

# Netherhall School

*An Ambitious, Caring Community*



## Netherhall School

This is a school that fervently believes in the abilities of all our students, staff, parents / carers and community. A school that is governed by values and one that works to the highest ideals. Our values are faithfully applied to the facts before us: all young people want to succeed, feel confident, capable, in control, proud of their achievements and well prepared for their challenges. All teachers want to make a difference, be respected by their students and colleagues, want their students to attain the best results, progress in their career and achieve professional fulfilment. Every parent and carer would like their child to be happy, fulfilled, well-educated and successful at school. Each and every school governor is committed to supporting the school in its aspiration to become outstanding. Our community fully understands and appreciates the benefits for everyone of having a superb school, that actively engages with other community groups, plays its part, makes a full contribution and helps to build a cohesive, friendly, caring and supportive community. This is a relationship based on mutual respect, in which everyone benefits, built on an understanding that we rise and fall together.

When Netherhall School received its momentous Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in 2018 – the first time in the school's history that it had ever attained an overall rating of 'Good', because of the significance of the judgement (the only primary or secondary school in the entire northern region to have its directive academy order revoked, earning special commendation from the regional schools' commissioner) the HMI - Mr Neil McKenzie, asked me, the chair of governors and governing body, the deputy headteacher, the senior management team, all teaching colleagues and all of the school staff to give an assurance that we 'would not take our foot off the gas'. As you all know, we absolutely look forward to every day at school, we have honoured our commitment and none of us, for one moment 'have taken our foot off the gas'; despite the challenges of Covid-19, we have continued to drive the school forward, improve and to make exceptional progress. This is clearly known and understood by the community we serve, as more and more students, parents and carers place their trust in us, which is demonstrated in the record numbers joining the school in successive years, both in year 7, to our superb sixth form and by students joining the school in-year.

So, let's look in a bit more detail about our school's values of Ambition, Care and Community, how they're cashed out for all of our young people and how our actions match our values:

## Ambition

We are a school that aims to provide the absolute best for every single student, which you will clearly see as you walk around the buildings, look in on classes, experience learning taking place, view the facilities, the resources in every classroom, from the sports fields, to music, art, design and technology, IT and science to the school cafeteria. We have the highest aspirations for each and every student and we want every single student to endeavour to be the best in all aspects of their schooling and in whatever discipline they apply themselves to, whether they want to go to the top universities, secure an apprenticeship with a leading firm or begin their working career with the job of their choice. We are a school where students are actively encouraged to be in control of their own futures and through their own agency to fulfil their considerable potential.

We work extremely hard to provide as many opportunities as possible for all our young people to learn, across our rich, varied, challenging and superb curriculum offer. We aim to make learning as interesting and enjoyable as possible, where students have successive opportunities to apply their learning in practical activities. At key stage 3, all students study at least two modern foreign languages and the full breadth and depth of National Curriculum subjects, building toward the English Baccalaureate. In key stage 4, students can study the full range of the arts, humanities, languages, information technology, computer science, business studies, design and technology subjects, an extensive range of vocational subjects that run concurrently to the impressive academic core curriculum and we relentlessly support students in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. At key stage 5, students can study a full academic suite of qualifications, which includes A level biology, chemistry, physics, maths, English literature and language, French, history, geography, RS, art, photography and music, alongside a suite of vocational subjects, complemented by additional qualifications, which include the highly regarded extended project qualification, core maths, sports leadership awards and the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

At every year group age level there is a raft of extensive extracurricular and enrichment

activities that complement and enhance the curriculum, which provide our young people with seminal and inspirational experiences from playing for some of the best sports teams in the county, winning multiple county cups in a range of different sports, musical and dramatic performance, rich and varied local and national cultural experiences, including live theatre, live performance and overseas travel. In short, whatever aspiration or ambition all of our young people have, this is a school that will encourage and nurture all of their dreams in a friendly, caring and supportive environment. Importantly, these aspirations and ambitions apply to every single young person; we are an institution founded on equality, which believes that all of these opportunities and experiences should be available to all.

## Care

We know and fully appreciate that education is a unique and precious experience for every individual student, that every moment in school is an opportunity, that every interaction with teachers, school staff and peers is a personal interaction that is known, understood, interpreted and internalised by each student, and that each interaction has unlimited potential for positive reinforcement and positive change.

We are a fully inclusive school that has excellent pastoral care, we work extremely hard to get to know every single student, to know and understand each young person's character, strengths and areas for development; you will see this in all aspects of the school, from the pictures on the walls, in the interactions between the students and school staff, in the expressions on the students' faces, in the way they conduct themselves and in the way they represent themselves and their school. As Ofsted rightly cited in its most recent report: 'students are proud of their school...students love coming to school...there is great mutual respect between teachers and students, as students rightly believe that their teachers are doing an excellent job.' These are just a few of the many exceptional highlights detailed in the school's most recent Ofsted report.

