



# Information for Applicants



## **Welcome from the Headteacher**

I am delighted to welcome you to Denefield. Denefield is an ambitious, successful and over-subscribed school located in the western Reading suburb of Tilehurst. We are driven by a desire to ensure that students achieve 'Success for Life' – learning the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their examinations and qualifications as well as developing the CHARACTER values to thrive in modern life. Denefield was named School of the Year at the 2021 Pride of Reading Awards – the only secondary school ever to have won this prestigious accolade. In 2022 the school achieved some of its best ever examination results. At GCSE both Attainment 8 (54) and Progress 8 (+.1) scores are above the national average. Our A-Level A\*-C results improved by 31 percentage points from 2019 to 82%, matching the national average. We are determined that our current and future students will gain still better results.

Denefield offers a rigorous and engaging curriculum at GCSE and A Level, with creative and practical subjects alongside traditional academic courses. The school has a faculty structure, with three core faculties of English and Media, Maths, ICT and Computing, and Science and Social Science, as well as four foundation faculties of Humanities, Languages, Business and Travel, Creative and Performing Arts, and Physical Education and Health. The seven Heads of Faculty drive teaching and learning in the school, and staff are supported by a full programme of training and professional development, clear schemes of work, and a consistent but flexible approach to pedagogy summarised as our 'Lesson on a Page'.

Students at Denefield work hard at the school's nine CHARACTER values – confidence, happiness, articulacy, resilience, ambition, courage, tolerance, empathy and respect. They have the opportunity to develop these during subject lessons, in assemblies and house competitions and as part of our timetabled Success for Life curriculum. Students also build their CHARACTER values through participation in sports teams and competitions, attendance on school trips and residential in the UK and abroad, and involvement in the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities offered at the school.

We have very high expectations of students in terms of behaviour and culture. Students and staff deserve disruption-free classrooms. We have clear, consistent and certain systems in place to enable this, supported by a proactive and visible senior leadership team. As a result visitors to Denefield routinely comment on how calm and purposeful the school is. I am also particularly proud of the school's supportive pastoral system. Every student is assigned to one of four houses and is part of a vertical tutor group. Our four heads of house are responsible for behaviour and culture, and we have three welfare managers who oversee students' welfare and mental health. Many students are involved in the running of the school, by involvement in clubs and activities and the many community engagement activities on offer.

Denefield's sixth form curriculum is designed to ensure students can access the most competitive universities, including Russell Group and Oxbridge, and the most sought-after apprenticeships or careers. We have a Sports Coaching and Player Development programme which leads to advanced sporting qualifications and performance in addition to A Level qualification. Our Sixth Form leadership team play an active role in the school, and students are expected to undertake community service in the school or wider society. 65% of our 2022 Year 13 cohort progressed to study at university, with many attending Russell Group universities and two studying at Oxford.



Denefield is situated on a generous school site, with many playing fields and plenty of outdoor space. In recent years the school benefited from £9m of investment, creating an expanded canteen area, along with new facilities in the Science and Art, Design & Technology departments, as well as a new display and assembly space – fittingly called the Da Vinci auditorium. Our floodlit 3G pitch opened for school and community use in December 2021 and provides a first-class facility for PE lessons, training and competitive matches.

The school can only be as happy and successful as the staff it employs. We work hard to ensure that staff have a positive work-life balance. We have centralised behaviour management systems and a standardised curriculum with faculty members sharing the preparation of lessons and resources. We aim for only one after school event or meeting per week, and have significantly reduced the number of times we collect student data. Many staff live close to school and a significant number send their own children to Denefield. Staff are a close-knit community and regularly socialise together.

We are not resting on our laurels, and there is much still to do. We are currently developing our medium-term strategic plan, and our action plan for 2023-2024. Both of these plans will focus on four key themes: students, staff, resources (including the site), and the community (including parents and carers).

