

# The Sandon School



Sandon students are



**SUPPORTIVE**



**MOTIVATED**



**AMBITIOUS**



**RESPECTFUL**



**TRUSTWORTHY**

Aiming Higher Together

# HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents/Carers

I am delighted to welcome all prospective students and their parents/carers to The Sandon School with its successful history of service to local families over many years. I am pleased to have the opportunity of leading dedicated and well qualified staff who seek to create a supportive learning environment where all students can achieve.

We are a popular school whose continued success is founded on a combination of traditional values of respect and courtesy alongside the latest educational developments. We believe firmly that the partnership between student, home and school is the key to future success. By working together, we seek to help our students to aim higher in order to fulfil their potential and develop previously undiscovered talents.

The following pages will give you a flavour of The Sandon School. They contain information that may answer many of your own and your child's questions. Further information can also be found on our website, [www.sandon.essex.sch.uk](http://www.sandon.essex.sch.uk). However, no written source of information can do full justice to the rich diversity of exciting and successful work undertaken at the school and I would encourage you to visit the school to enable you to experience it first-hand.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

A Weaver  
Headteacher

***Aiming Higher Together***

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# THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

The Sandon School aims to be:

## **1 A Learning Organisation**

- focussing on aiming higher together
- promoting lifelong learning for students, staff, parents/carers, governors and the community
- setting clear targets for every learner in a spirit of continuous improvement
- maximising results at all levels by enabling good teaching and learning to flourish
- providing a purposeful education in preparation for life
- recognising and celebrating all achievements for all learners

## **2 A Caring and Supportive Community**

- that values and challenges each individual
- that encourages mutual respect and courtesy
- that has high expectations and positive attitudes to learning, behaviour, the school and the environment
- that allows the fullest possible development of everyone's intellectual, social, moral and personal potential
- that ensures our students grow up to lead safe, happy, healthy and successful lives
- with a positive culture and ethos that seeks to promote the wellbeing of staff and students alike

## **3 An Effective Learning Environment**

- with firm, purposeful leadership empowering others to achieve and participate
- that has clear, fair and consistent discipline
- that has a comprehensive and shared development plan
- with sound management and good communications at all levels
- that has high quality sustainable resources and an attractive working environment which promotes ownership and pride
- that uses technology to raise academic achievement and promote a technological, enterprising and vocational culture

## **4 A Popular School**

- where students want to attend and staff want to work
- where parents/carers choose to send their children
- in a community that supports and benefits from the work taking place
- which values working with other schools in the area
- with a confident and supportive Governing Board

***“Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to understand and contribute to wider society.”***

Ofsted 2024

# TEACHING & LEARNING

At the Sandon School we have defined what effective teaching looks like in our new lesson framework; an evidence informed compilation of best teaching practices. From this framework, we have identified a number of teaching strategies that we consider to be non-negotiables in a lesson at The Sandon School. We have created "The Sandon Six."

## What is The Sandon Six?

The Sandon Six is a comprehensive framework designed to enhance the educational experience of our students. This initiative, together with some key embedded teaching and learning expectations, focuses on six key areas that we believe are essential for fostering a well-rounded and effective learning environment. These areas are:

1. **Clear Intent:** Setting clear goals and objectives for student learning.

*Explanation: Clear intent involves defining specific, measurable learning objectives for each lesson and unit. This helps students understand what they are expected to learn and achieve, providing them with a roadmap for their educational journey. It also allows teachers to plan and deliver instruction that is focused and purposeful.*

2. **Literacy/Numeracy/Inclusion:** Ensuring all students achieve proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and are included in all aspects of school life.

*Explanation: Literacy and numeracy are foundational skills that are essential for academic success. Inclusion ensures that all students, regardless of their background or abilities, are fully integrated into the school community. This area focuses on providing targeted support, such as intervention programs and inclusive practices, to help every student succeed.*

3. **Adaptive Teaching:** Tailoring instruction to meet the learning needs of all students.

