 360 opened its doors in September and will offer pupils an education of the head, heart and hand. The school will pay attention to each learner as a rounded human being, their happiness and self-awareness, their knowledge and understanding, and their skills and experiences. As well as a focus on crucial literacy and maths skills, the school will develop a range of skills across the curriculum - creative, scientific and academic.



Surrey Square, one of our MAT schools, has led the way in its work on values and well-being. It has developed a personal excellence curriculum and toolkit that provide every child with the skills and attributes to develop into successful learners and rounded human beings.



Voice 21 started out with teachers developing oracy practice at School 21. We then worked with Cambridge University to devise the four strands of oracy (cognitive, linguistic, social/emotional and physical). Five years ago we created the charity, Voice 21, which has grown and flourished, working with 1100 schools and 7000 teachers in all parts of the country. We believe that oracy should have the same status as reading and writing. We want every child to find their voice and be able to use it powerfully and skillfully in a range of settings.



Rethinking Assessment. Big Education is part of a growing coalition of state and independent schools, academics, businesses, parents, students and teachers who all want to see a better exam and assessment system that gives proper recognition to the range of strengths of every young person.



The Big Leadership Adventure is our flagship programme to nurture leaders who want to push the boundaries of what is possible in education. Based on our head, heart and hand leadership model, participants are taught a range of powerful tools and are involved in immersive experiences and workshops with a cohort of bold leaders.



Learning from Lockdown is a new website we have created to help make sense of the Covid experience in schools. A series of fascinating blogs from leaders, teachers and practitioners are aimed at building a better education system when we return from lockdown. We are turning some of the emerging themes from these blogs into playbooks and toolkits for schools to use.

CHOOSE KIND
HUMANITY

WE BUILD STRONG CIRCLES
COMMUNITY

STEP UP
RESPONSIBILITY

EXCELLENCE
ABOVE AND BEYOND

OPENNESS
REFLECT AND GROW



school21
EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

OUR VALUES

A Big Education Zone in East London

School 21 will be part of a group of four Big Education schools, all within a mile of each other.

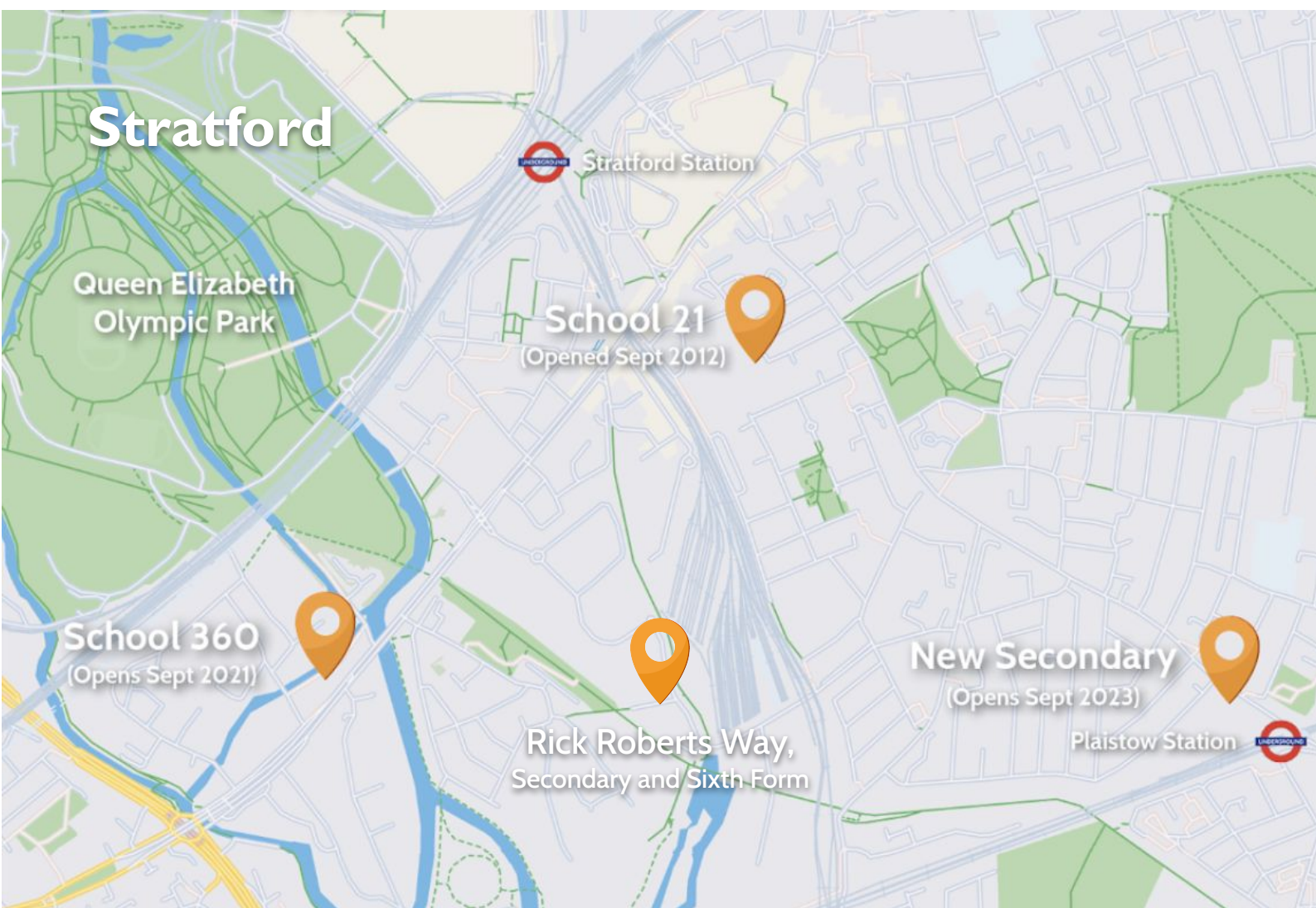
School 360 - our new primary school - opened in September this year.