At every level, we encourage constructive attitudes, positive behaviour and the development of good character, helping our students to make active and productive choices, to learn the values of honesty, kindness, courtesy, compassion and a great work ethic. Like any good parent or carer, we know that young people need good people around them, who care about them, lead by example and help them make productive decisions and to learn. We fully appreciate that if we want our young people to have

higher expectations, we need to have higher expectations of ourselves.

We nurture courage and passion, and cultivate an environment in which our young people are fearless and not afraid to get involved and to have a go. We aim to develop young people who are resilient, determined and who are not deterred by failure, who see it as part of the learning process and who use it as a positive learning experience with which to spur themselves on to greater achievements. A school, that in partnership with our parents and carers, creates an ethos where our young people are honest with themselves and with others, learn positive lessons from their choices, in an environment in which they embrace and accept responsibility; understanding that ultimately, it is the student themselves who is in charge and has both the power and the authority to make their own decisions to determine their future.

## Community

We are a learning community where each person understands their individual responsibility to the collective and that their actions matter to themselves and to everyone in our school community, that we are all inter-linked and that our futures, our happiness and our successes are all inter-dependent and that we are reliant on each other. A community in which we all understand that we have far more in common that binds us together than what divides us.

We are a school that actively works to engage with our local and wider community, creating interfaces for our young people to work with as many community groups as possible, working to the principle that communities are built through shared enterprise, shared experience, understanding, respect and that in reality, we all want the best, and to be part of something truly worthwhile that makes a positive difference. That we create kinship and the bonds that bind us together, which will help to define our young people, sustain them through their challenges and establish strong foundations for each and every one of our young people to aspire and to grow.

For example, at Christmas and at the end of the summer term, there is a whole school celebration at the fabulous St Mary's Church in Maryport, fully supported by the Archdeacon for Cumberland; there are regular school visits the Maryport Aquarium for biology, the internationally renowned Senhouse Museum for history, art galleries, live dramatic performances, a full contribution to war memorial events, honouring the commitment of current and previous generations; we support the Army cadet unit, the

Sea Scout unit and the Maryport In-shore Rescue; we work in partnership with local charities, like the amazing Mary Graves Trust and the brilliant Cumbria Community Foundation to provide opportunities for all of our students, the excellent Maryport Town Council, participating and performing in public events, like the Christmas lights switch-on, supporting local initiatives, litter-picking, beach tidy up, fundraising for good causes, supporting environmental programmes, carol singing in care homes at Christmas and sharing school facilities with superb community groups, from Maryport Operatic and Amateur Dramatic Society to Maryport Athletic Football Club, Netherhall RUFC to Maryport Tennis Club, to name but a few, and operating the brilliant Netherhall Community Sports Centre, which provides vital and superb community leisure, recreation and sports facilities and classes in support of the local community.

## **Netherhall School**

I, the deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team spend our time collaborating, working in partnership, in school, in lessons, in the corridors, around the school at breaktime, lunchtime, supporting after school activities, sports fixtures, school performances, local community events, welcoming students to school at the start of the day, on bus duty at the close of the day making sure that students safely get their transport home, listening to students at school council, listening to school staff, participating in enrichment trips and activities with students, I encourage all of my staff to do exactly the same. The reason for this is that it absolutely helps the school to stay grounded, relevant and focused on the most important aspects of the school: the quality of education, the day-to-day experience of all of our students and staff, what works, what is needed and what really matters – listening, collaborating, sharing, developing positive, constructive relationships and working with everyone to make our school the best it can possibly be.

This is a school that prides itself on its honesty and authenticity: we work hard to ensure there's no gap between what we say and what we do, that we match our words with our deeds, and if there is a gap, we'll listen and work with you to address whatever the issue is for the benefit of our young people. We believe in partnership, shared enterprise, the collective and working for the common good. I know this, because I see this in all aspects of school life, in school council, in registration, paired reading, assemblies, in lessons from first thing on Monday morning to last thing on Friday afternoon, at after school fixtures and

in enrichment trips in this country and overseas.

We fully understand that this is a relationship founded on trust, in which parents and carers actively place their trust in us to care for and nurture the dreams, aspirations and ambitions of their children. That we as their teachers in their school are in the exceptionally privileged position to have a profound and immeasurably positive impact on the lives and futures of generations of our young people.

If anyone would like to see this in action, please come and have a look around the school whilst it is in session, you'll see everything I've just spoken about first-hand.

### **Principles:**

The five principles that guide Netherhall School are:

- 1. Students first: every decision is founded on the best interests of the students.**
- 2. Aspiration: to be fiercely ambitious for all students.**
- 3. Quality: to provide the highest quality education possible.**
- 4. Opportunity: to provide enjoyable and relevant opportunities.**
- 5. Community: to be an active part of the local community.**

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