*Explanation: Adaptive teaching involves recognising that each student has unique learning needs and preferences. Teachers use various instructional strategies, such as differentiated tasks, personalised learning plans, and flexible grouping, to ensure that every student can access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.*

4. **Active Learning:** Engaging students in hands-on activities and interactive lessons.

*Explanation: Active learning shifts the focus from passive reception of information to active participation. This approach includes activities like experiments, discussions, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative projects, which help students to engage deeply with the material, develop critical thinking skills, and retain knowledge more effectively.*

5. **Teach to the Top:** Challenging all students to reach their highest potential.

*Explanation: "Teach to the Top" means setting high expectations for all students and providing them with the opportunities to excel. This involves offering challenging tasks, enrichment activities, and advanced learning opportunities that push students to extend their thinking and achieve their best.*

6. **Assessment for Learning:** Using assessments to guide and improve teaching and learning.

*Explanation: Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a formative approach that focuses on using assessment as a tool to support and enhance student learning during lessons. Rather than simply measuring achievement, AfL involves actively identifying students' strengths and areas for improvement, providing timely and constructive feedback, and encouraging reflection and self-assessment. It helps teachers adapt their instruction to meet learners' needs and empowers students to take ownership of their progress. By making learning objectives clear and involving students in evaluating their own work, AfL fosters deeper understanding, motivation, and a more personalised learning experience.*

### DIRT Tasks (Directed Improvement and Reflection Time)

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and reflective learning, we have implemented DIRT tasks. These tasks provide students with dedicated time to reflect on their work, understand feedback, and make improvements. Students use green pens to highlight their reflections and improvements in their books, making it easy to track their progress and areas of growth.

### Key Expectations for Learners in Lessons

To further support the implementation of "The Sandon Six," we are introducing key expectations for learners in lessons. These include:

- **Do Now Tasks:** Quick, engaging activities at the start of each lesson to immediately focus students and prepare them for learning.
- **Means of Participation (MOP):** Clear guidelines on how students are expected to participate in class, ensuring active and equitable involvement.
- **SHAPE Responses:** Structured responses that encourage students to provide detailed and thoughtful answers, promoting deeper understanding.
- **Turn and Talk:** Pairing students to discuss and share ideas, fostering collaboration and communication skills.
- **Mini Whiteboards:** Using mini whiteboards for quick, formative assessments and interactive activities, allowing teachers to gauge student understanding in real-time.

### Parental Involvement

We believe that the success of The Sandon Six relies heavily on the support and involvement of parents and guardians. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- **Stay Informed:** Keep up to date with the school's activities and initiatives related to The Sandon Six through newsletters, the school website, and parent-teacher meetings.
- **Discuss at Home:** Engage your child in conversations about what they are learning in school. Ask them about their projects, what they enjoy, and any challenges they face.
- **Provide Feedback:** Share your thoughts and suggestions with the school. Your feedback is valuable in helping us improve and tailor the initiative to better meet the needs of our students.

### Conclusion

We are confident that The Sandon Six will have a positive impact on our students' educational experience. We look forward to your continued support as we strive to provide the best possible learning environment for your child here at The Sandon School.

***“The school’s approach to pupils’ personal development is a strength. They ensure pupils learn about the range of choices of career available to them and what qualifications they would need to secure them.”***

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## THE SCHOOL SITE

The school is well-equipped with outstanding facilities which enable our students to excel in all aspects of the curriculum and beyond. Specialist sports facilities include two dedicated sports halls, one with an international standard specialist floor, a dance studio and multi-gym, two flood lit 4G Astro Turf pitches, extensive playing fields and hard play areas and a well-equipped gymnasium.

Within the Creative Arts faculty there are other specialist facilities including a fully equipped drama studio with banked seating for an audience of 100 and a separate large performance space which both allow for smaller performances to take place in professional surroundings. Larger performances regularly take place in the main school hall which is well equipped with sound and lighting. In addition, there are several smaller music practice rooms and a dedicated media suite.

As well as nine laboratories, the science department has an outdoor garden for environmental studies. In terms of ICT, the school is extremely well-resourced and the majority of lessons are taught in specialist classrooms.