I hope that you will take the time to visit us and to reflect carefully on the potential this post will offer you. If you like what you see and wish to be considered for the role, please complete the relevant application form. You should also write a letter (no more than two sides of A4) which outlines the skills, qualities, attributes and experience you would bring to the role based on the information provided in the job and person specification.

At Denefield we take safeguarding very seriously and consequently the successful candidate will be required to complete a DBS enhanced check for regulated activity. Please do not include CVs with your application as these will be disregarded for safeguarding reasons.

I hope you will consider joining my team and I look forward to receiving your application form and covering letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or indeed one of my colleagues, should you wish to discuss the role further or arrange a visit.

Mr E Towill MA (Oxon)  
Headteacher

## **Our school**

Denefield is a thriving and expanding school on the outskirts of Reading with over 1,100 students on the roll, including approximately 145 in the Sixth Form. The school has been serving the local community for over 40 years since its inception in 1976. It has steadily grown over the last few years reflecting our good reputation and the continued support from our local community.

The school is a stand-alone academy trust having converted in January 2012. We have an active partnership with our local partner primary schools. Each year, we admit approximately 75% of students from our partner primary schools and the remaining 25% from the wider area. Our standard admission number is 180 students for entry into Year 7, however due to continual demand for places we have admitted, on average, an extra 20 students for the last four years and have also operated a waiting list during this time.

For further information about our school, and for copies of the job description, person specification and application form, please visit our website - [www.denefield.org.uk](http://www.denefield.org.uk)



## **Our distinctive ethos**

We are very proud of our distinctive ethos which is based on a set of CHARACTER values and a belief that every student deserves success for life.

Developing CHARACTER values is a key focus of our work and we encourage students to become confident, happy, articulate, resilient, ambitious, courageous, tolerant, empathetic, and respectful individuals. We host annual CHARACTER Awards to recognise and celebrate students who have displayed CHARACTER values.

We strive to equip our young people with the skills, academic qualifications, and personal attributes to thrive in the modern world. We passionately believe that our role is to prepare students for the tests of life and not for a life of tests.



## **Working at Denefield**

We currently employ approximately 75 teaching staff and 70 support staff.

Professional development opportunities for staff in this school are outstanding. We have developed an exceptional in-house annual training programme enabling staff at all levels to follow a personalised programme linked to their performance management needs. Each year staff have the opportunity to review their work, to set targets at an annual appraisal meeting which is followed up with an interim review meeting part way through the year. We have a robust system in place for pay progression for both teaching and support staff.

Senior and middle leaders are supported to take part in recognised senior and middle-leadership qualifications with NPQSL and NPQH providers and the local authority.

Early Career Teachers are effectively supported and are provided with a reduced timetable, a planned induction programme and mentor support. We have welcomed a number of teachers from overseas with a supportive induction programme to help with transition to the UK.



Denefield is a member of the Two Counties Teacher Training Partnership, which comprises of eight local schools. Two Counties works alongside the University of Reading in providing teacher training; this is a very well-established alliance that is strong and successful.

As a partnership we pride ourselves on our teaching and the strength of our Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme. We have many years of experience in mentoring trainee teachers with our dedicated coordinators and mentors who are supported by strong leadership teams. Successful School Direct trainees are based in one school (most often the one of their choice) with the added benefit of regularly meeting other trainees across the partnership. Trainees also have a shorter placement in our variety of different educational settings in order to broaden their teaching experience yet further.

All of our schools are within a relatively small geographical area to the west and south-west of Reading; if you are keen to have some control over where you are based for your school experience then the School Direct route through us is ideal for you.

Many successful Two Counties trainees continue as members of staff at our schools after their ITT year has been completed; quality support continues through their first two years as Early Career Teachers and beyond as their careers progress. Please do be aware that due to the nature of staffing in schools, we cannot guarantee a post will be available with a Two Counties school on completion of your training.