Then there will be two new secondary and sixth forms opening in September 2023.

In addition we have several hundred partnerships with organisations in the area - many of whom are already taking students for real world learning projects.

That means there is the exciting prospect of 300 staff and 3000 students plus our partnerships being able to collaborate in interesting ways.

We are developing plans to bring this all together in a big education zone offering incredible opportunities for our children and families in the community.



A curriculum of head, heart and hand

At the heart of School 21 is a vision for a more expansive education. Key to this is a 4 to 18 curriculum that balances head (academics) heart (emotional intelligence) and hand (creativity and problem solving).

Our school is broken down into six phases, with the head, heart and hand curriculum running throughout.

Phases 1 and 2 (Primary years: Reception to year 4)

Phases 3 and 4 (Middle years: Years 5 to 9)

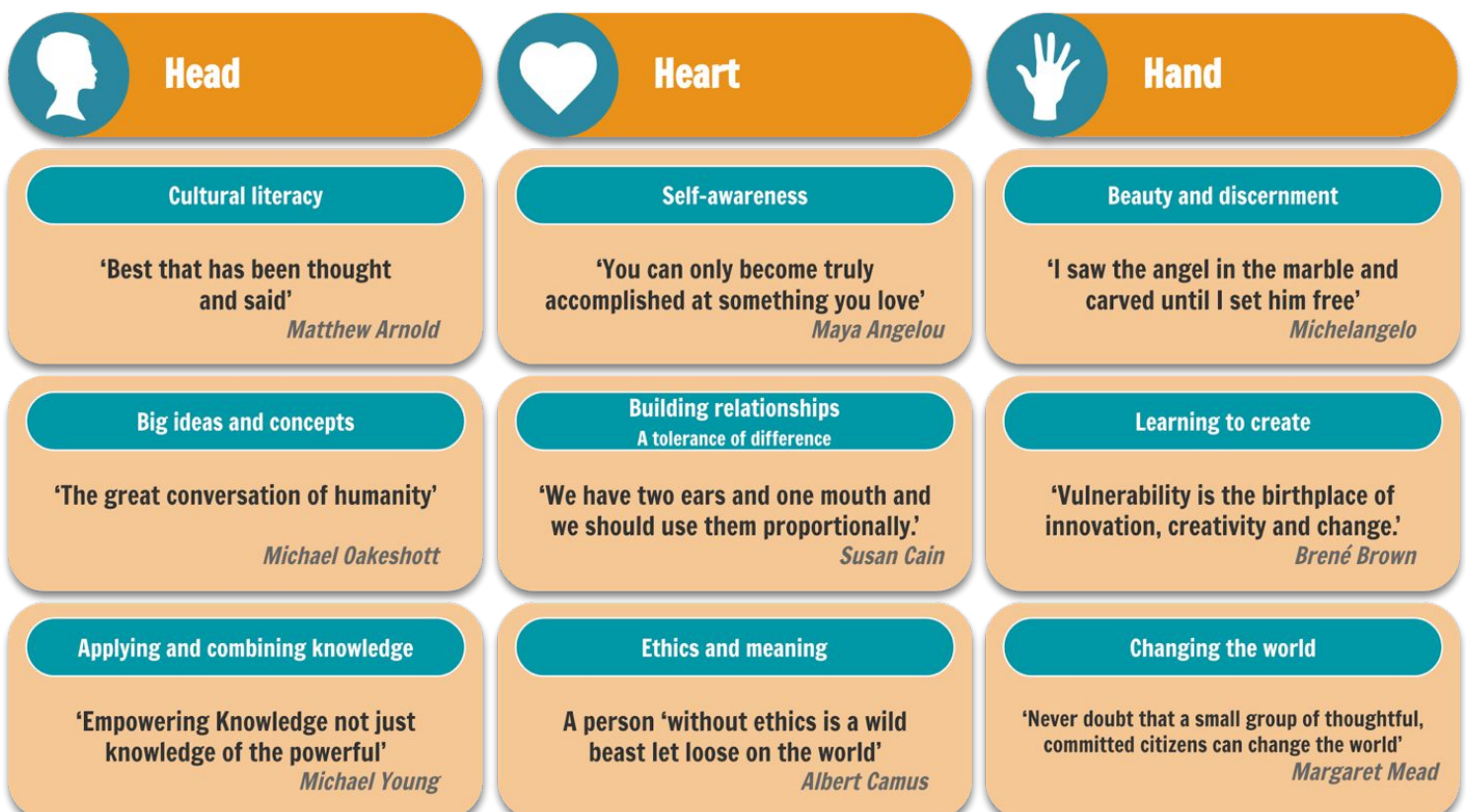
Phases 5 and 6 (Secondary years: (Years 10 and 11 and our Sixth form - Six 21)

For the head we are trying to foster deep and critical thinking. 4 to 18 well sequenced knowledge pathways that build out from big ideas and concepts, rich interdisciplinary learning and knowledge that is applied creatively to the world around us.

For the heart, we want every child to find their voice and develop confidence in who they are. We also want everyone to be able to work with others, make friends, and enjoy the different backgrounds and perspectives of our community. We also want young people to wrestle with big moral and ethical questions so they can navigate the complex world they are going into.

