



Bristol BS48 3BX

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The School

In November 2008 both the school and the Sixth Form were rated as “**outstanding**” following an Ofsted inspection. 24 out of 26 sub-section judgements were “outstanding”

Backwell School was opened in 1954 by Somerset County Council and has been fully comprehensive since 1974. It was administered by Avon County Council from 1972 to 1996 but became part of the unitary authority of North Somerset in April 1996. The School has an admission level of 261 in Year 7 and it draws on a catchment largely made up of the villages of Flax Bourton, Backwell, Cleeve, Claverham and Yatton. Approximately 60% of our students travel to and from school by coach. There is always a high demand for places from families outside the catchment area, including Bristol and Nailsea. Total numbers in the School are currently 1690 of which over 380 are in the Sixth Form. There are 126 full and part-time teachers and a support staff of 66.

The village of Backwell is situated in an attractive semi-rural location some seven miles to the south-west of Bristol on the A370 road to Weston-super-Mare. Staff live in the local villages such as Nailsea and Yatton, which provide a range of housing in size and price, whilst others live in Bristol. Bristol is an attractive city offering excellent cultural and shopping facilities. There is good access to other parts of the country via the M4 and M5 motorway links.

Following work with Bristol University and other teacher training providers over a long period, Backwell was appointed as a Training School in 2003 and was re-designated in 2007. In 2004, the school achieved Specialist School status in the Visual and Performing Arts, and was re-designated in 2009. High quality work in these curriculum areas has always been a strength of the school and the new status has seen community work in the Arts developed as a natural progression. Other subjects have also benefited from new resources. In particular, the Mathematics and Special Needs Departments moved into new accommodation in June 2006. We were also delighted to be re-designated as a Healthy School in December 2006 and our Investors in People status was renewed in June 2007.

The Curriculum

During the first three years, students follow a common course across the whole curriculum, with each department making its own arrangements for student grouping, as far as possible. In addition to the statutory National Curriculum, all students are taught Drama and Dance by specialists as part of the Performing Arts programme. Most students in Years 10 and 11 take courses leading to GCSE examinations in at least nine subjects - English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, a Modern Foreign Language and others chosen from a wide range after guidance between parents, students and school. In addition all students take PE, RE and Social Education. There is a wide range of over 20 AS and A Level subjects in the Sixth Form. Vocational courses are available at Levels 2 and 3 in the 14-19 age group. In

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2008 we introduced, with great success, the Creative and Media Diploma at Key Stages 4 and 5 and a new skills-based "breakout" curriculum was introduced into Year 7, replacing 10% of traditional curriculum time. This year we have introduced the Business, Administration and Finance Diploma.

In addition to activities within the conventional school day, students have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of Extended School Activities, including sport, the arts, exam courses, and learning extension and support opportunities. Participation levels in these activities are very high.

Standards

Examination results are among the best results produced by comprehensive schools regionally and nationally. About 75% of Year 11 continue to the Sixth Form to follow AS, A Level and Diploma courses and over 100 students per year go on to degree courses, including to Oxford, Cambridge and other highly competitive courses and institutions.

In 2009, 76% of students achieved 5 x A* - C at GCSE, 70% including English and Maths. At A Level, over 56% of entries were graded at A or B.

Pastoral Organisation

Year 7 students have their own Head and Deputy Head of Year who oversee the transition from primary to secondary. Students in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 are divided into four Houses, led by a Head and Deputy Head of House, assisted by nine tutors and accommodated in purpose built blocks. The Head and Deputy Head of House are responsible for all aspects of progress, development and pastoral wellbeing of their students. There are about 270 students in each House. The Sixth Form is led by a Head of Sixth Form and three Deputies. There is a Sixth Form Common Room and study area. We view the House system as a key factor in our students' success.

The School Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT consists of a mutually supportive team of colleagues with varying degrees of leadership experience but with shared goals and priorities. Whilst many of the SLT responsibilities are common to all, our specific roles from September 2009 will be:

Headteacher : Julian Baldwin
Deputy Headteacher : Emma Yates
Bursar : Katharine Martin
Assistant Head (Head of Sixth Form) : Jon Nunes
Assistant Head (Infrastructure Manager) : Tim Wheeler
Assistant Head (Personalising Learning) : Chris James
Assistant Head (Inclusion and Behaviour) : Nick Lind
Assistant Head (Training and CPD) : Louise Blundell.

Julian Baldwin
Headteacher

January 2010