

Achieving Success Together

Hirst Park Middle
School Sports College
Information for Parents



Welcome to Hirst Park Middle School

We wish to welcome all new students who will be coming to our school and look forward to working with your family.

As teachers we recognise that all students are individuals. Each child is valued and special to us at Hirst Park Middle School Sports College. The staff and governors will endeavour to cater for your child's needs by providing the best facilities and highest teaching standards while fostering the understanding that we all have a valuable part to play in promoting quality relationships both within our school and between the school and its community.

This prospectus contains a brief outline of some of the aspects of the life in this vibrant and active school. However, there can be no substitute for personal contact and you are warmly invited to visit the school.

Students come to us directly from Central First School but places are limited to 120 students in Intake Year and enquiries are received from many other schools in the local community.



In this very inclusive school, students receive good care, guidance and support which promote their good personal development. Students' health, safety, enjoyment and achievement are at the heart of all the school does.

Aims

Hirst Park is a 9-13 Middle school with 480 students in Ashington, Northumberland. It is a school which maintains the best traditional values, combining them with up to date facilities and has earned a reputation for forward thinking in Education.

The school building, which has been a feature of Ashington for many years, has been extensively revitalised and provides modern facilities which include:

- **2 computer suites and extensive computer facilities throughout the school;**
- **Specialist science laboratory;**
- **Performing arts department with dedicated music technology suite;**
- **2 fully equipped Technology rooms;**
- **A specialist Learning Support Unit.**
- **A media suite**

Mission Statement

“Achieving success together”

The school is popular and often over-subscribed. It is a calm, positive learning environment with well behaved students and an enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff.

Individuality - to recognise and value students as individuals, each with their own specific needs and establish a life-long appreciation of learning in which all forms of achievement are acknowledged

Learning Environment - to create an interesting and stimulating environment in which students take responsibility for their own learning through first hand experience wherever possible.

Responsibility - to encourage students to be caring, confident and concerned members of society, both now and in the future.

Partnership - to establish an understanding and successful working partnership between home and school.



Students have a good understanding of their responsibilities to the school and its wider community.

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Teaching and Learning

The quality of Teaching and Learning is a high priority for us. At Hirst Park Middle School Sports College the teaching staff are well motivated professionals who aim to provide challenging and interesting learning opportunities for all. Our students are well served by a broad and balanced curriculum which is designed to underpin our aims and values.

The wider community is also viewed as a valuable learning environment where we aim to enrich the child's education beyond the classroom.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

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We teach courses that fit in with the National Curriculum requirements and offer enrichment and extra curricular activities to enhance learning. Targets are set with students and progress regularly monitored.

Students are set for Maths in both Key Stage 2 & 3 and English in Key Stage 2; other lessons are taught predominantly in mixed ability groups. Other subjects taught are Science, ICT, Modern Foreign Languages, Humanities, Design Technology, Food Technology, Music, Physical Education, Art, Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship.

At KS3 we also teach Learn2Learn which provides students with transferable skills to be used in all subjects and outside of school in their everyday lives.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and engage learners well through good questions and interesting activities. Special theme days include topics to enhance the curriculum.

Ofsted 2009



Teaching and Learning are good. Teachers know the students well, have good relationships with them and create an environment through good classroom management in which the students are ready to learn.

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Behaviour

School Uniform

Positive Behaviour:

Good behaviour makes effective teaching and learning possible. Inappropriate behaviour disrupts these processes for the individual and the majority.

We aim to create a positive ethos in school by rewarding, praising and encouraging students when they do well. We also believe it is important to recognise the excellent attitude, effort and behaviour of the vast majority of our students and in order to do this we have designed a system to monitor the behaviour of all students. Rewards and sanctions depend upon the outcome of this over the course of each half term.

Staff have a strong concern for, and commitment to, the welfare of every student.

School Uniform

We expect high standards of appearance at all times and encourage the students to be proud of their uniform.

White school shirt/blouse

Black school skirt or black tailored school trousers

black v necked sweat-shirt with school badges*

Black socks or black tights

Black shoes in sensible style - no trainers

School tie (available from school office)

Hair – extremes of fashion including tramlines and colourants are not permitted.

*These can be purchased from our web shop at www.hirstpark.northumberland.sch.uk

PE Kit:

Blue polo shirt/t-shirt

Blue shorts (optional skirt for girls)

Blue socks

Trainers

Football boots, if possible

Black football socks

Dark tracksuit for outdoor, winter weather

All clothing should be clearly marked with the owner's name.

