



Birchwood High School

General Information 2020

your dreams, your future, our challenge

Birchwood High School

General Introduction

Dear Parent / Carer

Birchwood is a successful 11-18 mixed converter Academy with 1370 students on roll. We are very proud of our school, where students not only leave with strong academic qualifications but also as well-rounded individuals with a sense of responsibility and a willingness to contribute to both the economy and society in general.

We are rightly proud of our 'comprehensive' ethos and inclusive philosophy where the academically gifted achieve top grades at A Level and GCSE, going on in record numbers to Russell Group Universities. Conversely, those students who need more help are encouraged to progress in a caring and supportive learning environment. As a result, all our school leavers go on to further education or a chosen career with no one contributing to the governments 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) statistics.

Ofsted concurred when they inspected the school in June – the inspection report highlights our inclusive and balanced approach towards education, ensuring that children achieve well but are also supported and cared for effectively, as well as being given excellent opportunities in terms of enrichment, leadership development and extra-curricular activities.

Ofsted Key Headlines (June 2019)

- Effective teaching has a positive impact on learning, and pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects as a result.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are outstanding. Pupils play a key role in contributing to the ongoing improvement.
- Pupils look after the school site very well and are polite and courteous to adults and each other. They move around the school in a measured, calm and orderly fashion.
- The school's inclusive ethos ensures that diversity is celebrated, and this encourages all pupils to believe they can succeed.
- Pupils attend well, because they enjoy school. The curriculum is rich and relevant and covers the humanities and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, social, physical and artistic learning. Leaders have a relentless focus upon ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils.

At GCSE, our examination results have steadily improved year-on-year. For 2019, 75% of our 235 students passed English and Maths, significantly above the national average (62%). With 78% achieving 2+ passes in Science, our core subjects performed well against national statistics and this meant that a record number stayed on into our Sixth Form.

We have a large Sixth Form with 270 students allowing us to offer more than 35 academic subjects. Furthermore, this year, all our students passed their A Levels with a tremendous 75% of students achieving A*-B grades (well above the national average of 48%). What mattered most, however, was that 98% of students got into their first choice University and that 100% moved on to their chosen Post-18 destination. We are, consequently, very proud of our Sixth Form.

With regards to admissions, our admission criteria is simple and transparent – we will offer 240 places to boys and girls who have a brother or sister living at the school and who live in and around the Bishop's Stortford area. We are currently over-subscribed in Year 7. Unlike other local schools, we do not believe in aptitude tests. Our mantra is that all children, regardless of background and ability, are important to us.

In summary, Birchwood is a school with strong forward momentum and 'the wind in its sails.' It is also well-resourced, financially secure and not complacent, focussing on not only academic achievement but also personal development and welfare support as required. It is, for me, a happy school and one that is a great privilege to lead.

Dr Chris Ingate
Principal



Admissions

Birchwood is a co-educational Academy with a roll of 1370 boys and girls. Our admission limit at Birchwood is currently 240 (8 Forms of Entry); this was increased five years ago to accommodate the increased number of applications we were receiving.

As an Academy, Birchwood's Admission Policy is as follows:

- 1 **Children looked after** (children in public care).
- 2 **Siblings:** Children who, at the closing date for applications, have a brother or sister currently attending Birchwood High School in Years 7 – 12. Current Year 7 = 35% siblings.
- 3 **Members of staff:** Birchwood employees providing they have been employed for a minimum of two years.
- 4 **Priority area:** Children who, at the closing date for applications, live in the chosen urban priority area of Bishop's Stortford, Thorley Parish and the area North West of Bishop's Stortford namely; Albury, Berden, Birchanger, Brent Pelham, Farnham, Furneux Pelham, Little Hadham, Manuden, Much Hadham, Stocking Pelham, Takeley and The Hallingbury's.
- 5 **Geographical distance:** Should there be places unfilled after applying criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 then places will be offered on the basis of shortest distance from their permanent residence to the School as determined by Hertfordshire County Council.

These rules can also be found in the LEA 'Moving On' Booklet. The LA's on-line and paper application deadline is **Saturday 31 October 2020**. You will receive written confirmation of your child's place from the local authority on **Monday 1 March 2021** via email or, in the post, on **Tuesday 3 March 2021** and you will need to confirm the place by **Monday 15 March 2021**.