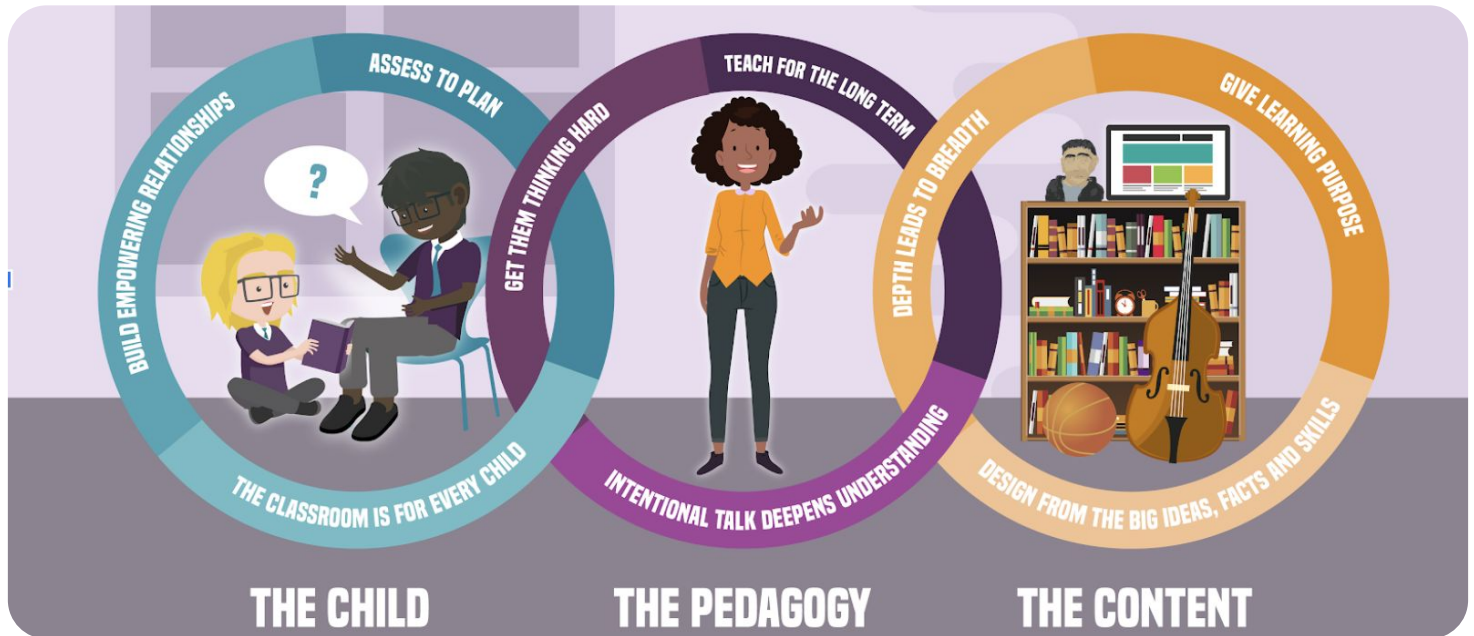
For the hand, we want the creative and performing arts to be centre stage. We have a Makerspace in the centre of our school so that students can solve problem, design products, create beautiful work, learn at the feet of experts.

There are two golden threads that weave head, heart and hand together. The first is oracy. The dialogic classroom and the dialogic staffroom is at the heart of the school. The second, is metacognition. We are a school where we are both intentional and deeply reflective about the processes of our learning so that we can become powerful learners and are constantly improving everything that we do.



Teaching and Learning at School 21

To bring alive a head, heart and hand curriculum requires a repertoire of teaching and learning strategies to suit the type of learning. School 21 carves out significant time for teachers to work on the craft of their teaching - understanding the child, the pedagogy and the content. Each of our four small schools has brought this alive for their context ensuring students achieve high academic standards as well as becoming powerful learners.



English Language is at the heart of everything we do, beginning in primary, where we teach phonics, reading, storytelling and writing with real passion. It's our mission to ensure every student is an avid reader, fluent writer and confident public speaker.

Oracy has been important to the school since we opened in 2012. We have developed a lot of rich thinking and strategies and oracy now is part of every aspect of the school from the way we do assemblies in the round, to the Ignite talks (like mini TED talks) that every child performs, to the classroom techniques that include storytelling, Harkness tables, socratic seminars, Philosophy for children and a range of other pedagogies. We have an oracy leader in each of our four small schools.

Problem solving and critical thinking is crucial to the way we think about learning and in maths where we begin with a maths mastery programme, in science and humanities as well as across the curriculum we create opportunities for children to think deeply and solve problems using a range of critical thinking strategies.

Wellbeing and growth through coaching. Throughout our four small schools we have a well-being curriculum that gives all our children the chance to get underneath complex social and emotional issues in a way that develops their personal qualities and dispositions. This involves dedicated coaching time, often in coaching groups of no more than 15, so that every child gets the chance to speak and be heard.

Music and the performing arts. From the Band Project where every child plays a musical instrument and performs together in a band, to high-quality musicals each year, to drama performances at all ages, to a community choir that has brought joy to staff pupils and parents, music and performance is woven into the fabric of the school.

