



A message from the Co-Headteachers



We would like to offer you and your children a warm and sincere welcome to Charters School. This prospectus is intended to give you information about the school and, combined with the opportunity of meeting us, an idea of the kind of school Charters is.

We believe in setting the highest possible standards in everything we do. Each pupil at Charters is recognised as an individual and encouraged to develop to his or her full potential. We set high standards of appearance and behaviour, seeking to provide an ordered, but happy caring environment in which pupils can flourish.

Charters is an outstanding school and we were delighted to have this recognised in our last inspection and our redesignation as a Specialist Sports College and award of a second specialism in Science. We seek to use our enhanced status to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve excellence.

Martyn Parker & Richard Pilgrim
Co-Headteachers

“The quality of leadership and management is outstanding”

OFSTED 2006



Learning Centre

“One of the country’s best performers”

OFSTED 2006



Charters is a true comprehensive that is determined to encourage and support our pupils to achieve their personal best. During their time at the school, our pupils achieve well above the national average in KS3 national tests, GCSE’s and post 16 courses. Our contextual value added scores - what pupils achieve in relation to their prior attainment and individual circumstances - are extremely strong placing us in the same category as the highest achieving schools in the country. The figures provide a clear measure of the value we add to our pupils’ performance.

This success is rooted in high quality teaching, a fact emphasised by the OFSTED inspectors who highlighted teaching as a strength of the school. All the lessons seen during the inspection were rated as either good or outstanding. Charters has a talented and committed group of teachers with impressive subject knowledge and very high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Lessons are rigorous, demanding and well managed.

The school is set in 30 acres of spacious grounds with well-resourced classrooms and specialist areas for practical activities help to

ensure that pupils have access to modern technology to support their learning. Pupils have ample opportunity to develop their ICT skills with nearly 600 computers spread around the school (all provided with constant but monitored broadband access to the internet). There are modern specialist science laboratories and technology work areas. The library also provides a focus for academic life with its impressive stock of books and research materials. The arts are particularly well catered for with a new suite of specialist music rooms, a spacious art and design area and two fully equipped modern drama studios.

As a specialist college our sports facilities are extensive, with the community recreation centre on site, giving pupils use of the sports hall, squash courts and aerobics and dance studio, for example, from its range of indoor facilities, as well as floodlit artificial pitches and tennis courts to supplement our extensive playing fields.



Pupils are expected to be actively involved in their own learning. This is reinforced by the school's academic tutoring programme where each pupil meets at least three times a year with his/her tutor for a detailed discussion of progress before setting negotiable targets for further improvement.

The effectiveness of the programme was reflected in the OFSTED conclusion that: "They (the pupils) take responsibility for their learning well."

Pupils of all abilities are well catered for by a range of measures. Gifted and talented pupils have a year round programme of special events to challenge them. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by a combination of withdrawal from lessons for intensive tuition on key skills, in-class support, a reading course and smaller groups.

Another distinctive feature is the resource unit for pupils with physical disabilities. This provision was particularly praised by the OFSTED inspectors for the access given to pupils with disabilities to the full range of the curriculum. These pupils are fully integrated and are making a significant contribution to school life.

"Behaviour is excellent"

OFSTED 2006



The first things one notices when entering the school are the sense of order and purpose and the open, respectful relationships between all members of the school community. We expect our pupils to become responsible members of the school community, respecting the needs of others, taking a pride in academic work, displaying high standards in regards to personal appearance and becoming ambassadors for their school.



These standards are not achieved by accident but are the result of making expectations clear and supporting them in the school's rules and policies.

Success in all areas is acknowledged and celebrated. For academic achievement a merit point system is used in Years 7-9 to reward pupils who have produced individual pieces of impressive work and excellent effort. These points are recorded initially in the pupil's record book and certificates awarded. This system is supported by praise postcards sent home to students by Subject Leaders and Heads of Year to acknowledge a range of achievement such as consistent good effort in lessons or high quality work. A certificate of achievement is also awarded by the headteacher for individual pieces of excellent work.

Community merits are also available for pupils who make an important

Standards

non-academic contribution to the life of the school and attendance awards are made at the end of term whole school assemblies.