If you wish to contact Hertfordshire Admissions Customer Care Centre, their phone number is 0300 123 4043. It is also possible to apply online: (www.hertsdirect.org/admissions). If you have any queries regarding Year 7 admissions at Birchwood please contact Mrs Hood on 01279 756375 or by email at shood@birchwoodhigh.org.uk.

Once your child has obtained a place at Birchwood, we have a carefully orchestrated and highly commended induction programme to ensure that their transition to Year 7 works effectively.

Length of the School Day and Week

Our school community is open from 8.00am each day with many of our students arriving early for clubs, private study or breakfast. The scheduled school day begins with registration at 8.45am, with students expected to be on site from 8.35am. Lunch is from 1.20pm (1.10pm for Year 7) to 2.00pm and school ends at 3.10pm. Each day consists of 5 x 1 hour lessons, providing a 25-hour teaching week. In addition there is a 15 minute period in the morning which is used for assemblies and tutorial time. After school clubs generally run to no later than 4:30pm followed by a full Community Programme until 10.00pm.

School Curriculum

At Birchwood; Years 7 and 8 form Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Years 9, 10 and 11 form Key Stage 4 (KS4). Some subjects are studied in both Key Stages; others are taught at KS3 but are optional at KS4.

The following table summarises what is taught at Birchwood at each Key Stage.

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	Compulsory	Compulsory
Mathematics	Compulsory	Compulsory
Science	Compulsory	Compulsory
Art	Compulsory	Optional
Business Studies		Optional
RS	Compulsory	Optional
Construction		Optional
Computer Science		Optional
Design & Technology	Compulsory	Optional
Drama	Compulsory	Optional
Dance		Optional
Food	Compulsory	Optional
French	Compulsory	Optional
German		Optional
Geography	Compulsory	Optional
History	Compulsory	Optional
ICT	Compulsory	Optional
Media / Film Studies		Optional
Music	Compulsory	Optional
PE	Compulsory	(Core) Compulsory (GCSE) Optional
PSHCE	Compulsory	Compulsory
Spanish		Optional
Statistics		Optional

Birchwood High School offers a range of subjects as shown above, for example, at KS3 the opportunity is provided to study a second modern foreign language (either Spanish or German). At KS4 an 'open' option choice provides an extensive variety of GCSE and vocational courses.

Sixth Form Provision

‘Excellence at Post 16’

The Sixth Form offers a wide range of Advanced and Vocational courses for approximately 250 students.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the Sixth Form is strong. (Ofsted June 2019).

Sixth Form students make a very positive contribution to the ethos of the wider school. (Ofsted June 2019).

Post 16 Guidance and Work Experience

All students in Years 7 to 13 receive careers information, advice and guidance as part of their curriculum programme from teachers, careers advisors, mentors and visiting speakers.

In the Sixth Form we offer a comprehensive programme of support to help students make informed Post 18 choices and prepare for life beyond Birchwood. All students in Year 12 undertake a week of work experience during the summer term.

The school subscribes to the Unifrog platform which gives students up to date careers information at their fingertips and helps students to research, compare and apply to the post 18 option of their choice. Careers information can also be found in the library.

All Sixth Form students at Birchwood who wish to go to university receive personal guidance with UCAS applications and related student finance. Students who choose an apprenticeship or employment route are given personal support with application forms, CVs and interviews.

Relationships and Sex Education

Birchwood High School is committed to the provision of relationships and sex education for all students at the school. In line with current recommendations from the DfE (Department for Education) the content will deal with physical, emotional and moral issues. The teaching offered to students is intended to be supportive and complementary to that provided by their families. Parents are able to withdraw their children from any part of the sex education programme other than the elements of the National Curriculum for Science. Parents who wish to do so should make contact with the school in writing.

Health and sex education is taught by the Science Faculty. Sex education starts in Year 7 concentrating on biological understanding. From Year 8 upwards Personal Development sessions progressively consider relationships and the social, moral and ethical aspects. This approach is supported by representatives from the local Health Authority, external agencies such as Relate, theatre groups and the school nurse.