Teaching and Learning at School 21



Beautiful Work and the Makerspace We believe our purpose as an organisation is to create beautiful work that makes a difference to the world. Our school is a place where children craft stunning work with quality end products, for real audiences as a result of deep teacher collaboration. In addition to teaching through discrete subject disciplines, our teachers collaborate to design and teach projects which tackle authentic issues and seek to create rich, beautiful outcomes of lasting value. Our Makerspace at the heart of the school supports this work.

Real World Learning. We go to great lengths to connect the learning of our students to the world outside the school gates. This culminates in years 10 and 12 where our students spend an afternoon every week at their Real World Learning placement, working in small teams to solve a challenging and authentic problem faced by their host organisation.

Integration of new technology. Through sophisticated use of technology including 1:1 devices online resources, apps and blogs, and e-portfolios chronicling their work, students harness the creative power of technology to organise and add value to their learning experience.

Exhibitions. At the end of every term we host an exhibition for parents, the community and our partners, where students can showcase the beautiful work they have produced and talk visitors through the story of their learning.



School 21 moving into the second decade...

Leadership structure. Our Leadership structure builds on the emphasis of students learning through unique, age-appropriate experiences as they move through their 4 to 18 journey. Each phase of the school is led by an Assistant Headteacher. The Deputy Headteachers work strategically across the 4 to 18 school, with overarching care and guidance of the students and adults in 2-3 phases of the school.

1. Phases 1 and 2 will enable strong **foundation and a love for learning** for our students
2. Phases 3 and 4 will enable the **development of passions and increasing independence** and to ensure a strong transition into phase 5.
3. Phases 5 and 6 will start at Year 10, an age when students are ready for more independence, empowerment and to ensure a curriculum built around authentic **choice**. Students in this age range will be given more **autonomy** and expectations for **empowered professionalism**.

Strategic plan. The overarching themes of our strategic plan are 'Craft', 'Curriculum' and 'Community'. The infographic below shows the draft strategic objectives for our new plan.

2022-2026		Strategic Impact Statement		Strategic Objectives / Golden Threads	
Our 'Why'	Our 'How'			Our 'What'	
Empowering Young People to take on the World together, through a Big Education	In all that we do we will be deliberately developmental, have a culture of Innovation & will drive diversity and equity. Together, as a community.	Craft: developing pedagogies that give students more ownership of their learning	A range of pedagogies will be in place that will enhance student learning and support our expansive curriculum and enable our vision. We will be outward looking, research based and restlessly deliberately developmental in our approach. Leaders at all levels will collaborate together to develop the adults in our care and to enhance student learning.	Fundamentals of Teaching & Learning - thoughtful, high quality conversations to ensure that the fundamentals of learning are lived out in every classroom to ensure strong progress for every child	Professional Learning - School 21 is a place of learning for all. Ambition and openness characterise the high quality reflections and conversations about craft. Professional learning is based on needs analysis and allows stretch and challenge for all.
		Community: creating a culture of student & community empowerment & well-being	The emotional needs of all students and staff are met, there is a strong focus on well-being and learners are showing high levels of self-regulation ensuring that they are ready to meet the challenge of 'changing the world'. Opportunities for student leadership and agency are embedded into our practice. We have strong and purposeful relationships and are making change in our community.	Leadership - building the capacity of middle and senior leaders to ensure empowerment, sustainability & a true focus on people development and student learning	Well-being, behaviour & Culture - We have a strong coaching approach and programme that ensures that every child has an adult advocate and every adult has a developmental coach. Our positive behaviour approaches empower students to self-regulate and build a strong sense of community that embodies our values
		Curriculum: embedding an expansive curriculum with intelligent assessment	Our curriculum enables the development of an empowered young person, is articulated clearly as an age -4-18+ journey with clear pathways & choices for all. Our assessment processes enable progression in learning and allow us to evaluate the strengths of each individual young person based on our Head/Heart/Hand curriculum through innovative, authentic and intelligent assessment approaches.	Building Communities - We build a variety of strong communities in and out of school (students, parents, wider) to be change partners	Student empowerment & agency - We have a strong culture of student agency through development of student leadership and role in decision making
				Progression & Challenge - Our curriculum is clearly mapped and articulated and provides key end goals for each phase of the school and pathways for all	Expansive curriculum for All - Building on our Head/Heart/Hand curriculum to ensure it is having the authenticity and impact needed to empower our young people.
				Intelligent assessment - We are developing innovative assessment approaches that evaluate the strengths of every child across our Head/Heart/Hand curriculum & strengthening approaches to ensure assessment processes identify next steps & celebrate success	

