



Dene
Academy



A Centre of
Excellence



Welcome to Dene Academy

Dear Parent/Carer,

On behalf of the staff and governors at Dene Academy, I am delighted to introduce our **Centre of Excellence**. I hope that this prospectus provides you with some of the information that you need to help you decide which school your child will move onto for the next stage of their education. Dene Academy is a dynamic and vibrant school. Our Commitment to Excellence is clearly visible in every aspect of our ethos and culture. At Dene Academy, your child will receive the highest quality of education from a dedicated and talented staff team of whom I am incredibly proud. Staff have a genuine pride for our school and love nothing more than seeing our children succeed.

At Dene Academy, we have five core values and these underpin our whole school ethos and curriculum. We believe that all of our students should demonstrate respect, be resilient, have high aspirations and work with integrity with one clear goal: to be happy. Furthermore, central to our ethos and values is the success of every student in the school and, for us, this means high quality teaching and learning are at the heart of everything we do, combined with exceptional pastoral care to meet the needs of every student.

As a school, we are dedicated to delivering a supportive, exciting and engaging curriculum providing opportunities for challenge, creativity and independent learning. We aim for our children to feel a sense of community, grow in confidence and to be proud of their achievements. As well as encouraging a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, we are keen to empower our children so that they are independent learners. Our aim is that all children should leave the school as highly qualified, self-reliant and articulate young adults. We are deeply dedicated to ensuring that our children have a rich and successful experience and we believe in equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence for the future.

From our students, we expect and insist upon the very highest standards: exemplary behaviour, manners and respect, commendable attitudes to learning, as well as an expectation that they are positive role models, within school and our wider community.

Finally, we believe that Dene Academy is a successful school because we value the things that are important to you: an aspirational curriculum, exceptional teaching and learning and outstanding achievement. These are the guiding principles that will ensure that your child grows with us to become a well-qualified, well-rounded, respectful and aspirational young adult with the knowledge, skills and attitude to be successful in whichever direction life takes them.

Mr D. Nelson
Headteacher

We are a **Centre of Excellence**, where **academic achievement** sits hand in hand with **exceptional pastoral care** and **outstanding extra-curricular opportunities**.

An Aspirational Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to place emphasis on knowledge and academic rigour, and to foster a genuine passion and interest in learning.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our students have an equal opportunity to receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which challenges them to be hard-working and ambitious, whilst also being supportive of their needs and their progression.

During Years 7, 8 and 9, all children study the full range of National Curriculum subjects, as well as a varied Personal Development programme. Our curriculum is designed to ensure that it both consolidates and rapidly moves beyond the curriculum that has been studied in their primary school. Most lessons are taught in sets, to ensure that work can be adapted to suit the needs of each individual child. By the end of Year 9, we have ensured that the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum has been covered in depth and so that our children are fully prepared for the next part of their educational journey.

At Key Stage 4, in addition to the core curriculum of English, Maths and Science, our children can choose to study a broad range of qualifications. We support and encourage our children to make fully informed choices about their option subjects; we believe it is imperative that children make the right choices and that they are given the opportunity to develop their individual skills, talents and abilities. The Key Stage 4 curriculum ensures that our children can access options that meet their individual needs, including an extensive range of GCSE, Vocational and Technical Qualifications.

As a school that celebrates high levels of achievement, we know that our children leave us with the qualifications that will enable them to excel in the next stage of their educational journey and then on into their future lives.

“One of the things I have discovered since joining Dene Academy in September is that my teachers always **encourage me to set goals**, to **challenge myself**, to persevere and to **always try my best**.”
Year 7 student



“The staff here could not be more **supportive**; they are really **motivating** and **inspiring**.”
Year 11 student



High Quality Teaching & Learning

At Dene Academy, we believe that every child is unique. This is why our teaching is designed to help students increase their subject specific knowledge, employ techniques to memorise this knowledge, and allow them to apply it effectively.

We believe that students learn best when:

- There is mutual respect between them and their teachers.
- There is a culture of high expectation, good behaviour and praise.
- They are able to memorise, recall and apply their knowledge.
- They find the work challenging and engaging.
- They are given regular feedback to correct misconceptions and improve.

