



Blatchington
Mill School

Involvement, Achievement & Care



Prospectus

2023/2024



Welcome to Blatch



Welcome to the prospectus for Blatchington Mill School. I hope that this snapshot of the school helps to give you an idea of what we are about, and the educational excellence we offer. We are so pleased to be able to be back to holding our normal open events this year and hope that you will be able to join us at our Open Evening or one of our Open Mornings to find out more about our incredible school.

The past few years have been an exceptional time for the world, and as educators, we are acutely aware of the challenges young people have faced in a time of highly disrupted education. We have seen firsthand that our students are aware, more than ever, of the importance of attending school, of learning and of the joy that comes from our shared endeavour. At Blatchington Mill we acted quickly, creatively and with huge determination to protect education during this challenging period - and as a result our students continued learning throughout.

Our efforts are rooted in the fact that we believe, above all else, that education is a transformative force for good. Learning prepares students for later life, including employment, and equips them to thrive in an ever-changing world - but it is also much more important than that.

Learning changes who we are and what we can become. It changes how we view others, and it changes how we interact with the world. It reveals our potential and helps us discover our passions. Learning is beautiful and often messy. We don't learn in straight lines, it's a complex process and that's what makes our school such a dynamic and vibrant place to be.

In order to learn well, we must all feel safe and secure. As such, we have unapologetically high standards for behaviour and conduct and no tolerance for bullying or discrimination. Our students support this.

At Blatchington Mill School, we are committed to exceptional success for every student. **With the right support and challenge we ensure that all students achieve their incredible potential.** We focus on the very best teaching, and create a love of learning that will inspire further study and success.

We judge ourselves, as we must, on the results that our students achieve but also on their wellbeing and happiness, their tolerance and respect for one another and the world, and the future they go onto when their journey at Blatch is

complete. On all of these measures, we do extremely well and we will continue to strive to do better. I hope that our reputation in the local community, our Open Evening and Open Mornings and the opportunity to talk to us all will help you to feel confident in choosing Blatchington Mill for your child's education at this critical and vital time.

“Blatchington Mill is a school where every child is supported to find what they love and experience success.”

**Kate Claydon
Headteacher**

High aspirations, high expectations

We know that every parent/carer has high hopes for their children; for them to be successful, happy and fulfilled. At Blatch, we share those hopes for all students.

We are incredibly proud of all our students who sat formal examinations this year, after they experienced the biggest disruption to education in living memory. We are delighted to celebrate with our students in person for the first time in three years when they collected their results and we were so pleased to see our students progress to the next stage of their education at a range of different Post 16 providers, with confidence in their achievements.

Our focus will always be on ensuring our students thrive academically and achieve brilliant outcomes.

Nationally GCSE results are lower this year (as grade boundaries have returned to those closer to the pre-covid levels of 2019). For example grades 4+ nationally have dropped from 73% in 2022 to 68% this year.

Our results this year are as follows:

- Our Attainment 8 figure of 50 (the average score students achieve across 8 subjects) means that our students on average are gaining at least a grade 5 in every subject.

- Our percentage of grades awarded at the top grades of 7+ is 23% (national average 22%), with 75% (national average 68%) of all grades awarded at 4+.
- Our English and Maths combined scores are 73% achieving 4+ (an increase of 2% on our results last year) and 50% achieving 5+.
- Our EBACC average point score is 4.5





Nurturing a learning culture

Our core business is learning. The majority of our effort and endeavour is spent on ensuring that lessons are vibrant and engaging; and that learning is secure and embedded.

Teachers support and guide students' learning with the highest expectations for behaviour, progress and enjoyment.

Students understand what they are learning and why it is important.

Students learn to work collaboratively and cooperatively, working alongside others effectively in teams.

Students develop their skills in order to reflect on their own learning and progress, become resilient, and commit to their own independent learning. These same principles underpin our staff development.

Teachers identify themselves as learners too, with an unwavering commitment to reflecting upon, refining and enhancing their classroom craft. Teachers work collaboratively to plan, assess and trial new approaches or techniques within their lessons, based on what educational research suggests makes the most impact upon

student learning. Teachers work collaboratively within teams to plan learning utilising and adapting current pedagogical research to inform and develop our practice.