The school holds three major events during the year when the pupils' success is celebrated with staff, parents and pupils together. The Celebration of Achievement evening is a delightful event for those year groups who have not taken external examinations and are being rewarded, therefore, for a whole range of achievements in school. Presentation Evening, on the other hand, is a more formal affair celebrating the examination success of all our students and awarding several prestigious prizes, including the Peyton Cup given to the sixth form student who most embodies Charters' values and

attitudes. There is also a GCSE Awards afternoon where the achievements of all our Year 11 students are recognised.

Pupils are proud of their school uniform, which is compulsory, and extremes of fashion in dress and hairstyle are not permitted. Sixth form students are not required to wear uniform but should dress in a manner appropriate to the life of a school where other pupils are wearing uniform.

“Standards are high and students make excellent progress”

OFSTED 2006

“Students’ personal development and well-being are outstanding”

OFSTED 2006



Care of Pupils *and links with home*



PRIMARY LIAISON

Extensive liaison takes place with our feeder primary schools culminating in a half day visit to Charters when taster lessons are experienced. Before starting at Charters, Year 6 pupils are also visited by their prospective Head of Year and each parent and child have a personal interview with a senior member of staff. Considerable care is then taken to place pupils in mixed ability tutor groups.

The tutor is the lynchpin of the school’s system of caring for pupils and tracking their personal development. Like the Head of Year, the tutor, as far as possible, stays with the tutor group until Year 11. Such an arrangement enables attention to be paid to the specific needs of each pupil and this is further encouraged by the school’s academic tutoring programme.

Year 7 pupils are also supported in their first year at school by eighty Year 11 prefect mentors spread around the tutor groups. The mentors are given specialist training in how to

offer effective support, including regular support for pupils who need to improve their core literacy or numeracy skills; and we believe they are a crucial factor in the successful transition from primary school to Charters.

COMMUNICATIONS

We believe in the importance of close links between the school, the family and the community. In particular, regular communication between the school and family ensure that a close partnership is maintained with parents. A clear structure of parents’ evenings and formal reports is supported with the use of the Record Book. This gives day-to-day details of homework and achievement and parents are requested to read and sign this book each week.

The school also posts home to each pupil, once a term, an academic monitoring sheet providing a snapshot for parents of their child’s academic performance and effort. Similarly, parents receive information, each term, about their child’s attendance.

At six weekly intervals approximately, the school publishes Charters News which provides pupils and parents with news about school life, clubs, sporting fixtures, visits and other school events.

To keep parents up to date with educational developments that affect their children the school also runs several open evenings with presentations, for example, on such areas as 'Revision Techniques for Year 11', 'UCAS Application' and 'How to support a Year 7 pupil in the core subjects'.

PARENTS COUNCIL

Any parent can attend our Parents Council which meets twice a term to discuss any issues of importance to parents. Topics in the past have included communication, school transport, the rewards system, homework and school meals, for example; and on several occasions the council's comments have resulted in improved school policies and practice.

CATERERS

The school employs a private catering company to provide an extensive, well-balanced and affordable range of food. All the food provided is made

from fresh ingredients and satisfies all aspects of the government's healthy eating agenda. There is a breakfast service provided and pupils can express their views about the service via their year representatives to the catering manager who regularly attends school council meetings.

THE COMMUNITY

The award of specialist sports and science college status confirms that the school is an outgoing institution eager to develop beneficial links with its local community. Several local businesses and groups raised sponsorship to support the school's successful sports college bid and sports coaches and science staff from Charters visit local primary schools to work with the children.

The school also has extensive work experience links and all sixth formers take part in Community Service.



“This excellent progress is due to a combination of students’ positive attitudes, excellent teaching and strong parental support”

OFSTED 2006



Curriculum



Key Stage 3

Pupils in Year 7 are mainly taught in mixed ability groups. Thereafter, there is increased setting of pupils so as to cater more fully for the differences in ability.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils study the three core subjects, English, Mathematics and Science, plus the following foundation subjects: Design Technology, Information and Communication Technology, History, Geography, French, Art, Music, Physical Education, Drama, Religious Education and Citizenship.

EXAMINATIONS

Formal examinations take place in all subjects in Years 7 and 8 and also in Year 9 alongside the National Curriculum tests. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the demands of the external

examinations they take at the end of Key Stage 3 and when they begin GCSEs.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The school is fully aware of the importance of these core skills and so we build upon the work covered by primary schools. All subjects take responsibility for developing particular elements of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and there is a whole school approach to such skills as spelling.

Year 11 prefect mentors are trained to work with selected pupils in Year 7 to help improve their reading or numeracy skills during tutor time.