To ensure high levels of engagement, our dedicated specialist teachers adopt innovative teaching styles that connect to the ever-changing world around us. Through research into the most recent advances in educational expertise, we are continually enhancing our teaching and learning to promote independence and challenge.

Exceptional Pastoral Care

Exceptional pastoral care is at the heart of the school. We recognise that above all else, the wellbeing and happiness of every child who attends Dene Academy is our primary concern.

Whilst we are confident that we can maximise every child's learning potential and ensure that this will result in high achievement, we are equally confident that we can provide a safe and caring environment in which each child that joins our school can flourish and grow.

Our dedicated team recognise that, for both parents and children, joining a secondary school can be a daunting experience and this team ensures the highest standard of care is provided. This is why we have a dedicated pastoral team. This team ensures the highest standard of care. To ensure your child has a smooth transition into school every morning, they will be allocated a tutor group, usually consisting of no more than twenty-five children from the same year group. The tutor group meets every morning, and the tutor is thus in regular contact with each student. The role of the tutor is to oversee each child's welfare and progress. We believe that the Form Tutor's daily contact with children plays an essential role in ensuring that everyone achieves their potential and feels fully supported.



Equality & Diversity

We believe that all students, staff and parents are entitled to be treated equitably irrespective of race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other characteristic.

We always ensure that we:

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Understand that everyone is unique and has different needs.
- Ensure that stereotypes are challenged.
- Robustly challenge all forms of bullying, harassment and prejudice-driven behaviour.
- Respond to individual and community needs in a sympathetic and compassionate manner.
- Provide appropriate support to individuals to ensure that their potential is fulfilled.



“There is a **clear ethos** across the school that sets the **safety of pupils** as a high priority.”
Ofsted

Personal Development & Enrichment Opportunities

Our fantastic Enrichment Programme gives our students the opportunity to get involved in a wide range of projects, activities and trips.

Our own staff run many activities, but we also work closely with external organisations and specialist providers to ensure a high quality offer for our students. Within school, we encourage all our students to take part in at least one activity, to enrich their experience and enjoyment of learning, as well as develop new skills, interests and friendships.

Visits/trips

We offer many local, national, and international visits for students including fieldtrips to the beach and photography trips to Beamish, national trips to London, and international trips to France and America.

Clubs/Groups

We have a huge array of extra-curricular clubs that happen over many nights each week, ranging from sports clubs, choir, gardening club and science club.

Guest Speakers/Events

We often invite guest speakers in to enhance the learning and development of our students. Previously, we have had music artists, acclaimed journalists and authors, as well as holocaust survivors and high-profile figures from STEM fields.

PSHE, RSHE and CEIAG

We not only offer drop down days, events and talks related to these areas, but all students from Years 7-10 also receive one hour a fortnight of dedicated lessons to support their development and understanding of the world around them.

British Values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Values

We are particularly proud of our SMSC Gold Award provision. SMSC and British Values are golden threads that permeate all aspects of school life here at Dene Academy. We raise awareness of these through tutor time, assemblies, PSHE lessons and drop down days. We also celebrate specific events through assemblies or whole-school awareness weeks.





Recognition & Reward

At Dene Academy, we are proud of our House System. This is because it helps us to foster a sense of community between, and across, all year groups.

The commitment of our House Champions and Student Leadership Team means that every student has a sense of identity and their own peer support network. This encourages our community to strive for excellence.

Our commitment to recognising success contributes to a culture of aspiration. All children aim for excellence in lessons and are respectful to one another around school.

During Key Stage 3 and 4, children are rewarded with certificates, prizes and trips for a wide range of achievements, including academic success, sporting talents, excellent attendance and going 'Above and Beyond'. Celebrating success motivates and inspires high standards of student achievement and self-discipline.



High Expectations for all

Supporting all Students

We value all of our students and the support provided enables them to achieve their full potential during the time that they spend at our school.

Students with special talents or academic abilities are offered additional activities including mentoring, study schools sessions and opportunities to be part of The Mastery Programme and Brilliant Club (led by Durham University).