During the enforced school closures in 2020 and 2021, our teachers worked tirelessly to provide a high quality online learning experience for our students. They adapted swiftly to utilising technology and online learning tools to ensure our students were able to continue learning from home. We created pre-recorded versions of all lessons, and provided live support, to ensure that whether students are learning in school or at home, the quality of education they received was consistently high and never disrupted. We have continued with this model, setting all lessons through Google Classroom, to ensure that any students who are absent from school for any reason do not miss out on their learning.

Blatchington Mill was also selected as one of only nine schools nationwide to be awarded MFL Lead Hub status. As part of the scheme we were recognised as experts in language teaching and we supported schools around the city to develop teaching

and learning of Modern Foreign Languages. We share best practice in order to further develop the excellent opportunities available for students studying languages in Brighton and Hove. Our MFL team have also created a number of lessons for the Oak National Academy, an online learning resource launched in response to the coronavirus outbreak. These lessons are used nationally by staff and students to support online learning.

We work collaboratively with all Brighton & Hove secondary schools to share best practice and play our part in raising standards for all learners across the city - using the legacy of being a founder member of the Pavilion & Downs Teaching School Alliance - which delivered teacher training and professional development to other schools through our Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs).

All staff contribute to this culture of learning and development, and every member of staff, from the facilities manager to the IT support team, know that their primary role is to maximise student learning. This ethos, above all else, is at the heart of our school.



Expression & performance

We focus on developing the whole child at Blatch.

We value the educational benefits of the Arts as a source of individuality, expression and creativity, and have a legacy of specialisation in Performing Arts. Students' confidence in their own articulation and expression, and the subsequent development of their sense of identity through performance, is a major reason for their success in other aspects of school life. Our reputation for delivering jaw-dropping student productions in our professional standard Windmill Theatre, as well as our extensive involvement in local community projects, is a source of great pride.

We have a thriving music department – our bands and orchestras perform beyond the school day and school location.

Our music department has professional standard music equipment for every student.

This proficiency in the Performing Arts has led our staff and students to take their expertise into the wider school community, working alongside local primary school children in a number of exciting Arts projects - as well as supporting staff teaching Music in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Students have numerous opportunities to experience Performing Arts, both within the classroom and in our range of extra-curricular activities. Our highly successful PE department aims to promote lifelong participation in physical activity alongside leading healthy, active lifestyles and develop student confidence, teamwork and leadership in and outside of lessons. We have students competing at international level in football and dance, with students training with the England U15 squad, and students at Brighton & Hove Albion's Football Academy.

We also have a number of former students who have gone on to play for professional football teams and represent England, as well as having students in the Harlequins Rugby Academy, Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Academy and the Sussex Netball and Cricket teams.

“Blatch is a great school because it has amazing drama lessons and brilliant opportunities to perform at the Windmill Theatre.”

Year 8



Building blocks

Student academic success is balanced across a range of subjects – we value holistic learning and offer a broad curriculum.

Within this, we have a set of subjects that are the foundation of students' knowledge and skill base. Known as core subjects, these include English, Maths, Science and Computing. Students focus on these subjects with significant curriculum time, in order to support the development of their literacy, numeracy, enquiry and digital fluency. In these areas, we strive to innovate and Blatch specialises in curriculum development to ensure students are equipped for lifelong learning.

As an example, we follow a programme of Maths Mastery in Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) for all students. This approach serves two purposes: firstly to ensure that every student becomes able to succeed in maths and, secondly, that naturally talented mathematicians have a better understanding of the principles of maths; the 'why' rather than the 'how'.

It fits our ethos that learning is carried out for its own reward and its own beauty. Students learn fewer topics, in greater depth. We spend a long time deepening understanding, rather than accelerating through topics. Problem solving is both how and why we learn mathematics. This approach improves enjoyment of maths and builds deep understanding.

We work to ensure that students experience a wide range of subjects at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

Full details of our Year 7 curriculum can be found on our website.

“The teachers really care about how much you are learning.”

Year 11



Extra-curricular

At Blatchington Mill School we endeavour to run a whole variety of study trips. In recent years we've visited America, Belgium, Zanzibar, France, Andorra, Austria and Spain. We believe giving students these opportunities helps them grow as individuals and gives them a lived experience of life beyond their homes, school and screens.