To complement our facilities we have a strong, experienced and committed staff. This is demonstrated by the fact that the quality of our teaching and learning is recognised by universities and teacher training institutions that regularly seek our assistance in educating the next generation of teachers.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

The school operates a two-week timetable cycle of 50 one-hour lessons divided between Week A and Week B. The timing of school sessions is the same for both weeks:

<i>Day</i>	<i>Morning session start</i>	<i>Morning session finish</i>	<i>Afternoon session start</i>	<i>Afternoon session finish</i>	<i>Range of extra curricular clubs etc</i>
Monday to Thursday	8.25 am	1.20 pm	1.55 pm	2.55 pm	Finish 4 - 4.30 pm
Friday	8.25 am	1.05 pm	1.40 pm	2.40 pm	

Buses depart at the end of afternoon sessions as shown above.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS & DISABILITY

We work closely with SEND Operations at the local authority to meet our statutory requirements with regards to children with EHCPs. The SEND Code of Practice states that most special educational needs can be met with high quality teaching in the classroom. There are lifts and ramps to allow wheelchair access. Heads of Year, Heads of School and the SEN department work closely with primaries at transition.

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND PASTORAL CARE

The school is divided into three phases: Lower School (Years 7 and 8), Middle School (Years 9, 10 and 11) and Sixth Form, each with its own Head of School who leads the Heads of Year. Each year group at The Sandon School is the direct responsibility of a Head of Year whose task it is to ensure the academic and personal wellbeing of each student in the year. The Heads of Year move up each year with the students and so get to know students well during their time at Sandon. Each Head of Year leads a team of tutors and coordinates liaison with parents/carers. Students are allocated to a tutor group and will see their form tutor each day for up to seven years. In this way, every student comes into daily contact with a member of staff who knows them well and can help or advise as necessary. We have one pastoral lead to assist each Head of Year in order to ensure our students are fully supported and always have someone to talk to. We also have a non-teaching Designated Safeguarding Lead, due to the importance that safeguarding holds for our students.

There is a valued and robust House system within school and every member of the school community is a member of one of the four Houses: Blake, Glennie, Russell and Thompson. The Houses compete for the House Cup, along with the Charity Shield, the Active Shield, the Creative Shield and the Genius Shield. Points are awarded for almost every school activity, allowing every student to contribute to their House in some way.

At the end of Year 9 students can apply to become a Peer Supporter. There are around 150 Peer Supporters whose training includes child protection, confidentiality, mental health awareness, safe relationships and cyber safety. They provide a service to fellow students, ensuring they always have someone to talk to, and are in addition to staff and other visiting professionals. Visiting professionals include the School Nurse, Behaviour Support Manager, our EMYPS workers and Young Persons Advocate. We also have three regular tutors that support the learning of our young people, especially our pupil premium students.

Great importance is attached throughout the school to high standards of conduct and the formation of good character. Our students embody the Sandon SMART ethos – being encouraged to be supportive, motivated, ambitious, respectful and trustworthy individuals. We set high standards in dress, work and behaviour and expect students to maintain these standards at all times. Expectations are based on the need for consideration for others and the needs of a learning community. Students are expected to treat staff and each other with respect and courtesy.

Students are expected to be prepared for lessons by bringing the correct books and equipment and are expected to work conscientiously and consistently throughout their time at The Sandon School. They are expected to be punctual and to attend school regularly.

Parent/carer support is essential to enable high standards to be maintained and the school works in partnership with parents/carers to ensure school discipline is maintained at all times. Discipline is based on the fact that children will respond to the positive approach of encouragement, praise and reward. When sanctions are deemed necessary, they may involve routine impositions, reprimand, detention or referral to senior staff. Parents/carers and students may be invited in or may wish to meet senior staff to discuss particular problems.

Parents/carers are kept informed of their rights and responsibilities via information evenings, newsletters and other correspondence shared via EduLink.

