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## Aims and Ethos

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## **Our Vision**

Birkdale provides a strong academic education through outstanding individualised teaching, which inspires all pupils to achieve their personal best. It offers a well-rounded education enabling pupils to pursue a wide range of interests, equipping them with skills and values to live a successful, fruitful and fulfilling life. Underpinned by strong Christian values, everyone is treated with care and respect.

## **Academic Excellence**

Our vision at Birkdale is to provide the best academic education for each pupil which will enable them to achieve their full potential and equip them for the rest of their life.

A dedicated team of outstanding academic specialists deliver high quality expert teaching in a wide range of subjects in an aspirational and supportive environment resulting in:

- Superb results in our public examinations, enabling our pupils to successfully gain entry to their chosen university or profession
- A curriculum tailored to suit each individual, promoting intellectual curiosity and independent thought
- Provision of a wide variety of academic clubs, entry in national competitions and trips to further develop and widen pupils' horizons

Learning is supported by excellent facilities, specialist resources and small classes encouraging pupils to develop as independent, intelligent and insightful individuals and life-long learners who are self-aware, reflective and proficient in a wide range of skills and abilities.

The school has strong links across the city of Sheffield, including with the universities, professions and different sections of industry providing pupils with further insights to higher education and career opportunities.

The tailored academic education received at Birkdale aims to prepare pupils not only for higher education, professional training and their future careers but also to contribute positively to society as life-long learners.

## **Rounded Education**

At Birkdale we place a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to develop their whole selves, with the help of a broad range of activities that extend far beyond the academic curriculum. Our vision is that each pupil is educated as an individual, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, enabling them to be well-equipped for life.

We achieve this through encouraging each pupil to reflect upon their character, and to play a full part in the school community. Academic and non-academic programmes, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and an Enrichment course, are structured to help develop important life skills, to promote the happiness and well-being of all, and to inspire passion to make the world a better place.

Throughout the school we provide a wealth of extra-curricular activities, including a broad offering of sport, music and drama opportunities, with most pupils involved in multiple aspects of these. Regular trips, including both residential and day trips, locally and internationally, encourage insight and enable pupils' horizons to be broadened in many different ways. Many pupils take part in our full Duke of Edinburgh programme (Bronze, Silver and Gold).

Each individual's needs are considered carefully, and development is provided through form tutors, the use of pupil-to-pupil mentoring schemes, and additional programmes such as mindfulness courses. Opportunities to develop skills for leadership, teamworking, communication and collaboration are embedded in activities both within and outside the curriculum, as are important wider issues such as equality and diversity, sustainability and mental health.

With an experience tailored to each pupil, Birkdale strives to develop rounded individuals who are prepared for their lives beyond the classroom, ready to participate in and contribute fruitfully to society with independence and confidence.

## **Christian Ethos**

Visitors to Birkdale often comment on the friendly environment and the warmth of the relationships between staff and pupils. We believe that all members of the school community have God-given gifts to be identified and developed. Our wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities encourages pupils to identify their gifts and to develop these to the highest possible standards. Alongside this pursuit of excellence, pupils are also encouraged to develop and refine their moral judgement in order to mature into adults equipped to make wise decisions for life.

Birkdale is unashamedly a Christian School which warmly welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. We believe that pupils should have the opportunity to develop spiritually: to reflect on the big questions of life and to consider the person and claims of Jesus Christ. From its earliest days, the school has been established on an evangelical Christian foundation, based on the authority of the Bible and the teaching of the Christian message of good news, and these continue to be essential to the school's identity today.

The Christian faith is therefore evident in the life of the school community through the governors' oversight, the senior leadership, a clear Christian witness from within the staff, and through every aspect of the school's culture, including the safe environment in which pupils can explore matters of faith.

To this end:

- all the governors are united by a simple creed or statement of belief, representing some of the basic Christian truth drawn from the Bible
- we aspire for Birkdale to be a supportive community where pupils of all views feel welcomed and loved, where Christianity can be explored, and where Christians are encouraged to grow and live out their faith
- the school actively promotes and expects all staff and pupils to live by the school's Christian values; and
- Christian chaplaincy plays a vital role in the day-to-day life and running of the school.