The History department takes students to Poland and France, the Music staff have organised for students to play at Disneyland and in Parisian parks, our Geographers

have experienced school in Brazil, Naples and Iceland, and all have the opportunity to study our own fine city. We've been hill-walking and skiing, and organised foreign exchanges. We've studied European art and food, visited galleries and music workshops locally, nationally and across the world.

Blatchington Mill is also a provider of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In recent years our students have averaged over 800 hours of voluntary work in our local community each year and carried out a number of expeditions. We were also delighted to have received a grant from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award's Diamond

fund which will enable us to reach and support more disadvantaged young people who want to undertake their award.

We have an extra-curricular offer that spans every year and every curriculum area, so that students can identify subjects within the curriculum that they enjoy, and skills they want to develop further. These extra-curricular clubs are organised and run by our own specialist subject staff, and are designed to be inclusive while inspiring enthusiasm and curiosity.



Student voice

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Student voice is incredibly important.

We ensure that all students are represented at all levels of the school, including Form Reps, Year Reps, Student Council, and student representation on our full Governing Body. We listen to and act upon student feedback in all aspects of school life, with many improvements coming from student suggestions. Our students are encouraged to express their views directly to the school's decision makers.

Students are involved in interviews for staff vacancies and Curriculum Teams regularly garner student feedback on which parts of a scheme of lessons worked best, how the learning could be improved and other areas in which the students are the experts.

We also have student groups such as our LGBTQ+ student group which provides a safe space for students to talk about a variety of issues with their peers. We have numerous students who have been trained as LGBTQ+ ambassadors. These students help to promote LGBTQ+ awareness within school and work with staff to ensure that Blatchington Mill is an inclusive environment for all LGBT+ students.

Students are also involved in our BARC Anti-Racist Group, alongside parents/carers, staff and governors. The purpose of this group is to ensure that BAME student experiences in school are positive and that school processes and policies are influenced by our diverse community; everyone has a voice.

We have students involved in many community events, supporting local and national charities and making sustained commitment to work in the local area. We ran our first ever 'Week of Action' two years ago where our students planned and ran activities having a positive impact on the world and this is now a regular fixture each year.

We also work with our local primary schools, involving them in theatre workshops and inviting all Hove primaries to have practical Science lessons in one of our newest labs.



Student leadership

Students in Year 11 apply to become 'Senior Students'. They are keen to pay something back to the school community by supporting younger students in their learning, greeting visitors to the school, supporting decision making and generally proving to be the finest ambassadors for Blatch.

Our Sports Leaders programme is also very popular and allows for our students to gain experience working with younger children, as well as their peers and adults. The programme has a very good reputation not only in Brighton and Hove but county wide. Spanning over three years, our Year 9 young leaders are firstly given the opportunity to help with various Blatch inter-form events and some primary school events such as

sports days before building on these skills in Year 10 where they will also have the opportunity to assist teachers and coaches at primary school extra-curricular clubs. In Year 10 there is also the opportunity to be nominated to become part of the Young Coaches Academy, a county wide sports leader training scheme. In Year 11 up to 15 leaders are asked to represent the school as Blatch Sports Ambassadors. Our leadership programme gives our students the chance to develop leadership qualities and independence that many have found extremely beneficial when applying for college places.

At Blatch we are also proud to run a peer to peer mentoring programme which has been hugely beneficial to the students involved. Our older students work through a stringent programme whilst getting to know

their younger mentee, building up a relationship which helps students feel supported and able to share any feelings they are experiencing.

APART
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Involvement

We are an inclusive school and we encourage all members of our community, including students and their families, to take an active part in their school.

Parents/carers can contribute through FAB (Friends At Blatch, our PTA), and we regularly invite parents into school for different events.

Clubs

Staff and students organise many clubs and specialist groups. Subjects are diverse and include Art & Design, Drama, Maths, Computing, Photography, Film, Music & Dance, Science, Technology and Cycling.

Departments run focussed revision sessions which students can attend to boost their academic performance. We also run an afterschool homework support club where students can receive help and guidance with their learning, with two separate venues for KS3 and KS4 that offer a quiet space.