Jewellery is not permitted other than an inexpensive watch and one pair of stud earrings.



Effective arrangements for pastoral care ensure good guidance and support for students, who say they feel safe and secure in this well ordered community.

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Homework

Pastoral Care

Homework

Homework is an important part of school work. It is given regularly to support and reinforce the work done in the classroom. It helps us to ensure that students have understood new ideas and concepts and helps them to develop responsible, independent working habits. The students are encouraged to record all of their homework in their Student Planner. Parents should check homework and sign these books weekly.

We welcome the support parents can give by providing additional resources, helping with research, giving a quiet working environment and encouragement in establishing a regular working routine.

Pastoral Care

Each child belongs to a tutor group of about 30 students. Your child's form tutor, who will be the first point of contact for parents, will see each student every morning. They will also teach them a wide range of modules as part of our personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. There are four tutor groups in each year group which are led by a Director of Learning. They work alongside our Learning Mentors, Inclusion Officer and Director of Personal Development towards high expectations of behaviour and attendance. To further support our work we have a Personal Development Centre (PDC) which ensures that "students are given constructive, sensitive help and guidance" (Ofsted 2009).



The personal development and well-being of students are good. Behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is good.

Ofsted 2009

Sex and Relationship Education

Sex and Relationship Education is designed to help and support our students through their physical, emotional and moral development. The PHSE lessons present factual information in an objective and balanced manner placing emphasis on relationships and on individual responsibility. We aim to help our students establish for themselves moral values and codes of behaviour which will enable them to approach adulthood with the self esteem and confidence to make healthy decisions.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is effectively supported by a well planned personal education programme that promotes their skills in citizenship and personal relationships.

Ofsted 2009

Religious Education

We value the contribution to Religious Education that can be made by students whatever their faith. However, parents may exercise the right for their child to be withdrawn from these lessons. Students have the opportunity to complete alternative appropriate study by prior arrangement.

School Council

Tutor groups elect two representatives from their class to sit on the school council. They meet on a regular basis with a member of staff. Their aim is to find ways to continually improve the school.

The views of the students are represented well through the effective school council.

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Supporting Our Students

At Hirst Park Middle School Sports College we recognise that all students are different. We offer an inclusive curriculum which is carefully tailored to the individual needs and abilities of our students. We have many strategies in place to ensure that every child gets the level of support they need, including provision for students with Special Education Needs, provision for Gifted and Talented students and access to our Learning Mentors.

SEN Students:

Each child has an individual learning plan and is supported by a team of Teaching Assistants, often in small groups or on a one to one basis.

Gifted & Talented:

Our more able students also require support to ensure they make the progress they are capable of. A range of opportunities are offered which include differentiated work in lessons, extra-curricular activities, educational visits and links with other schools.

The School Day

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday

From	To	
08.40	08.50	Registration/tutor groups
08.50	09.50	Lesson 1
09.50	10.50	Lesson 2
10.50	11.00	Break
11.00	11.50	Lesson 3
11.50	12.40	Lesson 4 Years 7 & 8 Lunch Years 5 & 6
12.40	1.30	Lesson 5 Years 5 & 6 Lunch Years 7 & 8
1.30	1.35	Registration
1.35	2.25	Lesson 6
2.25	3.15	Lesson 7 End of Day

Thursday/Friday

From	To	
08.40	08.50	Registration/tutor groups
08.50	09.50	Lesson 1
09.50	10.50	Lesson 2
10.50	11.00	Break
11.00	11.50	Lesson 3
11.50	12.40	Lesson 4 Years 7 & 8 Lunch Years 5 & 6
12.40	1.30	Lesson 5 Years 5 & 6 Lunch Years 7 & 8
1.30	1.35	Registration
1.35	2.25	Lesson 6
		End of Day

The curriculum meets the needs of students well.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make equally as good progress as their peers.

Lunchtime Arrangements

The school runs an established cafeteria style meals system and the students enjoy choice from a very wide menu. Students are offered a two course lunch and are guided through their choices from a selection of starters, main courses, potatoes, vegetables, salads and sweets. They are also offered a range of additional items.

Healthy eating is at the heart of our school catering and there is always a choice of vegetarian meals.

Students are not permitted to leave the premises at lunchtime.

Medical dietary requirements can be catered for.

Students wishing to bring a packed lunch may do so.

We operate a cashless system – the students have a swipe card and parents keep it “topped up” by sending money in regularly. Students on free school meals also have a card which is automatically credited every day entitling them to a two-course lunch of their choice and they may, if they wish, pay for additional items.