Cross-Curricular Provision

Many aspects of education are cross-curricular. Our Personal Development (PD) programme aims to help students understand themselves and others and encourage them to participate in society as informed adults. The programme also allows students to consider aspects of careers, health and sex education.

Home Learning

Birchwood places a strong emphasis on home learning and all curriculum areas take active steps to ensure our policy is operating efficiently for all students across the ability and age range. Home learning tasks vary and may include investigations, research, reading, drawing and designing, essay-writing, project work and revision.

The 'expected' time to be spent on home learning rises from about one hour a day in Year 7 to over two hours per day in Year 11.

A home learning timetable is issued at the start of each academic year for each year group and is available for parents and students to access online via the school website. Submission dates are made clear by the subject teacher and there are sanctions if home learning is not completed.

All home learning can be tracked by students and parents using the Show my Home learning website or app. The app also gives notifications when certain home learnings are due.

Birchwood offers opportunities for students to complete home learning on site before and after school every day.

Keeping You Informed

The school keeps parents well informed through interim reports and via Parents' Information Evenings. Birchwood uses the School Gateway app (www.schoolgateway.co.uk) so parents can see every time their children receive an Achievement Point or a Behaviour Point in school. Achievement Points build up and entitle students to take part in rewards events at the end of each half term. Praise and concern notes are also recorded in the student planner which parents are expected to check weekly and add their own comments if necessary. We also send letters home when a student is performing especially well or if there is a particular concern.

The 'Extended' Day

Extra-curricular activities are varied and range from Science, Technology and Art clubs to musical and theatrical opportunities including specific music lessons. Students can also take part in a diverse spread of competitive sports. Specialist coaching in a number of sports is available.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and help to enhance pupils' learning and positive attitudes. (Ofsted June 2019).

Concerns and Feedback

- If the concern is of a general nature you should contact your child's Form Tutor. If it is not resolved to your satisfaction please contact, in writing, your child's Head of Year.
- If the concern is specific to a particular subject area please contact your child's teacher in the first instance. Again, if not resolved to your satisfaction, contact the Head of Faculty for that particular subject area.
- If, after contacting the Head of Year or Head of Faculty, matters are still not resolved, you should contact a member of the senior leadership team (an Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or the Principal).
- In the exceedingly unlikely event that this does not resolve the matter, parents can report to the Governing Body via the Chair of Governors. Your concerns will be investigated by the Governors, after which, if you are not satisfied by the Governors' report, you have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State.

Charging Policy

The school will seek voluntary contributions from parents for certain items and activities but believes that no student should be disadvantaged due to financial hardship. Please contact the school for further details.

Further Information Regarding Policies

All policy documents mentioned in this information booklet have been developed by the teachers, the Governing Body and by consultation with parents. Birchwood's key statutory policies are publicly available on the school website.

Students with Special Educational Needs

The school believes that a child has an 'additional need' if she/he is experiencing a difficulty within learning that is hindering expected progress, in line with their peers. This can apply to children of all abilities, from the able who require additional challenge and stimulation, to those who have difficulty grasping new concepts or understanding tasks. We believe that the best form of intervention for all students – including those students with special educational needs – is high quality teaching. Some of our students are also supported by additional adults in the classroom.

In general, students with Special Educational Needs may have significantly greater difficulty in learning, when compared to the majority of their peers, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

In all cases we endeavour to:

- identify those experiencing difficulty as early as possible, monitor and record their progress.
- recognise the importance of the involvement of parents/carers.
- encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, behaviour and to become involved in planning and evaluation.

The school caters for the needs of a number of students with disabilities. Further information may be obtained from our school's Special Educational Needs Policy and SEN Information Report. Parents of students with particularly complex needs are recommended to contact a member of the Personalised Learning Team to discuss provision and opportunities.

GCSE Results

The latest available GCSE results achieved by students in Year 11 by subject.

The school has a policy of entering students who attend school on a regular basis and have completed minimum coursework requirements.