School Direct is a one-year programme that enables aspiring teachers to train full-time in schools. To find out more please go to the following websites:

[Get Into Teaching: Ways to train \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.education.gov.uk)

[Secondary School Direct – University of Reading](#)



## Facilities

The school is located in Tilehurst, some four miles from Reading town centre. Our estate backs on to farmland and woods and is generous in size extending to some 23 acres and boasting well maintained buildings and grounds. Recently the school received £9 million of government funding which was used to build a new Science block, to provide state of the art Design & Technology and Music classrooms, workshops, a recording studio, an Art exhibition space, a community room equipped with a dance floor and new Sixth Form common room and work areas.

Since academy conversion, we have successfully bid for £2.66 million of Government capital grants to improve the fabric and condition of our buildings. Past projects include window replacement, new lighting and ceilings, heating controls, and a significant extension to our canteen and outdoor seating area. More recently the school has invested in the installation of electronic exit gates and new fencing, external doors and alarms, car park lighting, an extension to the outdoor student supervised area including a ramp for accessible access and classroom doors with viewing panels. The floodlit 3G football pitch, opened in November 2021, provides first-class sporting facilities for the school and community alike.

### **Staff salaries and benefits**

The school follows the pay and conditions for teaching staff as set out in the current School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), and teaching staff are invited to enrol with the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS).

Pay and conditions of service for support staff are governed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and support staff are invited to enrol with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

### **Wellbeing**

Staff wellbeing is a key priority at Denefield and we are proud to offer a supportive workplace. There is no getting away from the fact that teaching is hard work, but we always aim to maximise staff wellbeing and enjoyment. We proactively manage teacher workload through fully developed resources and schemes of work, centralised behaviour policies managed and overseen by the senior leadership team, minimising the amount of student data that teachers need to input, and by limiting after school meetings and events to one per week. We have a full programme of training throughout the year, including through dedicated INSET days, and one INSET day a year is devoted to staff appraisal, avoiding the need to do this after school. Our staffroom has been remodelled to provide a welcoming and stimulating staff area, and there is a weekly staff 'You're So Denefield' shoutout with a termly draw with prizes for the winner. Finally, all staff, and their families, have free access to support and counselling through our employee assistance scheme.

### **Flu Vaccinations**

We offer free flu vaccinations during our October INSET day and the significant majority of both teaching and support staff take up this offer.

### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

Denefield partner with the Green Commute Initiative to offer all staff the opportunity to purchase a bike through our cycle to work scheme. This popular scheme enables staff to purchase a bike or ebike tax-free, and to spread the payments over 18 months.

### **Child Care**

A day care nursery operates from the site and provides places for children aged 0 to 5 years. The nursery, open all year around, offers term time only contracts and currently has space to accommodate 28 children.

### **On-site parking**

There is free, on-site, parking is available to all staff.

### **Tea and Coffee**

Free tea, and coffee are available to staff, in the staffroom.

### **Joint Consultative Committee**

Following academy conversion, the Trust Board implemented a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) as a means of consulting with staff on an array of employment, pay and conditions issues. Members of the Trust Board attend meetings to discuss any new developments and work-related issues with staff representatives, trade union representatives and senior leaders.

### **Working and living in and around Tilehurst**

Tilehurst railway station is located approximately a 15 minute walk from Denefield. It has regular Great Western Railway services between Reading (5 minutes), London Paddington (40 minutes) and Oxford (40 minutes)

The school is served by the number 16 Reading bus which operates up to four times per hour during peak times, providing a 20 minute journey into and out of the centre of Reading. The vibrant town of Reading sits 5 miles east of Denefield with its thriving shopping centre, constantly evolving restaurant scene, museums and medieval abbey. With its great array of bars, pubs, comedy clubs, live music venues and theatres, there is a nightlife to suit everyone. For those who prefer to spend their free time in a greener, more natural, environment, there is plenty to choose from. Reading has the longest Thames frontage of any borough, most of which is formed by public parks, part of the Thames Path (a long-distance walking route) and National Cycle Route 4.

