**Information for Applicants**

**Sturminster Newton High School**

Sturminster Newton High School is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school with a good reputation as a small, community focused school serving a wide rural catchment area. At Sturminster we set high standards for academic and personal achievement within the ethos of a smaller school setting. We are extremely proud of our school and value the size of our school community where staff and students know one another and where students are treated and valued as individuals.

The school promotes a happy and purposeful teaching environment, where all are supported and encouraged to do their best. *“pupils are now making better progress than they have in previous years.” Ofsted 2018*

Young people leaving this school will be confident individuals with the necessary ‘life’ skills for further success at university, college or in employment. We emphasise the development of good organisational, communication, ICT and problem-solving skills, thus developing young people who can use their initiative and relate well to others. *“There is a strong moral commitment to ensuring all pupils receive a broad range of opportunities in Key Stage 3.” Ofsted 2018* In return, we expect good manners, a respect for the school and a positive attitude towards learning.

Our aim is to build upon the existing standards and successes and move all aspects of school life from ‘good’ to ‘outstanding’ whilst educating all students in the widest sense academically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Working in partnership with parents we strive to provide students with a broad, balanced and supportive education. *“The school’s approach is ensuring that there is a rigorous and appropriate academic curriculum for all pupils that will help to prepare them for the next stage in their education” Ofsted 2018*

The school gained the ICT Mark in 2010 and was reaccredited in 2013 and 2016. The aim of Becta ICT Mark is to raise standards across the whole school and contribute to the positive ethos of the school. We are continually exploring ways of using IT innovatively and seamlessly. Students use ‘Google docs’ and ‘Microsoft Office 365’ to install on their own personnel windows or apple device via RM Unify. *“Sturminster Newton High School...clearly demonstrate how important it is to take a whole school approach to using ICT in school ...and how ICT can have a substantial impact on learner outcomes in the future.” ICT Mark.*

In 2018 the school was inspected with the new OFSTED framework and judged securely ‘good’ and GCSE and A level results are strong. *“Leadership is successfully combining the school’s long standing caring and compassionate ethos with a greater focus on ensuring that pupil achieve all they are capable of.” Ofsted 2018*

**The local area**

The school is situated on the edge of the small market town of Sturminster Newton. The surrounding area is rural comprising many farms and small towns/villages. Rural transport is not good therefore a car is almost essential in order to access larger entertainment centres such as Yeovil, Poole or Bournemouth. There is good rail access from Gillingham to London.

Within travelling distance is the Jurassic Coast, beaches and areas of outstanding natural beauty. The area is very well served by a range of village and local primary schools. The buildings in which the school is housed date from 1960 to 1995 and continual refurbishment and updating ensures that the school retains a ‘cared for’ feeling which is respected and appreciated by students.

There are extensive playing fields and superb views of the surrounding area from the school site.

**Students**

We currently have an admission number of 120 per year and approx. 620 on roll. This includes approx. 110 students in our Sixth Form which we run in partnership with Shaftesbury School, 9 miles distant. The partnership offers a range of A Level and other post 16 courses on our site for students based here at Sturminster Newton and at Shaftesbury. Transport is organised between the two sites. The feedback from the Kirkland Rowell survey was very positive with both students and parents indicating that students feel safe at school, are well supported and are happy at school. Students progress to a variety of destinations after school including Oxbridge and Russell Group universities.

Our pyramid schools comprise William Barnes – Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge, St Nicholas’s – Child Okeford, Okeford Fitzpaine, Shillingstone, Hazelbury Bryan and Yewstock (special school). Most pupils make the transition from our pyramid schools to SNHS with additional students from other catchment areas. There is a very positive sense of partnership within the pyramid with many joint activities taking place.

**Staff**

The staff within the school are key to its success and we are fortunate in having well qualified, supportive staff in all posts across the school. Curriculum areas are staffed with specialist teachers working in specialist rooms. Currently there are 44 teachers and 38 support staff. The school is in the process of moving over time to a Faculty banded system.

The school works with the University of Exeter on their Initial Teacher Training programme.

The Senior Leadership Team of the school consists of a Headteacher, Deputy and one Assistant Head, School Business Manager and an extended SLT of Heads of Core Faculties. The team meets formally on a weekly basis and informally far more frequently. Line management systems are clearly focussed on raising achievement with each member of the SLT being responsible for line management and performance management of several curriculum/cross curricular areas.

Year teams of tutors are managed by Heads of Year. Curriculum areas are led and managed by curriculum leaders who have responsibility for one area of the curriculum such as Science or Art.

The Governing Body has members drawn from a wide range of backgrounds who bring considerable skills and experience to their role.

**Curriculum, Teaching and Learning**

The school works effectively with a range of partners in order to give students the widest possible opportunities at all key stages.

There is a wide range of activities beyond the classroom including lunchtime and after school clubs, visits (both during the school day and the evenings) and residential trips. Such activities are indicative of the commitment of our staff to giving the best experience of being a student at SNHS.

At KS3 students follow a broad, balanced curriculum. Within some subjects such as Science we currently begin GCSE courses during Year 9 in order to maximize KS4 outcomes.

KS4 offers students the opportunity to follow courses dependant on their aspirations and needs. The core programme comprising: English, Mathematics, Science, PE and PHSE is followed for 30 out of the 50 period lesson cycle. Students select options at KS4 based on Ebacc and 75% of students study MFL.

At KS5 the curriculum is devised in conjunction with Shaftesbury School. A2 courses are offered in a jointly programmed curriculum to give students based at either site the widest choice of subjects. Level 2 courses are also offered with students again being able to access provision at either site.

The SDP for 2018-19 focuses on the quality of teaching, the development of whole school literacy and sixth form provision. The FFT data used to set indicators for GCSE performance and progress at both KS3 and KS4 is monitored against these indicators.

Results at KS4 have historically been good. The school has A8 about the national average but has suffered from the curriculum focus in P8 as historically not all ‘buckets’ are filled. In 2018 the school had its best set of GCSE results ever, with 70% of students gaining 4+ in English and Maths; with just under 50% of all students gained at least one A/A\*(7-9) in their subjects and 20% of all GCSEs were 7-9 (A/A\*) in maths. In total, 75% of all GCSEs taken were at grade 4 (C) or above.

­­The focus continues to be on maximising progress and raising achievement as we believe that there is still capacity for further improvement.

**Student support**

Students are placed in one of four houses: Barnes, Hardy, Raleigh and Thornhill on their entry to the school and remain with their tutor from Year 7 to Year 11. The tutor group is the main support for individuals as they progress through the school both academically and socially.

The school has very good links with other agencies for students needing more support and is fortunate in having a School Counsellor (working to national standards) to deal with issues requiring specialist support.

The Learning Support Department and the Student Guidance Unit work closely to support students requiring alternative provision for short periods or longer programmes.

Parents/Carers are an important facet of our work with students and the school maintains very positive communication routes with them. Parents/Carers have access to ‘live’ information on their child’s experiences in school via SiMs Parent.

As for all schools, the last year has presented challenges and we are extremely proud of the way our students and staff have managed the disruption. We benefitted enormously from community support and fundraising, which allowed us to rapidly provide IT devices to students and resulted in all our lessons, with the exception of PE and PSHE, being delivered as online live lessons during the closure period.