Where students have additional learning or medical needs, our starting principle is to ensure an inclusive educational experience that provides additional support to enable them to access learning alongside their peers.

We prioritise excellent teaching and learning practice and our teachers plan carefully to meet the individual needs of every student. However, if your child has any difficulties that may make it more challenging for them to access their work, to socialise with our other students or to manage the day-to-day operation of a large secondary school, please do not worry: we work closely with your child's primary school, gathering the necessary information that will allow us to support them. Where appropriate, a support plan will be produced by members of our SEND team, working closely with parents/carers and the student themselves, making sure that all class teachers understand the strategies that will help your child to be successful.

Where primary schools have already been made aware of medical or dietary needs by parents/carers, the primary school will share this information with our SEND team as part of our transition process. The necessary arrangements, including where appropriate the wider sharing of information, will then take place to make sure we are able to ensure the safety of all of our children, allowing them to focus on thriving during their time at Dene Academy. Support will always be there and available in many different forms for any of our students who require it.





“Through the School Council, House Ambassadors and Head Boy and Girl, pupils at Dene can **talk openly about their ideas** and make **positive changes** to their school based on their experiences.”
Investor in Children

Developing Leaders for the Future

We provide a range of excellent opportunities to develop the leadership skills of our students. All children have access to a progressive programme of leadership opportunities, culminating in the school's Student Leadership Team.

The Student Leadership Team work alongside the staff Senior Leadership Team to maintain the highest academic standards and pastoral care. Our student council ensures that every student has their say on issues around the school. Our Head Students, along with other elected children, represent the 'student voice' on important issues.

We are proud to have a strong student voice, and value our young people's opinions, acting on their advice and relishing in the feeling of empowerment this gives them. We also value our position at the heart of the local community. Strong partnerships with parents and carers, primary schools and local businesses help to create opportunities in school and beyond. Excellent relationships between children and staff also contribute to our young people's outstanding progress and achievements.

Ultimately, we aim to provide an education that enables children to realise their ambitions, and which prepares them for life in the 21st Century.

Informed Career Choices

Leaving school is a significant milestone for every child. This transition is inevitably eased when children make decisions that enable them to successfully reach their potential. Our children are encouraged to be ambitious in their planning for the future.

We believe that children need to understand not only the range of career options available to them when they leave school, but also the longer-term consequences of each choice they make. We have strong links and relationships with all local education and training providers. Our curriculum is designed so that, from Year 7, children learn about the different career journeys available to them. Furthermore, all children receive a one-to-one personal guidance interview with one of our qualified careers' advisers.

In Year 10, students are given the opportunity to visit a range of colleges in the North East. We also invite a range of local providers into school so that students have an opportunity to ask questions and develop an understanding of their selected pathway. Alongside this, we work with a range of apprenticeship providers to ensure that students are aware of every possibility open to them. This is so that they can make a fully informed choice.

We recognise that every student is an individual, so this broad network of education and employer engagement allows us to tailor a package of support to ensure that every student makes the best possible decision for them.



“**Very effective** careers guidance ensures pupils continue in education or training after Year 11.”
Ofsted



Success through Partnerships

At Dene Academy, we value the partnerships and links we have with our local primary schools, ensuring that students enjoy a smooth transition into secondary education.

It is likely that your child has already worked with our transition team and enjoyed experimenting in Science, being creative in Art, solving problems in Maths or even tackling our climbing wall in PE. They will also have had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of a Dene Academy student on one of our taster days. We believe that it is important that your child feels comfortable and familiar with the school, the staff and the older children.

Dene Academy understands and values the vital role that parents play in their child's education. We believe that education is a partnership of parents, children and teachers.

Regular Communication takes place via:

- Designated Year 7 Progress Leader
- Termly Reports
- Newsletters
- Texts and phone calls
- Review Days and Parents' Evenings
- Facebook

Other strategies to ensure a smooth transition process include:

- Induction programme for new children
- New Parents' Information Evening
- Extensive primary liaison programme co-ordinated by our Transition Leader

Detailed information on the school and curriculum can be accessed on the school's website: deneacademy.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming
you to our unique and vibrant
Centre of Excellence



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