Also, in Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils who need support with their literacy and numeracy skills are given additional lessons rather than following a second Modern Foreign Language.



Key Stage 4

All students study English, Mathematics, Science and a Physical Education course. They are also able to choose GCSE subjects from the following options: Art, Business Studies, Child Development, Drama, Food Technology, French, Geography, Graphics, History, Music, Resistant Materials, Spanish, Textiles and a range of vocational course: BTEC Business Studies, BTEC Performing Arts (Acting) and BTEC Sports Studies. Students also have an opportunity to choose an Information and Communication Technology (ITC) subject although all students follow an entitlement ICT course.

All students also participate in Cultural Studies which involves them studying GCSE short course Citizenship and GCSE short course Religious Education which incorporates Personal, Social and Health Education.

Students are able to 'personalise' their curriculum at KS4 in order to follow subjects appropriate to their abilities, needs and interest. For example some students might follow twelve or thirteen traditional GCSE subjects where as some may choose a mixture of traditional GCSE subjects and some of the new vocational courses on offer.

For one group of students who find traditional schooling a challenge, the school gives them opportunity to study a vocational course - Hair and Beauty, Construction or Motor Vehicle Technology - at the Windsor Skill Centre run by an experienced vocational provider. Similarly, during the final term of Year 10 and Year 11 some students are given an opportunity to take part in extended work experience placements for one or two days a week.

CITIZENSHIP AND PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

This subject area is a fundamental element of the way the school develops pupils' personal qualities. Citizenship lessons take place throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 covering topics that deal with personal and moral issues as well as focusing on study skills and broader issues linked to democracy and the UK's place in the global community.

These lessons are supplemented by special events such as the visit of a theatre group to work for a day with

Year 9 on sex and relationship issues and drugs education activities.

OPTIONS

During Year 9 a comprehensive tutorial and guidance programme, supported by Year 9 reports and an Open Evening make sure that pupils are well informed in order that they can make reasoned choices about the subjects they can study for GCSE. Although the National Curriculum requires pupils to study certain subjects there is an increasing degree of choice to enable pupils to take courses appropriate to their abilities and interests.



“an atmosphere of everyone busily learning and enjoying it”

OFSTED 2006

WORK EXPERIENCE AND CAREERS

In Year 10 all students spend time preparing for the work experience week in Autumn Term of Year 11, when all our students go out to work placements and gain valuable vocational experience.

The school provides comprehensive careers advice that was recognised by the presentation of an Endorsed Quality Award for Excellence in Careers Education and Guidance in 2003. This includes guidance to students in drawing up their CV's as well as local employers providing advice on Health and Safety, Customer Relations and making the right impression at work. This is supplemented by the provision of five Enterprise Days run by the Education Business Partnership covering key work place skills such as financial management, problem solving and teamwork.

Finally, all students have access to the Connexions Advisor (Careers Education Service) who visits the school each week throughout the year and is based in the Careers Library.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Students once again take formal school examinations in Years 10 and 11 to prepare them properly for their final GCSE examinations. This information is used alongside regular assessment grades generated by the school's Academic Monitoring system to track student performance. Assessment information is sent home at regular intervals during Years 10 and 11, not just at report time, so that parents can support the school in keeping students on track, particularly with coursework.



PREPARING FOR POST 16 EDUCATION

During Year 11 students are provided with a comprehensive programme to help them make a decision about what to do after GCSEs. Those students, the vast majority, who want to join Charters Sixth Form, attend a sixth form evening when explanations and information are provided about the courses on offer. Following this evening, each student is interviewed by a senior member of staff, for as many times as necessary, to help them make the appropriate course choice for the sixth form. Finally, after the summer examinations, the school runs an Induction Week for students to sample the subjects on offer.

Those students who are looking to move on from Charters to another college or work are given careers interviews and advice from the school's Connexions (Careers Education Service) Advisor who is available in school.

*“The quality
of teaching
is outstanding”*

OFSTED 2006





built facilities that include a cafe and an airy, modern large common room/study area surrounded by several seminar rooms.

Detailed information about the sixth form at Charters School can be found in our separate Sixth Form Prospectus.