***“Head Students are exemplary role models. They take responsibility for improving the culture across the school. They are proud of being in a leadership position and know they have a real voice in how the school is led.”***

## STATEMENT OF CURRICULUM INTENT

In pursuit of excellence the school has established a learning community that prepares students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The curriculum supports the school aim of 'Aiming Higher Together'. We deliver this aim by ensuring our taught curriculum is broad. Throughout Years 7-9 all students follow the same programme of study, experiencing a full range of subjects, including all those outlined in the national curriculum. The curriculum is both content and skills based; this ensures students learn a range of concepts and themes in each subject whilst being supported in applying what they know to a range of problems and scenarios. All lessons are carefully planned with tasks designed to help students to learn to think for themselves and to solve problems. There are opportunities to stretch and challenge the most able and to provide additional support for those who might experience barriers to learning.

Across the age and ability range we offer a flexible and accessible curriculum which will open up a range of learning pathways for the future – to university, college, apprenticeships, the world of work and towards personal achievement goals. Our committed and talented staff work together with parents/carers and students to provide a stimulating environment which benefits and motivates each individual, preparing them to contribute confidently to, and take their place in, the modern world.

The majority of students in Years 10 and 11 study a curriculum leading to qualifications in nine subjects. A full programme of careers education and guidance supports students to make informed choices when selecting options to study. To cater for the needs of all our students we also offer an increased flexibility programme which provides enrichment activities to support the development of linguistic, mathematical and life skills, ensuring all students have the opportunity and support to flourish. We have a thriving Sixth Form offering a range of Level 3 courses.

We believe learning should be fun. Enjoyment fosters a love for learning where students feel safe to explore new ideas, grow in self-confidence and develop resilience and perseverance. Alongside the academic, we place equal value on the development of the whole child, promoting positive behaviour and mutual respect, developing qualities of self-reliance and confidence in our students, alongside an understanding, care and tolerance of others.

Our taught curriculum is balanced. Across Years 7 to 13 each subject has time to deliver its distinctive contribution. No one subject dominates a student's timetable, ensuring equal status is given to the learning within all disciplines.

There is a shared determination amongst staff for all students to attain the highest standards of academic achievement; we expect our students to have similar high aspirations. However, our teaching goes well beyond the requirements of the academic curriculum in terms of the experiences we provide. Enrichment activities take place both within and outside the curriculum, enhancing personal growth and development. An extensive range of extracurricular activities is provided and students also have many opportunities to participate in a variety of trips and visits, charity work and work within the local community.

We believe it is important that students learn to be independent, to think for themselves and have the necessary ambitions and skills to aim high and make the most of their time at our school. This is key preparation for the next stage of their education and a successful and fulfilling life.

***“The school’s approach to pupils’ personal development is a strength.”***

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In Key Stage 3 Religious Education is primarily taught through the subject EPR (Ethics, Philosophy and Religion). The topics are taught alongside PSHE through a multi-faith, non-denominational approach. We focus on developing understanding, tolerance and respect for a range of religious, non-religious, philosophical and ethical viewpoints. In Key Stage 4, Religious Education forms part of our Personal Development Programme alongside PSHE topics. Every pupil has a legal entitlement to Religious Education. Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw children from Religious Education on the grounds that they wish to provide their own Religious Education. Parents/Carers wishing to do this should consult with the Headteacher. Students who are withdrawn should undertake private study.

## CAREERS EDUCATION

The Sandon School holds the Quality in Careers Standard (QICS), one of the nationally recognised quality awards for delivering excellence in careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). The school fully met all the accreditation criteria, incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks. We are very proud of this excellent achievement which recognises the quality and breadth of our careers provision. Our qualified independent careers adviser, from Directions IAG Ltd, is available in school each week to meet with students from all year groups and can advise on the following:

- Option Choices
- Progression routes, particularly at the key transition points of Years 11 and 13
- Explore career ideas
- Employment and training opportunities to meet the individual needs of students
- Job hunting, interview skills and CV writing

It is important that students can access support and guidance on the wide range of choices, be well prepared and make informed decisions to support their long-term career goals.

