



Introducing Durham Johnston

Durham Johnston is a long-established, highly successful and much respected comprehensive school serving 1500 young people from Durham City and the surrounding villages. Our school was founded in 1901 as a mixed grammar school and took on its current form in 1979 from the amalgamation of the grammar school and two secondary modern schools. After 30 years a spilt site school our new building opened in April 2009. The admission number for Year 7 is 232. Our prestigious sixth form draws from a much wider area and has approximately 340 students. About 65% of our own year 11 students stay with us into years 12 and 13. Before deregulation we were a Language College with full International Status and a High Performing Specialist School with further specialisms in Leadership and work with Gifted and Talented students.

How we serve our young people

Each young person is based in a form, with a tutor, and looked after by a Head of Year too. We have two Deputy Heads and three Assistant Heads. The Leadership Group are responsible for the curriculum and pastoral structures, the 6th Form, pastoral provision, and the quality of teaching. Our Business Manager is also on the team, together with some middle leaders who are supporting the strategic priorities of the school over the coming years.

In Year 7 our young people study in mixed ability classes for everything except mathematics and English and from Year 8 onwards we set in most subjects. Our curriculum is broad and includes art, English, French, geography, history, mathematics, music, PSE, physical education, ethics and philosophy (RE), science, technology and computing for all students. Students also study Latin, German, Spanish or Mandarin from Year 8; we teach Russian and a range of other languages to older year groups. The school operates a 25-period timetable and lessons last for one hour.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum currently includes core subjects and four pathways for option choices. The core subjects are English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, PSE (including Careers), RE and PE. We use GCSE specifications from all the examination boards. We offer a range of vocational GCSE courses: art and design; health and social care; information technology; engineering; and business studies. Some students take KS4 courses at other local schools, and for our lowest attainers we offer work-related programmes too.

In the sixth form we offer a range of GCE AS and A2 qualifications in applied science, art, biology, business studies, chemistry, critical thinking, design and technology, economics, English literature, English language, French, further mathematics, geography, general studies, German, history, information technology, media studies, mathematics, music, physical education, physics, politics, religious studies and sociology. Students take four AS subjects in Year 12, most dropping to three in year 13, although some students keep four. We try to make sure that our young people have an ICT award, and we also offer languages, and a choice of sport or community service to extend the range of options offered to sixth formers. Most of our sixth form go on to university, with many going to highly competitive courses and a large cohort – usually about 15% - to Oxford, Cambridge, medicine or veterinary courses.



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What's it like to work at Durham Johnston?

We have a strong teaching and support staff team and a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.

We work well with our partner primary schools, trying to develop coherence and continuity in the 3-19 curriculum. We work closely with the other schools in central Durham. We have strong links with local industry. The performances of our music department are of a very high standard and our sports teams are very successful regionally and nationally. Our carol service is held in Durham cathedral: a marvellous event!

Like other schools we use staff committees and working parties to consult, develop and plan for Johnston's growth. Staff are active on committees of the governing body. We encourage colleagues to pursue active professional development throughout their careers, and we enjoy our training time together. We are a friendly staff and nearly 100 teachers are enabled by our excellent support staff.

Durham Johnston has a very good reputation well beyond our neighbourhood. We are a high attaining school, and our students make excellent progress from their starting points. Our A-level results are among the best in the country. Our GCSE results in 2014 were 81% attaining 5 grades A*C with English and mathematics – an outstanding achievement. The percentage of students making and exceeding expected progress was high compared to the national. 38% of students would have gained the English Baccalaureate. At A2 Level 49% of grades were A and A*. We are equally committed to those students whose situations could make them more vulnerable; the percentage of 'pupil premium' students attaining 5 grades A*C with English and mathematics is well above the national for similar students, and we are working hard to support the achievement of these students. Even a cursory glance at our website or the performance tables would indicate how high achievement is here at the Johnston.

We have had two School Achievement Awards for sustained high performance and are regularly written up in the press as one of the top highest achieving comprehensive schools in England at A2 Level. We are highly ranked nationally for entry to highly competitive university courses. We blow our own trumpet when we can; our innovation and performance are emphasised through a good profile in the media. Better still, most of our young people and their parents have a very positive attitude towards their education and the opportunities that this school offers them. We had good Ofsted reports in February 1999 and May 2004 and in October 2007 they judged the sixth form to be outstanding in all aspects and the main school to be good with many outstanding features – as we had expected. In February 2011 we were judged an 'outstanding school with outstanding achievement'.

Is Johnston right for you?

Durham Johnston is an extraordinary school and we need staff who understand that. We are one of the very few genuine comprehensive schools in Britain, with young people from a very wide range of backgrounds and abilities, although many of our students arrive with NC Level 5 in English and mathematics. All our staff need to have the skills to work with the wide range of abilities, and to be equally at home with those who are struggling to learn as with some of the best young minds in the country. Working here is sometimes exhausting, but it is always rewarding.



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We want to appoint people who are committed to their jobs and prepared to throw themselves into school life. We want people to join us who know that a teacher's responsibility extends well beyond the walls of a classroom, who will play an active role in department teams and other staff groups and who will make good working relationships with young people, leading them to the highest standards of achievement. We need support staff who facilitate this and help us to improve our standards of service.

We are proud of our traditional ethos at Johnston, and we celebrate stability and reliable excellence. We know that it is in the maintenance of a happy, orderly and successful community built upon classroom excellence, long-term commitment and strong personal relationships that we root our success. We are a dynamic, improving school.

We take education very seriously at Johnston. We expect students to strive for the highest standards and grow into good citizens. Our school plan commits us to academic excellence and social justice and we believe that what we offer gives all our young people a fair opportunity to compete with those for whom privilege has been purchased. We seek to transform lives through learning.

Michael Wardle

Headteacher

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