

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES



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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 heavily oversubscribed. Sheldon is a genuine comprehensive: our intake is well-balanced both socially and academically.

School population 2017/18

In September 2017 the school had just under 1800 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 380 students on roll. This could increase to 400 in the years to come.

Staffing

There are currently 122 teachers (with a full-time equivalent of 86) and 87 non-teaching staff. The school is firmly committed to providing development opportunities for all staff. 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 and Sheldon students have a proud record of progression to top universities.

Examination results

At GCSE, there has been an improving trend over the last four years with strong outcomes in English and maths, supported by excellent results in the options subjects. The new Basics figure is healthy at 70% grade 4 and above in English and maths and our Progress 8 figure is extremely positive. After another good set of A level results in 2017, we were delighted to see four students progress to Oxford and Cambridge universities, but were equally pleased that from the 171 students, 41% of them achieved at least one grade A.

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, an aim which is a feature of three specialist school programmes - in science, in sport and in languages.

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. A £2.5 million sixth form centre opened in 2008. In the last six years we have built a new refectory, extended learning support classrooms, plus a large reception and medical space in January 2013, and a new diner. A significant £650k build is currently underway to replace our dance studio and we have plans to transform our library into an even more vibrant learning space.

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 vibrant 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 and Botswana. In 2014 we joined the Bath-Suzhou Partnership and each summer we host 20 Chinese students for the whole of the summer term.

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

September 2017