



William Brookes School

*A Coubertin School with specialisms in
Performing Arts, Maths & Computing*



General Information for Applicants

We are a mixed comprehensive school with **925 students on roll**, of whom **120 are in the Sixth Form**. We are a **High Performing Specialist School**, in our eighth year as a **Performing Arts College** and our third year as a **Maths & Computing College** - the school always has an exciting feel to it, with a lot going on – and particularly this year, as we move towards our new school which will be open in September 2010!

Although situated in beautiful surroundings on the edge of the small rural town of **Much Wenlock**, we are far from being a sleepy rural school. We have **eight partner primary schools**, with whom we work very closely, but we draw from a much broader spectrum of some 20 or more primary schools, including some in Telford, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury, as well as the **wide rural area of South East Shropshire**.

We are a **comprehensive** school in every sense of the word. Our **ability spread is wide and also well balanced**. We have many students who will leave us with excellent A levels and will take up university places, including at Oxbridge; we currently have 22 students with Statements of Special Educational Need and a further 125 or so on our SEN list; and we have the **full range of abilities** represented within our student body. The socio-economic background of our students is equally mixed: we enjoy the same levels of support from parents from all sectors. Some children have moved to us from the independent sector, some students live in isolated communities and many live in our surrounding villages and towns, with some 18% coming from the immediate town of Much Wenlock and surrounding area, approximately 40% of our students from Broseley, which lies to the south of Ironbridge and 20% coming from the neighbouring areas of Telford & Wrekin.



Artist's impression of our new school, currently under construction and due to open in September

This mix of backgrounds, abilities and interests is drawn together in what *Ofsted* described in December 2009

“a good school, where students from a range of backgrounds achieve well. Since the last inspection, students' attainment has risen and is now consistently high the impressive GCSE results over the past three years were sustained in 2009. This represents a considerable achievement given that, for most of the year, the school has had to cope with a new school being built directly adjoining its current buildings. These factors, together with the school's excellent ethos and philosophy, good processes for self-evaluation and action planning, demonstrate its good capacity to improve.”

As in our previous report, there are many positive statements about the students themselves. Many of them met the inspectors, who concluded that: **“Students enjoy attending this school and they are proud to do so. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes towards each other and their work create a positive climate for learning.....Students' achievement is the result of good teaching and excellent care, guidance and support.”**

As well as being judged “outstanding” in terms of student attainment, the school gained “outstanding” grades for a number of other aspects, including the extent to which students feel safe, adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute to the school and wider community. The effectiveness of care, guidance and support, safeguarding, equality of opportunity and partnerships for promoting learning and well-being also gained top grades. The Governing Body was praised for its excellent role in supporting and challenging the school's leaders.

The school's dual specialist status as a performing arts and mathematics and computing college is judged to have contributed extremely well to its success through enabling it to offer an excellent range of cultural opportunities for students to participate in school and also to enable them to make an outstanding contribution to the wider community.

The Sixth Form came in for particular praise, as well, with its “lively and purposeful environment”, in which “students develop good social and personal skills and become confident and articulate young people” who are “extremely positive about the education they receive”. The report refers to effective teaching and excellent leadership and management which enable sixth formers to make good progress, with above average attainment.

The report endorses the school's current focus on learning and teaching and on how assessment and tracking information is used to support students' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work still further. It describes the plans for improving learning in the new school as “impressive”.

As in our May 2007 report, the recent report also emphasises the importance of our performing arts status to the life of the school. It draws attention to the important contribution it makes to the local community as well as contributing greatly to students' cultural development and their social, organisational and teamwork skills.

Our proximity to Telford is particularly helpful for business links (e.g. our tradition of successful Sixth Form Engineering Education Scheme partnerships) and work experience placements, but we also look out in other directions, with the immediate local community of Much Wenlock providing excellent support for us in a number of ways.

We work hard to ensure ambitions are high enough to dispel complacency and to reduce still further the difference in attainment between boys and girls. In **2009 72% of Year 11 students gained 5+ grades A*-C at GCSE** (2008: 71%, 2007: 70%, 2006: 69%) and **59% gained 5+ A*-C including English and Maths with 98% gaining at least 5+ grades A*-G GCSE** equivalent passes. Boys' achievement is often almost as good as that of the girls but, where they exist, gender gaps frequently reflect the difference in prior attainment on entry. A significant number of Year 11 students stay on to follow A level courses here, based in our Sixth Form and they make full use of the adjoining Library and Study Centre. In 2008, our **average points score per student was 856** (the highest performing maintained school Sixth Form in Shropshire), with results well above ALIS predictors. Sixth Form numbers are currently 120.

