



Leading the Kennet School Academies Trust

KENNET SCHOOL

An Outstanding Academy

Kennet School is a thriving comprehensive, on the eastern edge of Thatcham. Pupils come from Thatcham itself and from the villages to the north and east, including Bucklebury and Brimpton. Currently there are 1800 pupils on roll, including 360 in the Sixth Form. Despite increasing the admission number in Year 7 from 170 to 227, then to 280 and now to 300, the school remains heavily oversubscribed, a testament to the esteem in which the school is held by the community it serves. Its popularity has been won by the determination that each and every pupil should fulfil his or her potential, both academic and personal. The work of the committed and talented academic staff is complemented by an excellent House system, led by a team of very skilled pastoral staff. The House system is seen as a real strength in this school. While concentrating on helping pupils raise academic standards, the school has also managed to sustain a huge range of extra-curricular activities in the areas of music, drama, dance and sport. Many other activities, both at home and abroad, are promoted to enrich pupils' experiences. These features have led to an impressive rate of success as the GCSE examination results reveal. The figures below are supported by the school's practice of entering all pupils for all examinations and by fully supporting pupils of all abilities in their work. This has resulted in our overall pass rate being the best in West Berkshire for many years, fluctuating between 99% and 100%, as published in Government tables.

Our raw results and the value added figures (between KS2 and GCSE) are consistently high, and always within the top 20% of schools nationally. In 2015, Kennet was in the top 20% of schools nationally, for attainment and the top 4%, for progress. At A Level, the results are equally strong, and in the summer of 2015 81% of grades were at A*-C, with 133 pupils winning a place on a degree course. In 2016, the GCSE results were every bit as strong and the headline figures improved. Both attainment and progress figures are in the top 20%. A Level results were also up, with 85% of grades at A*-C and 114 pupils going to university. In 2017, the GCSE (new measures) were strong and A and BTEC ALPS red, for example, the percentage of A*/A at A Level was 34%. Kennet has been recognised in many other ways and a large number of trophies and awards have been won, including our designation as a technology college in three subjects. In the spring of 2011 we became only the fifth school in the country to be rewarded with the coveted Challenge Award, recognising excellent provision particularly for able, gifted and talented pupils. In July 2012, we were only the second secondary school in the country to win the Exceptional Schools Award and we won the Investors in Careers award in 2015.

In May 2016, Kennet had an Ofsted inspection which declared the school to be **OUTSTANDING**. The school was delighted by the praise from the inspectors for every aspect of our school. We are proud but remain ever hungry for more and greater achievements for each and every one of our pupils. That, in our view, is the way forward. You can view the whole report on our website (www.kennetschool.co.uk). We have also just been re-awarded the Challenge Award, only the 12th school in the country to have it three times. The award is being presented by the Chief Executive of NACE in June.

Whitelands Park Primary School

Whitelands Park Primary School was one of Kennet's feeder schools and we have supported it for years. In 2013, it went into Special Measures and the Department approached Kennet and asked us to sponsor Whitelands. This we readily did. It became an academy, sponsored by Kennet, in January 2014 and our Executive Head spent a great deal of time there, slowly examining the staff for quality and building a stronger team. In April 2014, he appointed the current Headteacher, Matthew Irving, a colleague who had had experience as a Head in another authority. With considerable support from Kennet, personnel and financial, Whitelands has quickly improved and we were delighted when it was grade 2 by Ofsted in December 2016. The model at Whitelands is a supportive one where the Executive Head has the ultimate responsibility for results and performance but works in a supportive way with the Headteacher, to ensure that the school continues to focus all its resources, human and financial, on improving classroom practice and outcomes for young people. The catchment area is warming to the significant changes at Whitelands and there is growing support for the focus on securing continuous improvement in all aspects of school life. Major HR, financial and IT administration is carried out at Kennet, for Whitelands.

Kennet School is set on an attractive open campus; the amenities include a dual use sports centre, which enjoys an impressive indoor swimming pool, a sports hall, two squash courts, a purpose-built dance studio, extensive playing fields and floodlit tennis courts. One of the main feeder schools, Francis Baily, is also on the campus. The school's facilities extend to a

magnificent new library, thirteen fully equipped and recently refurbished science laboratories, a technology block with two rooms dedicated to each specialism, five art and photography studios, four business studies/information technology rooms, three drama studios, an assembly hall and a gym. Half a million pounds has been invested in the Music Block, providing it with magnificent practice facilities and a dedicated ICT room, in addition to much improved classrooms. We have used much of the money for our specialisms to increase the ICT infrastructure for learning and we have a network of more than 1,000 access points. We have added two further rooms with versatile computer furniture where computer work can be supported alongside written work, one in Technology and one in Modern Languages. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and teachers have their own laptops, to improve their efficiency. Also on the school site is a £2m block, largely devoted to Sixth Form common room facilities, private study rooms and other facilities. Part of the block includes a state of the art Drama studio, as befits the talent of our pupils and staff. Responding to pupil learning behaviours we have invested in a number of tablet suites which are used in lessons around the school. The school is also the designated Resource in West Berkshire for Physically Disabled pupils and Hearing Impaired pupils. These Resources are a key part of our school and their magnificent new building, costing £1.3m, was opened in October 2013. The pupils attached to both Resources are fully integrated into mainstream classrooms, and our buildings are fantastically equipped with lifts, ramps and specially adapted sound systems.

A striking feature of the school is the display of pupils' work in classrooms and public areas of the school. This is one of the many ways in which we celebrate pupils' success and encourage pupils to aim higher still. The school takes great care to present itself both internally and externally in a way which encourages achievement and brings pride in those achievements. The school is used by the local community a great deal. There are regular evening classes and we run ICT and Languages courses for parents. The sports centre is also open for community use in the evenings, at weekends and in the holidays. The other school facilities, including the hall, are regularly hired by local drama groups and other organisations, and the PTA is very active in promoting home-school relations and raising funds for school projects. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is thriving at Kennet.

The underlying principle driving the Kennet curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced range of subjects which allows all pupils to achieve. Most pupils in Years 7-9 study the full range of subjects, with some exceptions made to accommodate German for the most able in Year 8 onwards. Pupils are broadly banded by ability from Year 7, with some subjects being more tightly set—Mathematics for example is set from Year 7. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a core curriculum—English, Maths, Science, RS, PE—in addition to four options. Pupil options are guided using pathways based on prior attainment data with input from the pastoral team. The school offers specialist support for pupils with special education needs, physical disabilities and hearing impairments. Whilst we are fortunate to have specialist facilities and expertise in these areas, there is a strong focus on integration, with much support taking place within timetabled lessons. A broad range of courses are offered in the Sixth Form, which aim to match demand and support pupils' aspirations. Our curriculum offer includes level 2 and 3 vocational courses in both KS4 and KS5.

Kennet is a friendly school but one which aims at excellence. The staff body reflects a balance of youth and experience, and we enjoy considerable and growing support from parents. The school prospectus contains the detail of school life, from results to the strict, but straightforward, uniform policy. The school is entering a new and challenging period, with the major changes to the National Curriculum emerging, along with further potential for change in the Sixth Form. As an academy, we are revelling in our new found freedom and exploiting it to the benefit of our pupils. The high morale at the school, amongst staff, pupils and parents, is built on hard work and success. The school will, however, never be fully satisfied with its results. Kennet will seek to raise standards, both in personal growth and academic success by working closely with present and future pupils and their parents. There is more interest amongst local primary schools, in particular, to join the Trust and this work is ongoing.



Year 7 AG&T 2016-17

Presentation Evening 2016-17