In addition to independent one-to-one careers guidance, we work with local employers to provide the following careers activities throughout all key stages:

- Careers activities as part of the PSHE programme
- Sixth Form and college taster day for all Year 10 and 11 students
- Vocational presentations and workshops to targeted groups
- External speakers from local colleges, training providers and universities
- Outreach events at local colleges and universities
- Interview experience opportunities and sixth form careers fair
- Apprenticeship Roadshow
- Employment engagement opportunities

### **Essex County Council – Children and Young People with Disabilities Service**

Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan receive support from the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Service who help them get ready for adult life.

PfA advisors give these young people information, advice and guidance about their options. They ensure they have the information they need to make decisions about their future.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities provide an essential element of the school's life and many are funded or subsidised by the school. They involve students in all years and enhance greatly the work undertaken in the classroom. The programme covers a wide range of social, cultural and sporting events which take place either during lunchtime, after school or during the school holidays.

Sporting excellence is encouraged. There is opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities including athletics, badminton, basketball, cross-country, football, gymnastics, netball, rounders, rugby, table tennis, tennis and volleyball. We are proud of our teams' achievements and the regular successes they enjoy at county level and also proud of individual students who represent Essex in a variety of sports.

The school also has a strong tradition in music, with its ensembles and choirs regularly playing in various local events. Musical ability is encouraged through individual tuition provided by visiting specialist tutors and is available for a wide variety of instruments. There are regular school concerts and recital evenings that provide a showcase for our musicians' talents.

School productions provide a similar showcase for talent in drama and dance and these vary from smaller, more intimate productions to lavish musicals with multiple performances to cater for demand. The school has twice been awarded the prestigious Gold Artsmark award and constantly strives to raise standards even higher. At the heart of this work lies collaboration and imagination.

Also on offer is a wide range of clubs and activities including Art, Computers, Creative Writing, Dance, Poetry, Robotics, Scalextric, Science, Technology and Young Engineers. There is a well-established tradition of school journeys and field studies, which are organised to extend and enrich the learning experiences gained in school. In addition, there are curriculum visits to the theatre, exhibitions, museums and higher education institutions. These visits stem from, and support, the curriculum. In addition, a series of reward trips takes place each summer.

At The Sandon School, students can participate in the highly regarded Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is a voluntary and non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities. It is designed to support the personal and social development of young people, regardless of their gender, background or ability. It offers an individual challenge and encourages young people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time. What's more, many organisations including employers and universities take an extremely positive view of the award and what it says about the person who has achieved it.

We currently offer the Bronze and Silver Awards and have plans to extend this offer to include the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award.

***“Pupils are keen to participate in school life beyond the academic curriculum. They like to earn house points and get awarded shields for different activities, such as charity work.”***

*Ofsted 2024*

## SIXTH FORM

The Sandon Sixth Form offers three pathways of study and a wide range of Level 3 courses to suit individual needs. Students receive clear guidance and support to ensure they choose the right pathway.

All courses offered are Level 3 courses and are considered by employers and universities to be of equal merit and hold equivalent UCAS point values. The majority of our students progress to universities, with most gaining their first choice place. Others secure higher level apprenticeships, sponsored degrees or move on successfully into the world of work.

Sixth Form students benefit from two dedicated study rooms and their own common room alongside a private garden area.

The Sandon Sixth Form provides excellent role models for the rest of the school. They epitomise the Sandon ethos in their work ethic and conduct, and also by following the Sixth Form dress code.

Each Sixth Form student has a personal tutor who they will meet daily. Small form groups ensure that students receive tailored support from staff who know them well. Tutors will guide students through the university and apprenticeship options available. Lessons are taught by highly qualified specialist staff and these skilled teachers are also on hand to provide academic guidance. A dedicated pastoral team offers personalised support and our independent careers advisor provides support for the next steps into university, apprenticeships or the world of work.

