

Welcome to

GILLINGHAM SCHOOL

Additional information for
applicants to posts at
Gillingham School 2018





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO POSTS AT GILLINGHAM SCHOOL 2018

OUR SCHOOL

Gillingham is a friendly, popular and successful comprehensive 11-19 school. Currently, we have 1,700 students on roll, including a large Sixth Form of 350 students. The school's good reputation and the town's expansion have meant the school has doubled in size over the last fifteen years and we feel confident the school can look forward to the future with confidence and optimism.

Examination results are consistently high; Gillingham is proud of how well our pupils do both academically and socially. Our pupils are supported by a highly professional, dedicated and committed group of colleagues - both teaching and non-teaching. There is a high level of trust amongst colleagues in our school and we work in partnership with our pupils to provide the best possible opportunities for them. Colleagues at Gillingham value their own professional learning and there is a well established culture of accepting guidance and learning from each other.

Students from Gillingham excel on the sports field and have been represented at regional, county and national level across a wide variety of sports. There is also a strong tradition of performing arts in the school, with a substantial number of our students going on to work in this area.

The school stands on a pleasant, elevated site on the edge of Gillingham, overlooking open countryside. Since 1987 there has been almost continuous development providing new, high quality, purpose-built teaching blocks and refurbishing existing areas.

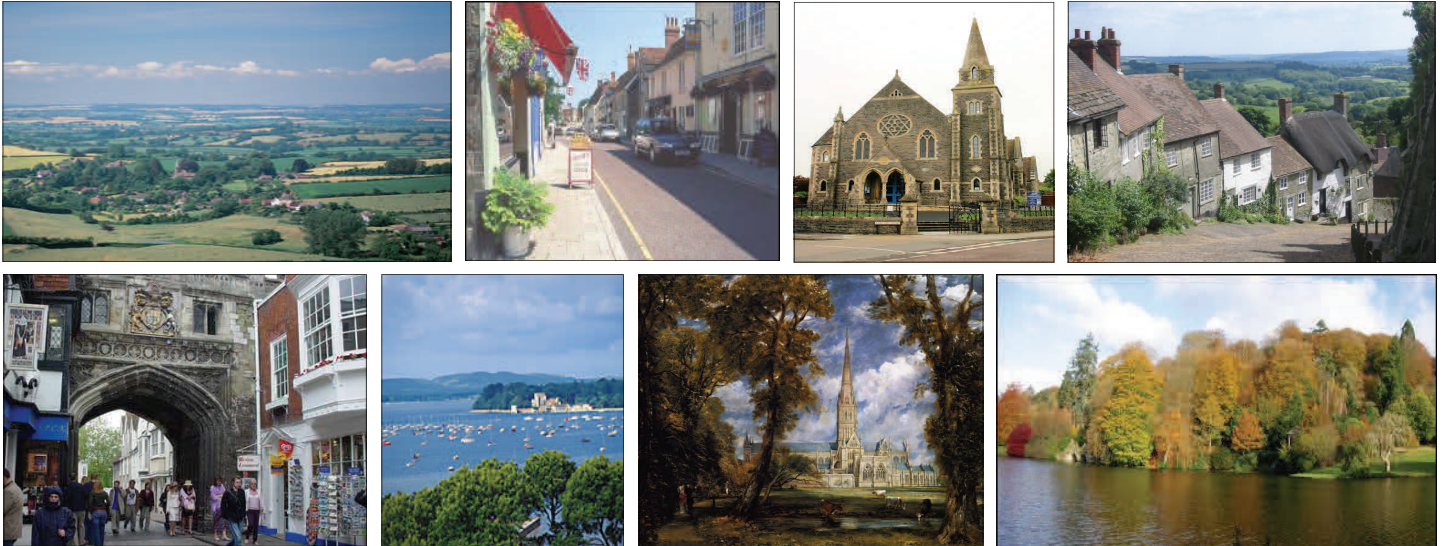
The school buildings are surrounded by extensive playing fields, including a full-sized, floodlit artificial sports pitch. The latest building to be added was the Sixth Form Learning Centre, which includes 'state of the art' science laboratories. Upstairs in the Centre there are 44 PCs and 5 Apple MACs helping to prioritise independent learning in the Sixth Form.



THE TOWN OF GILLINGHAM

Gillingham is a friendly town with a population of approximately 12,000. It is a centre of trade and commerce rather than a typical Dorset tourist town; it has some excellent housing (old and new) and attractive rural surroundings.

It is growing rapidly as a residential location being well-placed in relation to towns like Salisbury, Southampton, Exeter, Poole, Yeovil, Bristol and Bath, which lie within an hour's journey by road, and London which can be reached in under two hours on the Waterloo-Exeter railway line. Its location has been well summarised as being in the middle of nowhere but near to everywhere.



THE STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The school draws its students from some three hundred square miles of Dorset and South West Wiltshire. The students are friendly, hardworking and want to succeed. We benefit from the development of housing in the area and the popularity of the school and have seen an increase in the numbers of students from different backgrounds, many of whom have high aspirations and are well supported academically at home.

The school seeks to offer a stimulating environment to all our students and a full social and educational experience to enlarge their awareness of life beyond their pleasant rural location. Consequently, there is a traditional staff commitment to extra-curricular activities and to the relaxed and friendly relationships between teachers and their students. If the school had a mission statement, the word 'enjoyment' would be in it!

