



Thirsk School
& Sixth Form College

PROSPECTUS

2018 - 2019

Educating today, preparing for tomorrow



Welcome to our school's prospectus...

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Thirsk School
& Sixth Form College

TOGETHERNESS

HONESTY

INCLUSIVITY

RESPECT

Headteacher's welcome

I am delighted in welcoming you to Thirsk School and Sixth Form College.

Our school is truly at the heart of our local community and likewise the local community at the heart of our school. We have served Thirsk and the surrounding area for over 60 years and continue to do so with an ethos that is child-centred, ensuring that 'every child really does matter'.

We pride ourselves on being committed to delivering an excellent 'all round' education confident that whatever the needs or abilities are of your child, that we will help them to fulfil their goals. Not only do we strive to ensure that the young people in our care achieve academic success, but likewise we endeavour to develop the 'whole person' through our strong extra-curricular offer; this includes music, drama, sport and the Duke of Edinburgh Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) to name but a few. For us, the recognition of individual qualities is key to both academic and personal success.

Similarly, we value the importance of our role Pastorally in terms of supporting students. We know that without the right support and interventions, at the right time, young people will not succeed academically. Through our Pastoral and Inclusion teams we aim to help our students navigate the challenges that life may throw at them, both now and in the future.

Finally, for us to achieve the ultimate success for our students is not only dependent upon the student themselves, but also the partnership between school and home; which cannot be underestimated. For any community to thrive it must be built on strong and positive relationships. With this in mind, we look forward to working with you in supporting our values and vision. Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you require further information or would like to request a visit.

Emma Lambden
Headteacher

SUPPORT KINDNESS

Ethos

Through our collective **values** we derive our **vision**



History

The school was built in 1957 as Thirsk Grammar and Modern School.

Although it now accommodates over 900 students it was first built for approximately 700. As the only secondary school in the town the school serves most of the children in the area. Many of our students are bussed to school each day from Thirsk's surrounding villages. In recent years the governing board set the aim for the school to become 'the school of choice for the heart of North Yorkshire.' The achievement of this aim is reflected by the growing numbers within the school, and the fact that we have increasingly attracted students from the fringes of our catchment area.

Throughout its history the school has always had a rich tradition of extra-curricular activities. Today the school is proud of its German exchanges, Music tours, Sports trips, Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Dramatic productions, The Falcon newspaper and debating heritage as well as the full programme of weekly clubs, ensembles and leadership opportunities that are offered. The school badge features our distinctive falcon as well as the school crest and motto, 'Victor Qui Laborat' ('Victory to he who toils'). The message that hard work brings success is one that we adhere to today, and the culture and values of the school are deeply embedded. It is a place where everyone is valued and we celebrate success in as wide a way as possible.

Over the years the school has helped to forge and shape the lives and careers of many people including two of Yorkshire County Cricket Club's leading bowlers, Karl Carver and Ben Coad, as well as Ben Hollingsworth who drums for Tom Watson and Bruno Mars. We have always stood by a balanced curriculum that offers students an all-round education for whatever pathway becomes important to them. Our students take opportunities in local employment, often in trades, agriculture or engineering, and many further their education in Colleges, or at University. Every year we send a number of students to Oxford or Cambridge.

The school has a rich history. For our staff, students and the many families in the town that have had several generations educated at the school, we continue to take great pride in being at the heart of our community.





The curriculum

We care passionately about making learning intriguing and captivating. The curriculum at Thirsk is designed to ensure that students experience a broad range of subjects and opportunities during their time with us.

Through the Key Stage 3 curriculum, students develop a broad skills base upon which they can build once they select their Key Stage 4 options. They also begin to develop expertise across a number of different courses. Throughout our curriculum we aim to promote and develop certain key values amongst our students, to ensure they leave us as well-rounded citizens who will make a positive contribution to their community. Students have the opportunity to experience and explore the key British values of democracy, rule of Law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those from different faiths and beliefs.

KEY STAGE
3

Years 7, 8 and 9

During Key Stage 3, students will study the following subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Technology*
- History
- Geography
- Social and Religious Studies**
- French and/or German
- PE
- Drama
- Music
- Art
- Computing

*Technology incorporates Food, Textiles, Resistant Materials and Graphics
**SRS incorporate Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)

KEY STAGE
4

At Key Stage 4, students continue to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The range of GCSE and vocational qualifications on offer to students in Years 10 and 11 reflects the interests and aspirations of our students.

The core curriculum which all students must follow consists of:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Social and Religious Studies (incorporating Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education)
- PE





Students are then given four option choices. Students in current Years 10 and 11 have chosen from the following subjects:

GCSEs

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- PE
- Drama
- Art and Design
- Business
- Geography
- History
- French
- German
- Music
- Computing
- Design Technology

Vocational Courses

- Engineering (BTEC)
- ICT – Creative iMedia (Cambridge National)
- Music (BTEC)
- Health and Social Care (Cambridge National)
- Hospitality and Catering (Level 1/2 Award)



SIXTH FORM

Students choosing to stay on to post-16 study at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College have a wide range of subjects to choose from.

These include vocational qualifications, academic A-Levels and applied A-Levels. The academic curriculum is supported by strong pastoral provision and excellent information, advice and guidance. The success of our sixth form curriculum is evidenced by the wide ranging choices our students make about where they go next. In recent years this has included many students moving to study at the top universities in the country, including Oxford and Cambridge. However, students have also taken more diverse routes, with ex students becoming professional musicians or sportsmen and women. We also, through our highly skilled and targeted careers service, have supported students in taking up a number of different employment and apprenticeship options.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

An integral part of our curriculum at all key stages is the development of skills that will be vital to the future life chances of our students. These skills include independence, teamworking, creativity, problem-solving, reflection, organisation, resilience and communication. Students have the opportunity to develop these skills in all areas of the curriculum, and as part of our extensive enrichment programme. We also encourage all of our students to take part in our wide range of extra-curricular clubs and trips, which take place at lunchtimes, in the evenings after schools and at weekends and in school holidays. There are more details about these options in the extra-curricular section of the prospectus, and on our website.