Curriculum provision at KS4 has changed significantly over recent years, with 5 pathways currently on offer. Our **KS4 curriculum** has been largely GCSE based but OCR programmes in Business and ICT, along with college based NVQ courses, are now a strong feature, with good provision for those who require additional support through our Study Support Groups. 14-19 partnership work with the South East Learning Forum (SELF) has enabled us to strengthen a new vocational pathway for a number of students and forms the basis of our preparation for the introduction of Diplomas from September 2010. Our **post-16 curriculum** has been mainly Level 3, with 24 subjects offered at AS/A2. We make increasing use of the Shropshire Learning Gateway and are working to increase its resource level quickly as a central part of our new school.

Our key focus is on learning and teaching and Ofsted. Subject staff are grouped in **departments**, with long established Leadership Team liaison and line management structures. PSHE is taught separately by a specialist team of teachers, with short course GCSE certification in Citizenship. Most teaching staff are tutors, working with recently introduced vertical tutor groups in preparation for the move to our new school. They deliver a strong tutorial programme as part of a and there is an increasing focus on academic monitoring and target setting. Currently there are 57 teaching staff (including 12 part time) with 43 support staff.

Sports, the Arts and extracurricular activities are all features of William Brookes. Our letterhead is indicative of the wide range of success and achievement including the renewal of our Sportsmark Silver accreditation and Artsmark Gold. There is a **joint use Leisure Centre** on the site. As the only "**Coubertin School**" in Britain we enjoy not only a rich cultural tradition that is derived from the life and work of our namesake, Dr William Penny Brookes, but also unique opportunities for Sixth Form students to undertake activities with partner schools from across Europe and beyond. Younger students are participating in student voice and leadership activities related to the Olympics and Olympic values. Our **Arts Centre, "The Edge"**, enhances our Music, Dance and Drama facilities as well as benefiting the wider community of this part of Shropshire and reflecting our great strengths in the performing arts.

Students and other members of the local community stay on at, or return to, the school out of hours on a regular basis and the school is an important **focus for the local community**. We work with the Bridgnorth District Rural Transport Partnership to provide after-school transport arrangements that help address some of the disadvantages associated with a sparsely populated rural area, with few or no local public transport systems available. We are a local centre for evening classes and activities. We are an extended school, with very active partnerships with a wide range of local agencies and organisations.

Visitors to the school continue to comment very positively on the "**good feel**". Relationships are good and most people - staff and students - are happy here. We pride ourselves on providing a **secure environment within which individuals can flourish** and the **Every Child Matters** agenda is prominent. Values are generally traditional, as are standards of discipline - behaviour is generally good. Our work on **student retention and inclusion** is a strength, in partnership with the LA Children & Young People's Services and our multi-agency team.

Total **numbers on roll have increased steadily** over the last 15 years or so. Although our **buildings have been extended and refurbished** to reflect this expansion, they have become somewhat tired and in need of considerable changes to ensure that we meet the requirements of a 21st Century education. We are therefore delighted that we will be moving to a brand new school building in September 2010, including fantastic new community facilities for the arts and sports, in good time for the return of the Olympics to Britain in 2012 - a fitting tribute to our namesake. Summer 2009 also saw the local community celebrating the bi-centenary of the birth of Dr William Penny Brookes.

Our £25 million rebuild programme sees us as Shropshire's "One School Pathfinder" for the **Building Schools for the Future** programme - an incredibly exciting project! It is the catalyst for a wide range of new developments, targeted at moving us from a "good school with many outstanding features" to "an outstanding school".

Building work is going on within in the school grounds, in front of the school but entirely separate from the existing school buildings. This has enabled us to continue our normal day to day work throughout the building period. The school will move across to the new accommodation in the summer of 2010 and many and varied discussions are taking place about how we will teach and support students in the new school. This is a year focused on change management and we have already moved a long way in introducing key changes such as our 4 new Houses, with vertical tutoring.

We consider ourselves fortunate to be working in a good school in a beautiful location, with wonderful scenery and facilities all around us and wonderful new school accommodation for our future. We hope you will want to join us and help shape this exciting future.