Home School Agreement

The School:

The school will -

- care for your child's safety and well being
- promote high standards of work and behaviour, and provide clear guidelines for pupils and parents
- ensure your child is given every opportunity to achieve their full potential as a valued member of the school community
- provide a balanced curriculum to meet your child's individual needs
- contact you if we have any concerns, and keep you informed about your child's progress and how you can help them at home
- be open and welcoming at all times

The Parent/Guardian:

I/We will -

- see that my child goes to school regularly, on time, properly dressed and properly equipped
- make the school aware of any concerns or problems that might affect my child's behaviour

- support my child with his/her homework and home learning opportunities and ensure my child completes his/her homework on time
- attend parents' evenings and discussions about my child's progress
- support my child in responding positively to the general expectations and regulations of the school.
- provide a written explanation for any absences

The Pupil:

I will -

- attend school regularly and on time and with any necessary equipment
- wear school uniform and be tidy in appearance, without any extremes of fashion
- do all my class work and homework on time and to the best of my ability aiming to be responsible for my own learning
- tell a member of staff if I have any worries or concerns
- be polite and helpful
- observe the school's rules and regulations.

Sports College Status

In September 2008, Hirst Park Middle School was designated as a Specialist Sports College. This means that PE and sport lead the way in driving, piloting and shaping innovations in teaching, learning and provision. In this way our specialist subject will lead to improved whole school standards. We will use specialist status to raise standards of engagement, attainment and achievement in PE in our own school but also across the key stages and in our partner schools.



Numerous and varied extra-curricular activities provide for a wide range of interests including opportunities for physical activity which effectively promote the development of healthy lifestyles.

Extra-curricular and Enrichment Activities

There is a wide range of sporting activities. Teams operate in several sports and in various age groups for both boys and girls. There are opportunities for individuals to practice and develop skills in other areas of physical activity such as dance and cheerleading.

The school has a choir and various musical ensembles. There are numerous opportunities for students to take part in workshops run by visiting musicians to develop skills in our own purpose built recording studio and the chance to attend concert venues and theatres such as the Sage. Instrumental lessons for keyboard, brass, string, woodwind and percussion are available weekly.

Twice yearly we hold major concerts which involve many of the students and we foster a community spirit by participating in a variety of locally based competitions.

Over 30 clubs operate in school on a seasonal basis and include: Fishing; Fly Tying; Table Tennis; Technology; Archeology; with opportunities to attend clubs in other Trust Schools e.g. Archery.

We provide a variety of enrichment activities throughout the year and have a comprehensive programme of residential and outdoor visits which offer the students a variety of recreational and leisure activities. These include

- students experiencing outdoor and team building activities at Whithaugh Park in the Scottish Borders,
- a visit to Stonehenge and other sites of archeological interest;
- a visit to France to give students the opportunity to practice their foreign language skills.

Every pupil is given the opportunity to visit ALPEC (Ashington Learning Partnership Enterprise Centre) to develop their enterprise skills through themed activities.



The range of visits and special events enriches the curriculum well. Provision for music is particularly strong.

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Communication with School

As a school we believe that your involvement and participation is an essential part of your child's education and it is our policy to encourage and develop parental co-operation in every possible way. The Principal and staff are pleased to meet parents at any mutually convenient time and throughout the year we arrange:

Parents' Evenings – held termly to discuss progress

Reports – sent out annually

Newsletters – termly with dates of forthcoming events and school news

Invitations to a variety of concerts and other activities held throughout the year.

If you have any:

General queries

(e.g. payment for visits, extra curricular activities, free school meals, etc) – contact the school office on 01670 813111

Concerns about your child's work

Contact their form teacher in the first instance

Concerns about your child's behaviour

Contact their form teacher who may refer to the Director of Learning for their year group

Absence

If your child is going to be absent please ring or email school on the first day of their absence

We operate a system of 'first day calling'. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you we will telephone or text to ascertain that they are unwell and you are aware of the absence.

Senior leaders and governors monitor the school's work well, have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and know what is needed to promote further improvement.

Detailed and robust monitoring data show that most students are making good progress.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and engage learners well through good questions and interesting activities. They use interactive technology very effectively to enhance students' interest and enjoyment of learning.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that are appropriate for all.

Students are provided with good quality feedback which helps them to improve further.

The school develops students skills well by using an innovative 'skills matrix' to identify those skills which students most need to develop.