### ***Sixth Form opportunities:***

Many opportunities are available to our Sixth Form students which can help to develop personal skills. Students are encouraged to seize all the opportunities available to help them to develop into well rounded, independent young adults. These include volunteering with:

*Charity team*

*Curriculum teams*

*Environment team*

*Social & communications team*

*Mentoring team*

*Peer mentoring*

*Diversity team*

*Enrichment opportunities*

*SEN team*

*Range of extra-curricular activities*

*STEM team*

Students are also encouraged to support school activities such as showing visitors around the school, taking assemblies and helping out in curriculum areas.

Students are actively encouraged to develop independent learning skills and to manage their time effectively. Students allocate curriculum study periods (CSPs) into their own timetable, facilitating a personalised study pattern to suit their needs.

Furthermore, a comprehensive leadership, mentoring and enrichment programme is offered to ensure students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities that prepare them for their next steps.

Sixth Formers studying subjects that require access to specific equipment, resources or spaces are actively encouraged to use their CSPs in the correct environment. Our students can often be seen working away independently in art rooms, supporting each other via group study sessions, and practising performance pieces in music and performing arts. Staff are always around to offer their support and guidance.

## HIGHER EDUCATION DESTINATIONS 2025

Many of our students moved on to higher education this summer with a variety of destinations and courses as follows:

<b><i>Aberystwyth University</i></b>	- Animal Science
<b><i>Anglia Ruskin University</i></b>	- Animal Therapy
	- Primary Education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
<b><i>Aston University, Birmingham</i></b>	- Biomedical Science
<b><i>Bath Spa University</i></b>	- Architecture
	- Fine Art (with Foundation Year)
	- Photography
<b><i>Cardiff Metropolitan University</i></b>	- Biomedical Science (with Foundation Year)
<b><i>King's College London, University of London</i></b>	- Biomedical Science
<b><i>Lancaster University</i></b>	- Business Management
	- Politics and International Relations (Study Abroad)
	- Computer Science
<b><i>London Metropolitan University</i></b>	- Forensic Science
	- Fashion Marketing and Journalism
<b><i>London South Bank University</i></b>	- Politics and International Relations
<b><i>Loughborough University</i></b>	- Automotive Materials (with Placement year)
<b><i>Nottingham Trent University</i></b>	- Marketing
	- Law with Criminology
<b><i>Oxford Brookes University</i></b>	- Sport and Exercise Science
<b><i>Queen Mary University of London</i></b>	- Biological Sciences with Foundation
	- Chemical Engineering
<b><i>Royal Holloway, University of London</i></b>	- Accounting and Finance
<b><i>University of Bath</i></b>	- Biomedical Sciences with professional placement
<b><i>University of Birmingham</i></b>	- Sociology
<b><i>University of Brighton</i></b>	- Criminology
	- Business Management
<b><i>University of Bristol</i></b>	- Music

*Higher Education Destinations 2025 (continued)*

***University of East Anglia UEA***

- Law
- Psychology
- Biological Sciences
- Psychology with a Year Abroad

***University of Essex***

- Economics (including placement year)
- Modern History and Politics
- Sports Therapy
- Biomedical Science (including foundation year)
- Business Management (including placement year)
- Social Work
- Nursing (Mental Health)

***University of Exeter***

- Business
- Finance: Business Management with Industrial Experience

***University of Kent***

- Law (Integrated Masters in Solicitors' Practice)
- Forensic Science (MSci 4 years)
- Law with a Foundation Year
- Business Management
- Forensic Science with a Year in Industry
- Biochemistry with a Year Abroad

***University of Lincoln***

- Music
- Physics with Astrophysics with Science Foundation Year

***University Portsmouth***

- Forensic Psychology

***University of Reading***

- Law
- Quantity Surveying
- Mathematics with Finance and Investment Banking
- Psychology

***University of Surrey***

- Business Management with Business Analytics
- Politics and Economics
- Chemistry and Forensic Investigation

***University of Sussex***

- Criminology

***University of the Arts London***

- Fashion Marketing

***University of Warwick***

- Chemistry with Industrial Placement
- Chemistry
- Modern Languages



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