Governors

Our school has a strong and effective governing body that includes parents/carers, teachers, students and members of our community who represent a wide range of professions and business areas.



RIC and OLA

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Our Research & Information Centre (known as the RIC) is a centralised resource area that combines library and IT facilities to support academic study across the curriculum.

A range of magazines, journals and daily newspapers are always available in the RIC.

The RIC aims to provide a welcoming and stimulating study environment, and is staffed throughout the day. Students can come to the RIC before school, during break, at lunchtime and after school for independent study or to read. Classes are brought to the RIC by their teachers for research-based lessons. All students are given a comprehensive induction to the RIC facilities during Year 7. Our specialist staff are always on hand to provide expert guidance and help students

to develop good research skills.

The RIC library contains a wide range of non-fiction books linked to the National Curriculum. We also have a broad selection of fiction that caters for all ages, abilities and interests, with new books regularly added.

Our homework club runs daily until 4:30pm in the RIC, meaning our students can complete additional work in a calm and supportive environment - and all students are welcome to attend this.



Rewarding excellence

Behaviour is excellent at Blatch. We use positive behaviour management to recognise and celebrate the excellent conduct, attitude and effort of our students.

At Blatch our staff really enjoy praising students through thoughtful public and private recognition. Students love being rewarded in this way as individuals and it is also great to showcase what successful students at Blatch are doing day in, day out! We enjoy highlighting the areas each student excels in with praise and feedback, positive messages home and recognition in form time so every child feels a sense of success.

Feedback from teachers in the classroom is one very important way we recognise excellence but at Blatch we also believe in rewarding great conduct and effort more generally, so we designed our own reward programme - PASSPORT.

At its heart PASSPORT is a visible, responsive and fun way to recognise all students, especially those who do the right things every day, be it always arriving on time, putting their maximum effort to their studies or being kind.

Passport is a system where students accrue PASSPORT Points, which they can exchange for rewards, prizes and enhancements that they value. The power of Passport is not just in the exchange of points for prizes but also the visibility of the points - students can see how their excellent behaviour and attitude each day translates into more points. They can challenge themselves to accrue even more or even compete with peers! We of course also enjoy celebrating the form groups who are excelling in our assemblies.

Care

Whilst school is primarily a place of academic learning, students need to be happy to do their best, and as such we place great emphasis on ensuring they feel safe and supported and are able to flourish.

We monitor our students' needs very carefully. We work in conjunction with the students' primary schools during the transfer period, to ensure that a suitable support package is in place for each new Year 7 student.

Each student has a form tutor who is their 'go-to' adult each morning to help them tackle issues, answer questions and generally have a positive start to each day. The tutor is also the first port of call for most queries parents may have. Students also all have a Year Team, two dedicated staff that lead the year group by championing our caring, inclusive and aspirational ethos but also supporting students where they have challenges.

Our teaching staff are also fully trained in safeguarding matters and ready to identify students who need support from specialist staff

or indeed, if appropriate, offer that support themselves. They know how to get the best out of students and support them to be successful, confident learners.

Student Services is often the first point of contact for parents and carers, as well as students. Our Student Services staff are responsible for many aspects of day-to-day life at school, such as attendance and admissions, student questions and communications. They can pass on messages from and to home, deal with enquiries and are able to answer most questions that home and students have about the school.

At Blatchington Mill School, we make sure that students are prepared for the world they will be joining when they leave our school. We ensure they are fully informed about specific issues as well as the broader topics of health and relationships. (See our Sex and Relationship Education Policy).

Education is an important part of PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and our detailed programme includes introducing students to the roles of helping agencies, such as the police and health professionals.

Students are given clear online safety guidance in PSHE lessons as well as in Computing lessons. They are taught about the impact of their digital footprint and the need to keep themselves safe. We also provide guidance for families. Any students who make mistakes online which may compromise their safety, or that of others, are supported by the Year Office and Safeguarding Office (where appropriate). Information is regularly sent out to all staff from our E-Safety Lead on the latest trends or issues with online behaviour.

Community leaders including those from a variety of charities regularly come to work with our students or to speak at our assemblies. We teach tolerance, respect for diversity and support the 'Prevent' anti-radicalisation agenda.

