

Durrington
High School



Teaching at Durrington

An enriching and exciting place
to work as a teacher

Ofsted reports:

The leadership team has been innovative and highly effective in training and developing teachers.

The excellent quality of staff development is recognised locally and nationally.

Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge.



Find out more about us online:

durringtonhighschool.co.uk
researchschool.org.uk/durrington



Sue Marooney Executive Headteacher Durrington High School

Going beyond our best ...



At Durrington we have worked hard to develop a culture in our school where teachers and leaders are looked after, supported and professionally enriched. We summarise the essence of this culture in this booklet, to help you decide if you want to play a part in the exciting Durrington journey!

In an ever-changing educational landscape, we focus on clear priorities:

- Ensuring all staff are able to have a sensible work/life balance - this means that we constantly review what we do, so teachers and leaders are able to focus on their core purpose.
- An evidence informed approach to teaching and CPD - we don't want our teachers wasting their time on low-impact, gimmicky approaches to teaching. We want them to shape their teaching around what research evidence says is most likely to work.
- Developing and growing our own excellent leaders, who in turn are able to nurture their own high-performing teams.
- Appointing external candidates with shared values, who will thrive in our school.



A strong record of academic success

In 2019, Durrington maintained an impressive track record of high standards across the board in this new era of GCSE exams (with year groups of 330):

- More than two thirds of students passed English and maths with a grade 4, with 1 in 5 students achieving the highest grades of 7-9.
- In a range of subjects including English language and literature, maths, science, drama, French, geography and history over 50% of students achieved a 'good pass' of a grade 5.
- Huge success in science, where over 75% of students achieved a 'good pass' of grade 5 in biology, chemistry and physics, with almost half of the cohort achieving the highest grades of 7-9.
- Further success in PE where 57% of students achieved a 'good pass' of level 5 or higher, and similarly 94% in art.
- Over a quarter of students achieved the highest grades of 7-9 in art, geography, graphics, dance, history and textiles.



Good behaviour, traditional values

We believe strongly that if teachers are going to be able to teach effectively, so that students can learn, we need to ensure that there are clear expectations in terms of behaviour in school. These expectations are upheld strongly, resulting in a calm and purposeful environment in every classroom.

A senior member of staff is on duty throughout the school day, and there are clear systems of sanctions and rewards. Supporting staff in this way is central to our success.



‘Tight but loose’ evidence informed approach

We have moved away from a ‘tick-box’ approach to teaching and have embraced a ‘tight but loose’ approach. We want teaching to be tight, in terms of focusing on sound, evidence-informed pedagogical principles, but loose in terms of how this is interpreted in classrooms.

For example, how a PE teacher models a throwing technique will be very different to how a history teacher models how to write a discursive essay. We do not talk about ‘outstanding’ teaching and we do not grade lessons; instead we talk about great teaching and how all teachers can get that little bit better. Outstanding teaching is formulaic; great teaching accepts that successful teaching looks different in different contexts - great teachers are great at teaching their subject.

We have distilled our view of great teaching down to six pedagogical principles:

challenge

explanation

modelling

practice

questioning

feedback

We believe that when teachers implement these principles effectively, students learn well, have high aspirations of what they can achieve and so develop into confident and resilient learners.

Research School providing high quality CPD



As one of only 32 Research Schools in the country (funded by the Education Endowment Foundation, EEF), we work with schools all over the country to help them understand and mobilise the research evidence about 'what works' in education. Our staff also benefit from this expertise through a rich programme of CPD opportunities:

Fortnightly sessions on Subject Planning and Development (SPDs), where curriculum teams meet to discuss and plan 'What are we teaching over the next fortnight and how can we teach it well?'

Three-day training programmes on a range of topic e.g. metacognition, improving memory and improving literacy.

Regular twilight sessions – on a range of evidence informed topics

Weekly e-Bulletin - Teaching and Learning.

Regular articles on our school teaching and learning blog.

Well-stocked CPD library.

Coaching and personalised support as required.

Annual researchED conference with high quality speakers from around the country.



Developing strong leaders

Strong leadership is the bedrock of all that we do. We provide a range of support and development for our leaders – whether embarking on their first leadership role, or an experience leader.

We do this in a variety of ways:

- Fortnightly line management meetings with an experienced member of the Senior Leadership Team - focusing on strategic leadership development as well as operational issues.
- Recognised CPD programmes such as NPQSL, through the UCL, Institute of Education.
- Coaching with an established leader.
- School based opportunities/courses to gain leadership experience.
- Actively involved with 'Women in Leadership'.
- An annual, residential leadership conference.