Penny Cooper & Geoff Renwick (Head and Co-Head)

January 2010

WILLIAM BROOKES IS A NON-SMOKING SCHOOL

OUR SCHOOL PRIORITIES FOR 2009-2010

1. **Raising student achievement**
2. **New Learning & Teaching Policy**
3. **Innovative practice through action research**
4. **Ensuring structures for the new school are in place to raise achievement**

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS WILL INCLUDE:

- Our range of teaching and learning styles, with a very flexible approach in the new school
- Embedding our recently introduced vertical tutoring as a more personalised approach to student monitoring and support
- A core programme enhancing students' learning skills, involving SEAL and Learn 2 Learn principles
- More flexible curriculum models, incorporating a range of Diplomas, OCR, BTEC, GCSEs and foundation tier learning, alongside a system fast tracking some student qualifications
- Extended project work, already trialled in Year 8, to develop student research and enquiry skills
- An increased emphasis on the use of ICT for learning and communication, raising the role of audio-visual technologies

OUR ONE SCHOOL PATHFINDER PROJECT

5 TRANSFORMATIONAL THEMES are woven through the body of the educational principles that inform the vision for our pathfinder school:

1. **OLYMPISM:** Grounded in the historic legacy of William Penny Brookes and the founding work of Coubertin, Olympism draws on the pursuit of personal excellence.
2. **INNOVATIVE TEACHING, PERSONALISED LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT:** A sustained focus on innovative teaching and learning, harnessing the benefits of the new technologies, developing the practice of the school workforce and providing opportunities via learning pathways, for all to progress and achieve in an outstanding school.
3. **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** Active pursuit of the 5 outcomes of 'Every Child Matters', allied to the fundamental principles enshrined in the Olympian ideal of a 'healthy mind in a healthy body'.
4. **COMMUNICATIONS:** At the heart of the everyday practice, to meet the needs of students and the community, to provide breadth of access to the curriculum and to exploit the benefits of e learning, thereby encouraging the further development of citizenship and personal development.
5. **EXTENDED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:** An extension of the foundation of success, partnership working will strengthen relationships with and between all the communities served by the school, through opportunities in learning, sport, arts and culture.

10 KEY PRINCIPLES

1. An outstanding school which maximises the potential of all learners to achieve, and which respects its Olympian heritage
2. A sustainable landmark building in harmony with the environment
3. Access to innovative, personalised learning to include and value all learners
4. Active, creative social spaces that promote learning and physical and emotional health and well being
5. A balance between flexible, multi-functional, adaptable and specialist spaces for learning
6. A welcoming school with high value on independent learning, student care, guidance, leadership and personal development
7. Accessible, appropriate, adaptable ICT to meet the needs of all learners served by the school
8. An extended campus for learning with appropriate access for all the communities served by the school
9. Learning enriched by partnerships which facilitate transition and progression
10. Access to high quality sports, arts and cultural opportunities in partnership with all the communities served by the school.

Our School aims

We support the new QCDA aims for the Secondary Curriculum. Our curriculum should enable all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

We aim:

1. To create a stimulating, active and effective learning environment that encourages initiative, independence, self-confident tolerance and a sense of responsibility in all its members.
2. To give every student the opportunity to develop to their full potential.
3. To be responsive to the requirements of students, parents, teachers governors, the local community, the DCFS and the LSC, make working links with our partner primary schools. as well as with local colleges, industrial and commercial enterprises and community groups and to consult widely with all groups who are involved in the life and activities of the school.
4. To encourage all members of the school to feel a respect for and a sense of identity with its aims and values.
5. To offer a relevant, broad and balanced range of learning activities that provide a wide variety of challenging experiences carefully matched to the needs of individuals within the framework of the national curriculum.
6. To create a happy, supportive atmosphere in which there is a firm commitment to a policy of equal opportunities for regardless of race, creed, gender or ability.
7. To help equip our students to participate effectively in and enjoy fully their personal lives, their family lives, their working lives and their role in a democratic society.

Performing Arts College aims

1. To raise standards of achievement in each performing arts subject, through the increased quality of teaching and learning.
2. To extend curriculum opportunities in the performing arts subjects including cultural, creative expressive a technological enrichment.
3. To increase take-up of and interest in the performing arts subject courses, particularly post 16.

Maths & Computing College aims

1. To create a visible mathematics and computing/ICT ethos that inspires and motivates, raises attainment and improves post-16 participation in the specialist subjects.
2. To develop a mathematically and computing/ICT rich curriculum.
3. To address the needs of future citizens, as well as those of future mathematics and computing/ICT specialists.
4. To develop a rich repertoire of teaching and learning strategies to enrich provision for our own students and those in our partner schools.
5. To develop and disseminate resources and good practice to be shared with other schools and the wider community.
6. To work with relevant businesses and industries to establish high status vocational courses and work-related opportunities, to ensure that all students have access to appropriate pathways.