The range of activities is vast and includes exchanges, musical and theatrical productions, field trips, activity weekends, art and theatre visits, visits to sporting venues, trips abroad to the Mediterranean and Barcelona and World Challenge expeditions to Kenya, Thailand and Peru.

This school takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care. If you would like to read our Child Protection Policy, please don't hesitate to ask for a copy.

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STAFF

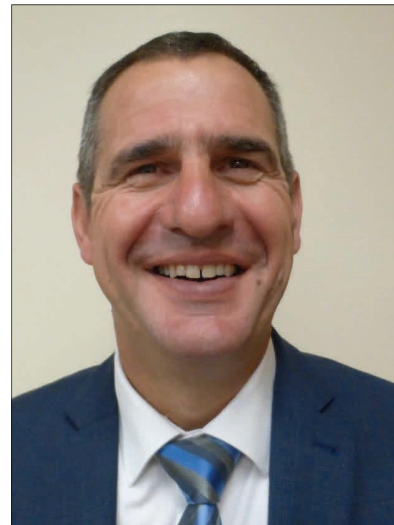
There are 121 teachers and a senior management team of five, who, in addition to their specific responsibilities, share the leadership of the school with the Headteacher, Paul Nicholson. However, we believe that all staff contribute to the leadership of the school and we prefer to take decisions after formal and informal discussion with all staff who have a view.

Great emphasis is placed upon professional development in what is a young and vibrant staff. Opportunities for career growth are excellent, as are opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the school.

There is a large team of support staff which includes a Headteacher's PA, Administration Officers, Finance Officers, an Examinations Officer, a Librarian, Technicians and TAs. The school is fortunate to have non-teaching staff of the highest calibre who are dedicated to supporting the work of the teachers and school as a whole.

There is good morale and a genuine sense of camaraderie amongst the staff. There are staff cricket and soccer teams and many of the staff go running or take part in organised fitness sessions. There are various trips, a staff choir and opportunities for staff to be involved with the school plays – sometimes onstage and certainly off! The school also offers an extensive programme of touring theatre companies and musical ensembles performing in the Creative Arts Centre. A number of staff are actively involved in raising money for charity and most staff participate in some way in the many extra-curricular activities on offer during the school year. There are organised evening staff socials in both the Autumn and Summer terms and at the end of every term after the school day has ended. Staff are also welcomed by students at the Year 11 Prom and the Sixth Form Ball.

Each Friday at break we meet in the staff room for free coffee and doughnuts, to relax and catch up with each other socially. Finally, there is the awarding of the much sought-after and prestigious Herbert Bastable trophy for the most outstanding example of incompetence during the past year!



**Headteacher
Paul Nicholson**



THE CURRICULUM

The school operates a 10-day timetable, with six teaching periods in each day. Teaching groups in Years 7, 8 and 9 are predominantly mixed ability. However, Maths is taught in sets in Year 7, Languages in Year 8 and in Year 9 setting becomes more evident across the curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 the students follow a core curriculum of English, Maths, Science, PSRE and PE, with options chosen from a Humanities block, a Design Technology block, a Modern Languages block and an Emphasis block. Application to the Sixth Form is open to all pupils, subject to an interview. Sixth formers are offered 33 AS level courses and, where appropriate, the new EPQ and Oxbridge entry. We offer an increasing range of work-related learning and all Sixth Form students are encouraged to widen their experience with new GCSE subjects and Functional Skills courses. Diplomas also now feature in the option blocks.



THE PASTORAL SYSTEM

On admission, pupils are placed into year groups and tutor groups which are arranged on social and personal rather than academic criteria. The pastoral structure rests on the work of the form tutor and all new full-time staff should recognise that this will be a key part of their work. To support the form tutor, each year group is led by a year head, a senior assistant year head and two assistant year heads.

The school firmly believes that a personalised curriculum is a key ingredient in good learning and behaviour. Year 7 students are taught in ten mixed ability groups; as they progress through the school, students are offered increasing choices within the curriculum with greater emphasis placed on independent learning skills. The Sixth Form accommodation includes the common room, a cafeteria, a games room, library study area and the Sixth Form Learning Centre.



THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

As a Voluntary Controlled co-educational comprehensive, Gillingham has four Foundation Governors as well as those normally appointed to governing bodies. In addition to the usual meetings, the governors visit the school throughout the year on both a formal and informal basis and there is a mutually supportive and constructive relationship from which we all benefit.

THE FUTURE

The school has a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere but staff work exceptionally hard. We are always looking to improve whilst remembering that tired teachers are not better teachers and unhappy students are not better students.

Ofsted remarked that the school is 'characterised by its humane values' and there is a very positive ethos in the Staff Room. In part this reflects the extensive investment in our future represented by the new building programmes and by the optimism we share in what appears to be a relatively secure future of gradual growth. The school has been here since 1516, and there is every expectation that it will continue for a few more years yet!

Our vision is to make the next few years challenging, interesting and most importantly of all, enjoyable. If you are interested in playing a part in this development we look forward to receiving an application form from you.

Paul Nicholson
Headteacher