Number of students in school in Year 11 **228**

Number of students in Year 11 not entered for GCSEs **0**

Subject	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	4+	% 4+	9-1
English Lang	228	4	5	18	36	62	70	26	5	2	-	195	86%	228
Maths	227	11	17	26	23	58	45	32	13	2	-	180	79%	227

Subject	NOE	% 4+	% 9-1
2+ Science Qualifications	226	78%	100%

Subject	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	4+	% 4+	9-1
Art	47	2	5	3	9	12	12	4	0	0	0	43	91%	47
Biology	64	6	10	12	19	14	3	0	0	0	0	64	100%	64
Chemistry	64	11	12	15	12	12	2	0	0	0	0	64	100%	64
Dance	18	2	3	3	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	17	94%	18
D&T	65	2	3	7	8	15	13	8	6	2	1	48	74%	64
English Lit	225	2	8	13	30	55	76	31	9	1	0	184	82%	225
Food Tech	17	1	3	2	2	3	4	1	1	0	0	15	88%	17
French	87	3	4	9	11	21	21	16	2	0	0	69	79%	87
Geography	111	6	9	7	19	22	16	21	9	1	1	79	71%	110
German	12	5	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	12	100%	12
History	108	4	7	11	15	22	29	10	7	2	1	88	81%	107
Media	45	1	3	4	4	6	15	10	2	0	0	33	73%	45
Music	19	1	2	5	1	3	6	0	1	0	0	18	95%	19
PE	61	1	3	6	6	9	21	13	2	0	0	46	75%	61
Performing Arts	54	3	2	9	10	15	6	8	1	0	0	45	83%	54
Physics	64	7	10	11	18	15	3	0	0	0	0	64	100%	64
RS	16	3	0	4	5	0	3	1	0	0	0	15	94%	16
Science	162	1	3	4	16	51	49	27	9	2	0	124	77%	162
Science Add	162	1	2	2	10	45	55	34	8	5	0	115	71%	162
Spanish	29	3	5	3	5	6	3	3	1	0	0	25	86%	29

Subject	NOE	L2 Dist*	L2Dist	L2Merit	L2Pass	L1Dist	L1Merit	L1Pass	U	% D*-L1Pass
Business	71	3	32	15	9	7	3	0	2	97%
Construction	19	1	0	0	13	0	0	3	2	89%
Creative Imedia	29	0	0	6	10	5	5	3	0	100%
H&S	27	0	0	3	7	10	4	2	0	100%
Music Tech	12	0	0	0	3	1	5	2	1	92%

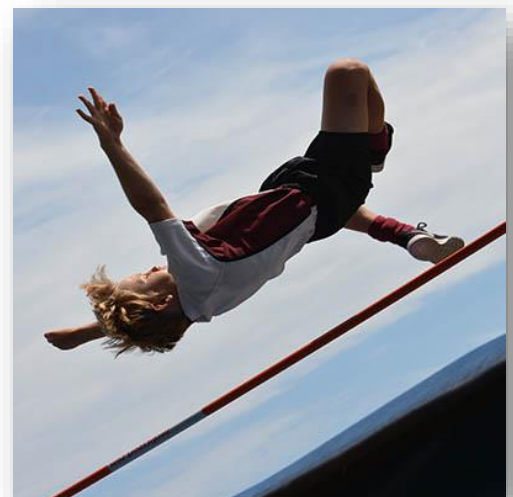
A Level Results

2020 GCE A Level Examination results by each subject. Achieved by students aged 16, 17 and 18.

Subject	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	% A*B	% A*-E
Biology	22	3	5	8	5	1	0	0	73%	100%
Chemistry	11	1	4	2	3	1	0	0	64%	100%
Drama	8	0	4	2	1	1	0	0	75%	100%
D&T Product Design	6	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	17%	100%
Economics	18	1	3	5	6	3	0	0	50%	100%
English Language	8	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	38%	100%
English Literature	6	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	67%	100%
Film Studies	11	0	2	3	4	1	1	0	45%	100%
Financial Studies	17	0	3	7	3	4	0	0	59%	100%
Fine Art	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	75%	100%
French	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	100%	100%
Geography	14	2	1	5	4	2	0	0	57%	100%
German	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	50%	100%
History	9	0	2	4	2	0	1	0	67%	100%
Mathematics	32	12	10	8	1	1	0	0	94%	100%
Mathematics Further	6	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	100%	100%
Media	0	1	5	6	3	1	0	0	38%	100%
Music	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0%	100%
Physics	14	3	3	3	4	1	0	0	64%	100%
Politics	5	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	80%	100%
Psychology	15	4	3	3	3	1	1	0	67%	100%
Religious Studies	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	75%	100%
Sociology	13	3	1	6	1	2	0	0	77%	100%
Spanish	5	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	80%	100%
PE	7	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	71%	100%