Developing you and your practice

At School 21, we take your development extremely seriously. We are an organisation made up of people who are dissatisfied with the status quo in education, and our quest to build a school fit for the 21st century means that we are constantly seeking to improve and innovate. In this context, it is not enough to simply improve our processes, we believe it is absolutely imperative that we are proactive in developing our people. The key ways in which we will support your personal and professional development are as follows:



CPD

Our practice is our testing ground. For this to happen, we think CPD should be constantly asking us what we are working on and giving us the time, space, resources and challenge to improve our practice. This is why our CPD is carefully differentiated into pathways which offer staff choice of modules, research opportunities and rigorous conversations.

Every member of staff will have:

- Allocated time to work on “craft modules” that you have chosen from a menu designed by staff.
- Regular feedback from peers, “critical friends” and those with expertise in areas you are working on.
- Opportunities for peer:peer collaboration around professional development



Leadership &
Growth

Every member of staff has a “flight path” conversation in which we discuss how they want to grow over the next two to three years and the training and support structures needed to achieve their goals.

We provide a variety of routes to progression with opportunities to:

- Lead areas of our pedagogy, such as oracy or project-based learning.
- Lead on aspects of curriculum design.
- Lead departments.

We have distinctive leadership courses to develop the skills of staff so they can lead in a range of settings. Our leadership training includes inputs from great educationalists, entrepreneurs, leaders in diverse professional fields, and those with deep experience of building high performing teams.



Strategic
Direction

Staff have the opportunity to be in a “circle” or team to develop an aspect of the school. This gives everyone the chance to be strategic and have a genuine and deep input into the direction of the school.



Line
Management

You will have a line manager dedicated to helping you grow. The expectation is that the line manager observes you in action in some setting: teaching, coaching, working with parents, taking an assembly and then gives you specific feedback at line management meetings. That way you have more specific feedback on your practice. Your line manager will act as your professional coach.



Feedback
culture

There are plenty of other ways in which staff get regular and specific feedback not just on their teaching craft but on how they want to grow more widely as a leader, project designer, team builder or coach. Much of this is done through peer feedback – matching people with the right expertise – and sophisticated protocols that help people wrestle with dilemmas or tune-up something they are working on.



Professional
Portfolio

There is an expectation that every member of staff will develop a professional portfolio of their work, projects, professional development, interests and reading. Staff find this very rewarding and provides them with a very personal story of their growth as well as a unique platform to engage outside practitioners and forge partnerships.



What we are looking for

We have spent a lot of time thinking about the attributes that make staff successful at School 21. These qualities sum it up as best we can.



Innovator

We are looking for people who do not believe business as usual is good enough: people who want to develop new approaches, challenge outdated assumptions and research new practice. We have, for example, redesigned how we do assemblies, parents' evenings, CPD, tutor time and work experience. **We are looking for new members of staff who can add fresh thinking and fresh insights.**



Multiplier

At School 21 we have a deeply held belief that our task is to grow ourselves, grow others and grow the organisation. We also believe that the highest form of leadership is to build high functioning teams. So we are looking for genuine collaborators and people who have the interest and skills to grow other people as well as themselves; **people who seek to share, learn and give to others.**



Craftsperson

School 21 is a rich environment for discussion, debate, thinking and evaluation. Staff read and research, they wrestle with deep questions about teaching and learning and they constantly look to refine and reinvent their practice. Our CPD is layered, personalized, regular and in-depth with far more time than most schools to delve deeply into practice and impact. **Our staff support each other as critical friends and collaborate deeply in order to develop their teaching craft.**