Blatchington Mill School is a safe, secure and happy environment, where we all – students and staff – look out for each other. We take personal security extremely seriously and have robust safeguarding procedures; recognised by Ofsted as outstanding. For some time, we have had highly effective anti-bullying strategies in place (including anti-cyber bullying), so our students can learn in a secure and calm environment in each year group.

The school also takes our site security very seriously, with a suite of measures in place to ensure students are safe and secure when with us and that any visitors to site are managed appropriately.

All of our staff from tutors and teachers to our year teams and inclusion staff are committed to supporting the academic and emotional development of each student in their care.

Achievement

The school is broken into two key stages, **KS3** and **KS4**. We structure the curriculum in each to support students making the best progress. We run KS3 over Years 7-9 and KS4 in Years 10 and 11.

Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3 we focus on providing an inclusive and welcoming environment within our classrooms, while ensuring that lessons are differentiated, to provide both appropriate support and challenge for every student. We believe that it is important to secure good progress for each and every student, knowing that this will then support the best outcomes at Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 4

KS4 is where students prepare for their GCSEs or other public examinations. Students from ages 14 to 16 are able to study a wide range of courses, ranging from the traditional classroom based ones such as Physics, Latin and Computing, to the school based practical courses such as Drama, Dance and Design & Technology.

A model for best learning

All of our lessons at Blatch are planned using a framework we have developed to ensure learning is accessible to all, is deep and secure, and all students make progress.

Our teachers plan collaboratively to ensure that all our students receive the same high quality teaching whoever their teacher is.

It won't matter who your teacher is, the quality of learning will be the same.

Helping Students to Become Effective Learners

At Blatch, learning is at the centre of all that we do.

Learning

At Blatch we know that the most successful teachers spend more than half the lesson time modelling and asking questions. Questioning allows the teacher to determine how well the material has been understood and learned. Teachers at Blatch also provide models of how to do something using, for example, worked examples and clear processes to help ensure students know the steps needed when completing a task. Teachers will teach new materials in small steps, checking that all students have understood. For challenging tasks, scaffolds are provided as temporary support to assist teaching until students can independently practise new material. Daily, weekly and monthly review ensures that recently learned material embeds in long term memory.

Our aim is that all students become effective learners. In the classroom teachers work on building the necessary skills so that students are able to:

Plan - Think about the goal of their learning and consider how they will approach the task.

Monitor - Assess the progress they are making, and make changes where necessary.

Evaluate their Learning - Appraise the effectiveness of their plan and its implementation.

Feedback

For students to make progress and develop their learning it is vital that they respond to feedback from their teachers. This feedback could be about how to improve a specific task, how to develop a particular skill or how to become a more effective learner.

At Blatch we use a wide range of feedback including both verbal and written strategies. Each subject area carefully considers how to provide the best feedback in their subject context. This feedback could be provided to the whole class or it could be provided to the student as an individual using numerical or coded systems as well as more in-depth written responses.

Behaviour

In lessons all students follow our Blatch Basics which are the minimum expectations we have of all of our students. These basics reflect the principles behind our school motto of 'Involvement, Achievement and Care'.

B - Be on time, fully equipped and greet your staff.

A - Attempt work straight away and do your best.

S - Sit in the place designated by the member of staff.

I - Involve yourself in the lesson and focus on your learning and what you need to improve.

C - Contribute to the lesson in a positive way so that everyone can learn and do well.

S - Speak kindly and respectfully to all and look after the classroom.

Extended classrooms – online learning

We extend the reach of learning with our online learning facilities.

We are proud to share that we have the capacity to loan, free of charge, a Chromebook to every single student at Blatchington Mill, making it easier than ever for students to access their work from outside the classroom, and ensuring that all of our students are on a level playing field when it comes to accessing their school work online.

Lesson resources are available to all students through their Chromebooks that students use both at school and at home. Students have access to their homework (and the necessary materials), their timetable, achievement points and school news and events. All homework is set electronically. We help students access learning at their own pace, revisiting a tricky topic at the end of the school day, getting ahead of the class by looking up the next topic in advance, or extending their knowledge with optional units and extension work.

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For parents and carers, we have an electronic system which provides a convenient and accessible way for the school to communicate with parents, and displays information such as attendance data, progress reports, homework, and behaviour and achievement information.





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