“Being a curriculum leader has given me the opportunity to build a department around my ideas. It has been a great experience to do this within a well organised and structured whole school environment. The school systems and support from pastoral teams and the leadership team have given me advice and new ideas, whilst helping with my own personal leadership development.”

Head of Geography



“We are constantly reviewing our practices so that teachers are enabled to focus on the main function - planning and delivering great lessons.”

Shaun Allison, Head of School Improvement

Great working conditions

Strategies to alleviate the pressures on staff include:

- Each department has developed their own streamlined feedback and homework policies, aimed at reducing workload whilst optimising impact.
- Teachers are not expected to write lengthy reports for students, but to record a current and projected grade for students and a judgement grade for effort and homework.
- Enhanced pay scales and rapid progression opportunities.
- Teacher non-contact time above the national average.
- We have just three data collection points for each year group in a year.
- We do not grade lesson observations.
- Joint planning within curriculum teams saves a significant amount of time for individual teachers.
- INSET days are used for collaborative planning in curriculum teams.
- Teachers are not expected to keep lengthy ‘evidence files’ for appraisal.
- All staff are registered with ‘Health Shield’. This is a workplace health scheme that provides staff with a variety of benefits such as support with a range of health services e.g. acupuncture, physiotherapy, etc.
- Access to Schools UK Eyecare plan.



Extended NQT Induction programme

Our comprehensive induction and support programme for NQTs extends beyond your NQT year - you will receive:

- Weekly mentor meetings with a colleague in your curriculum area.
- Fortnightly subject specific CPD through 'Subject Planning and Development Sessions'.
- Comprehensive professional studies programme based around current research from education and cognitive science. These are led by our dedicated NQT Induction Lead.
- Termly meetings with your assessor, who will be a member of the School Leadership Team.
- Ongoing support in your second year of teaching, through our 'Early Career Teacher Development Programme', led by members of the Research School team.
- Opportunities for further study.

"Over the course of my NQT year I have been encouraged to do things my way. Never has Durrington tried to make me be anything beyond the best version of myself as a teacher.

Often as a trainee, you feel that you have to emulate the behaviour of so many different teachers, that your teaching becomes a poor mix of everything. Durrington has always supported me seek inspiration to build a foundation for the way I want to teach.

When suggestions have come it has always been validated by research and not anecdotal evidence based on '...Oh I do this and it works for me why don't you try this...' but rather 'research shows that this is successful so how could you incorporate that into your teaching'. I am always grateful for the ability to constantly reflect and develop my practice so it never becomes stale."

"As an NQT, the element which makes Durrington such a good school to work for and that has benefitted me most, is the support given. From the SPD sessions to the twilight events, the high level of CPD on offer at Durrington has allowed me to develop my pedagogical practice and move confidently through my NQT year feeling supported and appreciated."

"Being informed by the most current educational literature, I know that my teaching methods are providing students with the deal that they deserve. I owe the support in improving my use of these methods to Durrington."



"Colleagues from my trainee year have commented that they do not feel supported in their schools and that their ideas and contributions to the school or department are rarely appreciated.

I struggle to empathise - I could not feel more supported, valued, appreciated and understood in the environment at Durrington."

A strong sense of community

A key goal of our school has been to create a community team ethos. We have done this through organising a variety of activities and events which have focused on creating innovative opportunities for shared time and teamwork between staff, governors, students and parents/carers. We have concentrated on how, through predominately (but not exclusively) physical activity, we can break down barriers, support well-being and celebrate being part of the Durrington team.

Events have included:

- *One Drop at a Time* – staff and students swam an incredible 100 miles in 2 hours to raise awareness about environmental issues and money for Oxfam and the Marine Conservation Society.
- Annual charity concerts to raise money for local charities including Guild Care.
- Regular staff cake sales including Dementia UK's *Time for a Cuppa* and McMillan's *World's Biggest Coffee Morning*.
- Whole school, staff, parents/carers and governors *Pole2Pole* challenge – we walked/jogged/ran an amazing total of 15,454km in a week of school (before school, breaks, lunchtimes and after school) on a track we set up on our field.
- Students and staff have taken part in the annual CRUK *Race for Life* for the past 3 years with numbers growing to a team of over 380 in 2019 and raising over £12k in total.
- Year 11 stress buster mud run – offsite day of mud running and fun with 28 staff and over 100 year 11 students to de-stress them (and the staff) before their exams.
- *Giving Words to the World* – a whole school, inter-tutor group based book donation project for Africa, local refuges and charities and into local primary schools with high levels of deprivation. Over 8000 books were donated).







Looking forward ...

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