The library

Reading, both for research and for pleasure, is a fundamental part of a child's education.

At Thirsk School and Sixth Form College we encourage all our students to regularly visit our fantastic library, which is stocked with over 9000 books, as well as a bank of computers. These books cater for all interests and abilities, and are carefully purchased with the needs of our students in mind. Our full time librarian works with both classes and individuals to support their reading choices.

All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 come to the library as a part of their English lessons, and are also enrolled on the accelerated reader scheme, which is designed to support and challenge young readers. This builds on work done at primary schools in supporting literacy.



Transition

We believe that a smooth transition from primary school to secondary is vitally important.

Our transition process begins in Years 3 and 4 with a varied programme of primary school sport competitions, organised and managed by our on-site School Games Organiser. As part of this programme, your child will be given plenty of opportunities to participate in sporting events at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College. Competitions are officiated and managed by a successful team of our Young Leaders.

During Year 5 we also provide two Enrichment Days for all our feeder primary schools, where the children are invited to spend the day with us. During these the children participate in a range of taster activities such as Drama, Food Technology, Music and Team Building. This allows them to meet a range of key staff and experience a 'day in the life' of a Thirsk School and Sixth Form College student.

YEAR 6 INDUCTION:

Unlike most secondary schools, at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College we run a week long programme of induction for all Year 6 students planning on coming to the school in September. In preparing for this week, our Head of Lower School will visit every Year 6 pupil in their own school around Easter. This will be followed up with an information gathering session from our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator, and a talk from the Head of Year. We will also arrange any additional visits/transition activities at parents' request.

In July the Year 6 pupils join us for a week. During this time they meet their form tutor and go to lessons in all of the subjects. We find that this week is invaluable in helping to allay any worries or anxieties they might have at this pivotal point in their education.

The amount of time, energy and effort we invest in your child's transition from primary to secondary school is deliberate. We think it is imperative that they are familiar with the school and its environment and have met the staff. This lifts barriers, and helps them to feel settled and at home here as quickly as possible.



Pastoral care

At Thirsk School and Sixth Form College we take our duties of care very seriously.

Our role is to nurture and develop every student, supporting them both inside and outside the classroom. This process begins with transition, and then continues throughout their time at the school. From the day that they start, every student is placed in a tutor group with others in their year. This group will meet at least once a day with their tutor, a member of the teaching staff who will be responsible for their pastoral care. In supporting these tutors there is a head of each year group, who will regularly meet with the different tutors. Overseeing this process we have three heads of school- Lower School (Years 7 and 8), Upper School (Years 9, 10 and 11) and Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13), as well as an Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral Care, Behaviour and Attendance.

To give our students the best chance of success in life and to enable them to make the right choices when faced with difficult situations, we take care to guide them and instil in them the values that lie at the heart of our community, in order to achieve our vision. We are truly a 'family' and, like any family, we are always there to support one another through life's ups and downs, whether academic, sporting or personal triumphs and/or failures. We have an extensive inclusion team of non-teaching mentors based in our inclusion unit where students can gain support regularly. One of the key strengths of Thirsk School and Sixth Form College is that every member of staff, teaching or non-teaching, recognises the part they have to play in the care of all our young people, on a daily basis. We are proud of our ethos and support each and every member of our school community, particularly when they are most in need.

In this school, pastoral care and academic achievement go hand in hand. We see the value in all our students' achievements and encourage positive attitudes. We aim to give all our young people equal opportunities to succeed within a positive and caring environment, so that each one of them has the right to fulfil their potential.

Extra-curricular life

We are proud of the extraordinary choice of extra-curricular activities that we offer, and we aim to cater for every different interest and enthusiasm.

The range of activities for students is too great to list here, but includes substantial opportunities in areas such as sport, music, art and technology, as well as Lego, board games and clubs in most subjects. In recent years our hockey and debating teams have competed in national finals, and every year we have a large number of students achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Gold, Silver and Bronze level. The annual school musical is a particular highlight, involving a huge number of students, and we also run many different musical ensembles and bands, as well as drama clubs. School trips are often a highlight of a student's time at school, and we offer opportunities such as the World Challenge trip to Iceland, or the Battlefields trip to Belgium and France. Our staff are extremely committed in catering for our students' interests, giving up lunchtimes, evenings, weekends and holidays to support our extra-curricular offer. We regard this area of Thirsk School life as a huge strength, and a great opportunity for all of our students.



Student voice

The views and opinions of our students matter to us. In supporting the smooth management of the school, we run a hugely successful school council.

The council plays a key part in making Thirsk School and Sixth Form College such a successful institution, and is involved in key decisions such as the appointment of new staff, the organisation of charity work and the development of extra-curricular activities. Students from the council also support the process of mentoring run for all year groups.







We hope that this can give you a flavour of life at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College.

For more information we highly recommend that you either visit our website www.thirskschool.org or follow us on twitter (@thirskschool) or facebook (/thirskschool/).

Alternatively we always welcome visits and would be glad to show you around.



Thirsk School

& Sixth Form College

Topcliffe Road, Sowerby, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 1RZ



01845 522024



01845 526617



thirskschool@thirskschool.org

Find us on