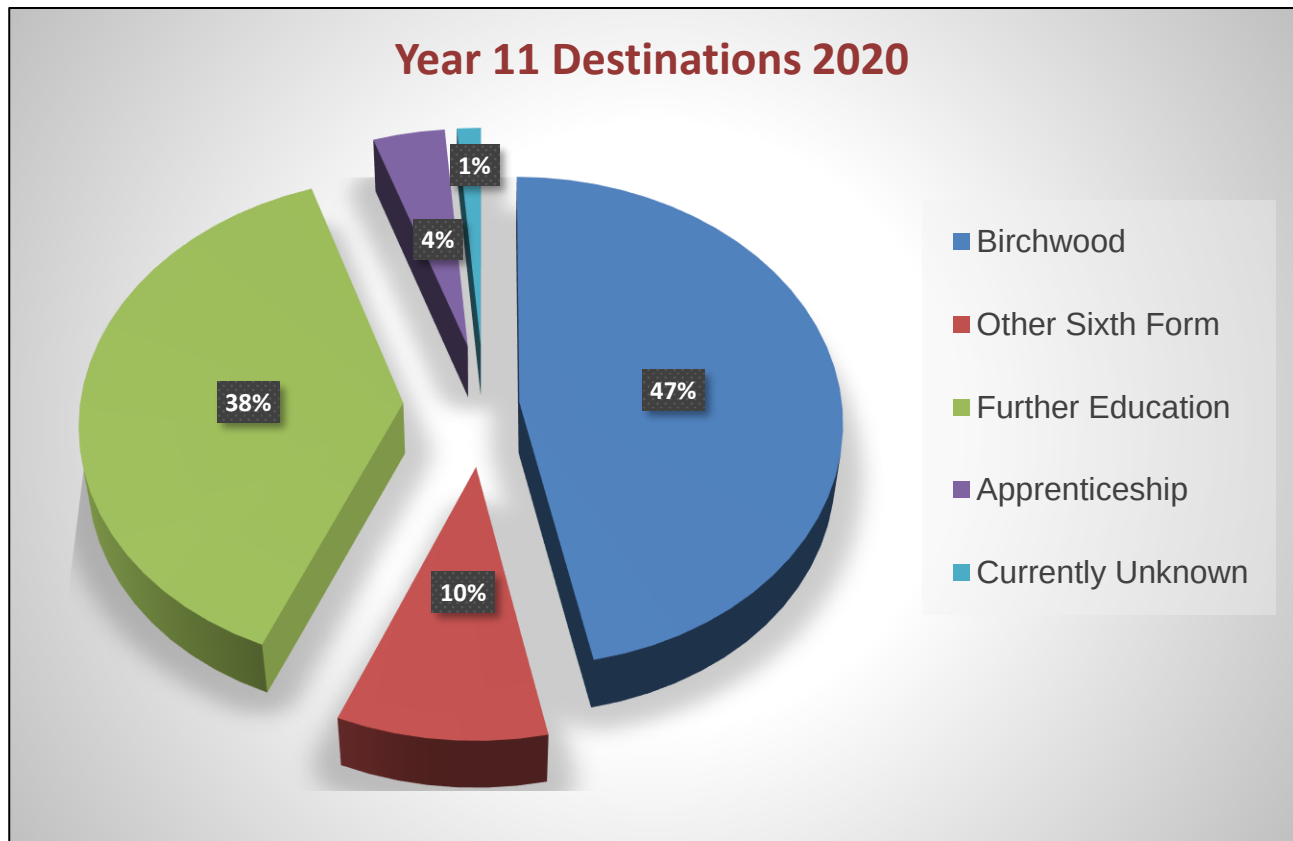
BTEC Results

Subject	NOE	Dist* - Pass	% Dist* - Pass
Business Studies	15	15	100%
Health and Social Studies	10	10	100%
ICT	4	4	100%
Performing Arts	1	1	100%
Sports Studies	12	12	100%

