

## INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

# Sheldon School

Chippenham



Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 6HJ

**Headteacher:** Neil Spurdell BSc (Hons)

**Tel:** 01249 766020

**Email:** [hr@sheldonschool.co.uk](mailto:hr@sheldonschool.co.uk) **Web:** [www.sheldonschool.co.uk](http://www.sheldonschool.co.uk)

Thank you for requesting information about Sheldon School. The school is a professionally rewarding and enjoyable place to teach. Standards of achievement and behaviour are very good and are supported by high expectations. The professional development of teachers and support staff is a school priority and newly qualified teachers in particular enjoy an excellent induction programme.

Although the school is already successful, we are committed to improving all aspects of our work. An important part of that improvement is the appointment of talented, committed teachers and support staff who enjoy working with children. We value all aspects of a teacher's work, including their role as a tutor and their involvement in providing extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, but above all, their expertise and commitment as subject specialists.

### **Location**

Sheldon stands in an attractive parkland site on the edge of the rapidly growing market town of Chippenham, surrounded by beautiful countryside. There are good rail and road links to London. Teachers enjoy living in the town, but others find the journey from Swindon, Bath or Bristol convenient. The school is only five minutes from junction 17 on the M4. The area offers a rich diversity of cultural and leisure facilities with plenty of relatively affordable housing.

### **Pupil intake**

The school draws pupils equally from the town of Chippenham and from the villages around. We have a strong reputation and, in an area well-served by secondary schools, places in Year 7 are often oversubscribed. Sheldon is genuinely comprehensive: our intake is well-balanced both socially and academically.

### **School population 2022/23**

In September 2022 the school had 1650 pupils on roll. A maximum of 280 pupils are admitted into Year 7 each year and placed into ten tutor groups. The sixth form is very well-established and is one of the largest in Wiltshire, with approximately 300 students on roll. We expect this to increase in the coming years.

### **Staffing**

There are currently 120 teachers of which 81 are full time, and 84 non-teaching staff. The school is firmly committed to providing professional development opportunities for all staff and staff continually comment on the quality of CPD that is offered. A performance management review system is well-established and firmly part of Sheldon's culture.

### **Structure and organisation**

The academic organisation is based on eleven faculties which have considerable autonomy in the management of day-to-day affairs. The curriculum is structured to allow extensive setting on a subject basis, although a number of faculty areas prefer to deliver through a mixed ability arrangement. Tutor groups are mixed ability with tutors and the head of year seeing their groups through from Year 7 to Year 11. In the sixth form, we have separate Year 12 and Year 13 tutor groups. All tutors have regular timetabled one-to-one interviews with their pupils, supporting and monitoring academic progress as well as providing care and guidance.

### **The curriculum**

All the core and foundation subjects are taught at Key Stage 3, where our broad and balanced curriculum reflects the value we place on all subjects. At Key Stage 4, the majority of students follow nine or ten GCSE subjects. A vocational pathway provides opportunities for less academic pupils. The Sixth Form programme comprises an extremely wide range of A Level courses – almost 40 on offer for 2022/23 – and Sheldon students have a proud record of progression to top universities, as well as higher level apprenticeships.

### **Examination results**

The last few years have been extraordinary years in terms of the awarding of examination grades, whether that be at A Level, GCSE or Btec. Even in 2022, it would not be particularly meaningful to talk in terms of headline figures, something that other schools locally have also committed to. We were pleased to celebrate the many successes of the individual students in the summer, including some stellar performances which you can read more about on our website. Until 2019, there had been an improving trend of performance in GCSE, with strong outcomes in English and maths, supported by excellent results in the options subjects. At A Level, too, figures were healthy and in 2019, the value-added return placed Sheldon in the top 20% of schools nationally. Every year we see students progress to university, typically 75% of the cohort, and this always includes Oxbridge. Choices of university subjects reflect the wide curriculum offer, but they invariably include medicine and veterinary medicine, as was the case in 2022. In addition, increasing numbers are also moving on to higher level apprenticeships, some extremely prestigious.

## **Links with parents and the community**

The school is popular with parents, who are very supportive. They have plenty of opportunities to be involved in their children's education, parents' evenings being well attended. Sheldon seeks to reach out to all areas of the Chippenham and North Wiltshire community, and there are extensive links through a number of local employers.

## **Accommodation**

Faculties are based in distinct suites of rooms. In specialist areas like science, design technology and the arts, accommodation is purpose-built and attractive. The quality of general teaching rooms is very good and improving. Because we recognise the link between a high-quality teaching environment and improved learning, we have a comprehensive rolling programme of classroom refurbishment. Over the past decade we have built a new refectory, extended learning support classrooms, a large reception, medical space and a new diner. We were delighted to add a dance studio and mini lecture theatre in March 2018 and we are excited by the transformation of our library into an even more vibrant learning space. We are not stopping there, however, and are continually working to enhance our already excellent facilities.

## **Enrichment**

A wide variety of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils and staff. Sheldon is known for its sporting excellence (we regularly win county and district competitions and have representatives in national squads). Drama, music and dance have high profiles and excellent productions. Clubs and societies meet at lunchtime and after school. In more normal times, we have exchange trips to France and Germany; other European trips for history, geography, PSRE, art and sport; field trips, residential visits and outdoor pursuits; and sixth form expeditions which have been to Tanzania, Namibia, Borneo, the Himalayas, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Botswana Zanzibar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

## **Achievements**

Sheldon has a long record of success and in the days of specialist status was awarded three categories: science, languages and sport. We also have SportsMark Gold, ArtsMark Gold, the Healthy Schools Award, the Design Mark and the International Schools Gold Award.

We are determined together, however, to make Sheldon even better. I hope you'll be tempted to join our exciting, friendly and rewarding community. Good luck with your application.

**Neil Spurdell**  
**Headteacher**