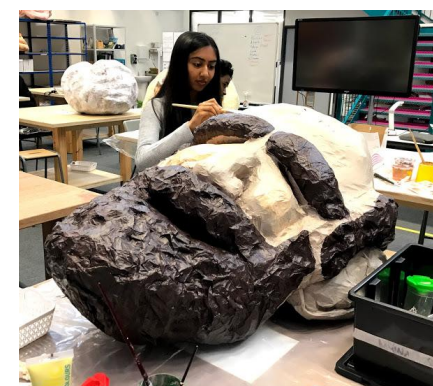
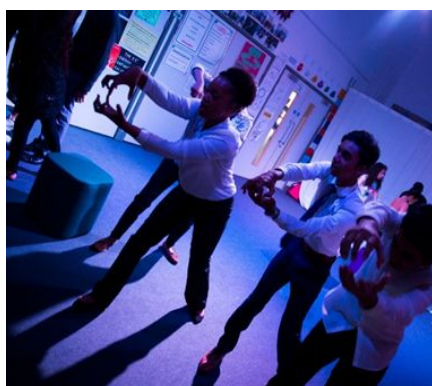
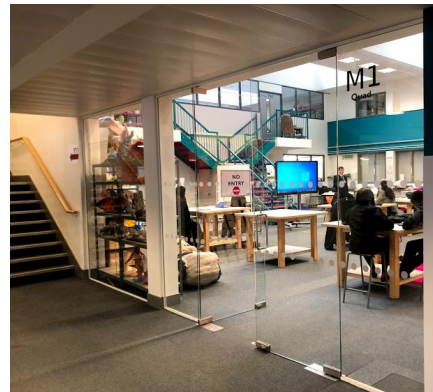


Living by our values

School 21 is an organisation that has core values at its heart. Whether a student or a member of staff, we look for people who share our values of humanity, responsibility, community, excellence and openness. **We look for people who bring these values to everything they do.**

Facilities & Environment

The School 21 site was completed in 2012, and represents an extensive rebuild and redesign of an existing school complex. The founders had considerable influence in the design and layout of the school, including the creation of large courtyard spaces which are used for assemblies, exhibition and break-out teaching spaces. There are also well-equipped specialist teaching facilities including four purpose-built science labs, a makerspace of craft and design, two drama studios, several Harkness rooms, a sports hall and MUGA sports pitch.



Location

School 21 is extremely well located at just 5 minutes' walk from Stratford Tube station, Stratford bus terminal and Westfield Shopping Centre.

With well-established and reliable public transport links throughout the area, Stratford is within easy reach from a wide range of areas and heading into Central London from the school takes about 20 minutes.

Our close proximity to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park means there are fantastic facilities on our doorstep and a constant flow of exciting organisations and start-ups into the area.



Job Description

Innovator

- To design, plan and deliver innovative lessons for young people.
- To support students to take part in purposeful talk and to develop their oracy skills.
- To plan and deliver interdisciplinary projects which bring together knowledge and skills, are focused on real-world enquiries and which culminate in a high-quality end product.
- To foster independent student-led learning, utilising new technology where appropriate.
- To develop the aspirations and professionalism of a coaching group/class, collaborating with colleagues within your coaching/year team to construct and deliver the wellbeing curriculum for a year group.
- To contribute to the strategic direction of the school.

Craftsperson

- To be an agile, reflective and open-minded learner.
- To provide on-going specific and personalised feedback to students.
- To understand progression and be able to assess against benchmarks.
- To be comfortable using data to plan interventions for individual students.
- To plan for great lessons across a scheme of work, a term, a year and across different ages.
- To be immersed both in your subject specialism and the literature around how children learn.
- To adopt a process of ongoing reflection and improvement within your teaching practice.
- To be a creative and deep thinker about pedagogy.
- To understand your role in ensuring every student is an avid reader, fluent writer and confident public speaker.

Multiplier

- To collaborate with colleagues through departments, CPD, circles, and inter-disciplinary projects.
- To collaborate with colleagues across the 4-18 school
- To make a commitment to growing others and taking part in building the feedback culture of the school.
- To build high-functioning teams of teachers and other staff.

Professional responsibilities and attitudes

- To represent the core School 21 values, humanity, community, responsibility, excellence, openness and integrity.
- To support the inclusion of all young people and to foster a belief that every child can succeed.
- To be constantly learning, open to feedback, and demonstrating a growth mindset.