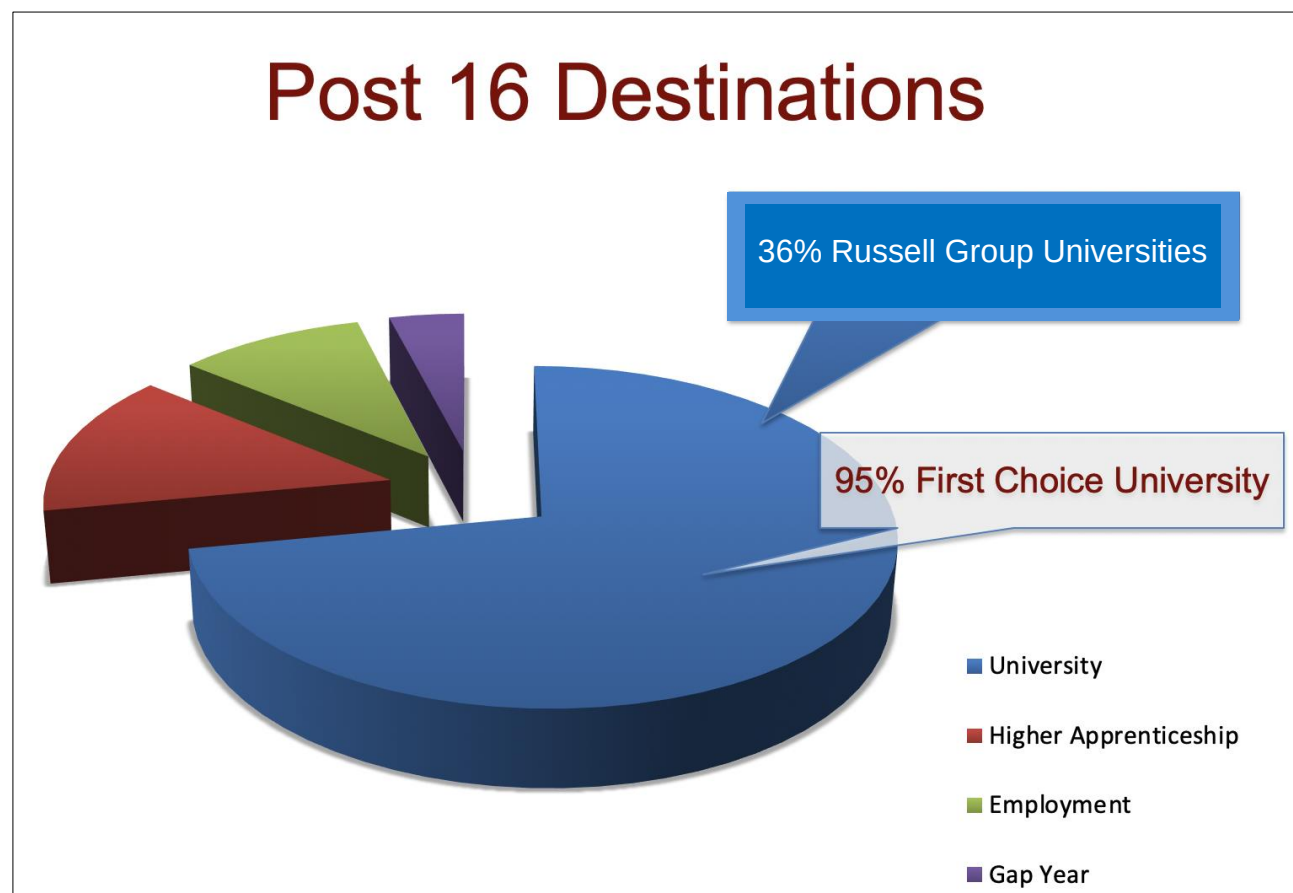


Year 11 Destinations 2020

Out of our 2020 Year 11 cohort we have no NEETS to report. The chart has been broken down into the following destinations.



Post 16 Destinations





Birchwood High School

Address Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 5BD

Tel 01279 655936

Email admin@birchwood.herts.sch.uk

Website www.birchwoodonline.co.uk

Principal Dr Chris Ingate