THE SENIOR TEAM

After an extensive interview process each year, a Head Boy and Girl and Deputies are chosen to represent the school with issues and at important events such as Presentation Evening. Furthermore, a pair of Liaison Officers is apportioned to support each year group.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The sixth form has a long tradition of service to the local community. Links with Heathermount School and the Ascot Day Centre are particularly strong and a popular event is the Tea Dance arranged for local senior citizens. As part of their CSLA and NVQ coaching awards, several students coach in local primary schools.

DESTINATIONS

Most sixth form students at Charters go onto Higher Education courses at university, the vast majority attaining their first choice, including a significant number each year to Oxford and Cambridge.

Sixth *Form*



A substantial number of our students move into the sixth form after GCSEs and this number is swelled by an increasing intake of students from other institutions. The attraction of the sixth form is its consistently high academic standards, the wide range of academic and vocational courses provided and the excellent purpose





Extra-Curricular Activities

Before school, at lunchtime and on any afternoon, after lessons have ended, pupils have access to a wide range of different clubs and activities. At least 75% of pupils regularly attend an extra-curricular activity. Sports and Arts activities aside, pupils can go along to such diverse recreations as the Chess Club, the Creative Writing group and the Amateur Radio club. Many of these clubs are well resourced with equipment provided by fundraising events and the school fund.



Parents are particularly appreciative of the varied range of residential experiences offered to pupils, including Tirabad, foreign exchange visits to France and Spain, in addition to the yearly ski trips and watersports trips abroad.

Charters firmly believes that these additional activities are central to the education of the young people at the school, providing them with a range of opportunities for achievement and to develop the skills necessary to work effectively as part of a team and as a leader. Accordingly, the school subsidises a late bus service for pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities.

The Ofsted inspectors identified as an outstanding feature of the school's provision the extensive range of academic clinics and revision clubs that run at certain times during the year to supplement pupils' work in lessons and to provide support with examination courses.

THE ARTS

The school is very strong in the expressive arts of Music, Drama and Art and in 2006 achieved the prestigious Artsmark Gold award. This was partly given in recognition of the variety of extra-curricular avenues available to our pupils to experience the excitement and satisfaction of performance and display.

Vocal groups, instrumental groups and drama clubs meet together regularly during the year. This work finds an outlet in the annual school production giving large numbers of actors, musicians, technicians and many other helpers from all years the chance to participate in a large-scale professional event.

There are also many other events such as the Arts Soiree, Summer Art Show, Celebration for Christmas,

“Students make excellent contributions to the community”

OFSTED 2006



Charterstock, the Dance Evening and numerous musical concerts that give our talented young people the chance to showcase their talents. Their productions and concerts take place regularly during the year and are well attended by pupils, parents and the community.

THE HOUSE SYSTEM

Upon entry to the school each pupil is allocated to a House. This then becomes the focus for many extra-curricular competitions in sport, arts events, general knowledge quizzes, public speaking events and numerous other activities.

All pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate in these activities with people from other year groups and younger children gain particular benefit from working with older role models.

SPORT

The school, as befits a Specialist Sports College, has extensive facilities including the community recreation centre allowing use of the weights room, dance studio, squash courts and multi-purpose sports hall where five-a-side football, basketball, badminton and indoor cricket take place amongst many other activities.



The outdoor pitches and hard play areas/tennis courts are well maintained and are enhanced by the provision of an Astro turf floodlit pitch and extensive grass playing fields. Links with a local school also give us access to swimming facilities.

A full programme of sports clubs operates throughout the year before school, at lunchtime and after school. Whatever your child's interest and ability level, there will be an opportunity to participate, whether for fun or more competitively, in House Matches to Inter School and District Level, County or National Level. There are teams for numerous sports at all age groups.

TIRABAD

The school is very fortunate to have access to Tirabad, a residential outdoor education centre in Wales, which hosts a range of residential visits by pupils of all ages throughout the year.

The Ofsted report emphasised the respect pupils had for themselves and one another and, undoubtedly, this quality is fostered by the opportunities Tirabad offers our young people to develop a sense of responsibility, independence and the ability to work as a team member.

Pupils often highlight their visits to Tirabad as the best memory of their time at Charters. This is no surprise when they are able to experience climbing, abseiling, canoeing, kayaking, caving, gorge walking, mountain biking, not to mention washing up and cleaning!

CHARTERS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

This organisation runs a Youth Club for young people in the 11 to 21 age group at their clubhouse on site, and liaises closely with a school representative to ensure that the club runs in an appropriate way to meet the needs of the young people who attend.

