



# Blatchington Mill School

AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

*Involvement, Achievement & Care*

Blatchington Mill is an 11 to 18 co-educational school incorporating a Sixth Form College, which serves a mixed catchment area on the northern side of Hove. There are approximately 1720 students on roll (of which about 150 are in the Sixth Form) and this figure may increase slightly over the next few years. The school sees itself as a 'typical' comprehensive in terms of its intake. A strength is the high number (for this area) of students from a variety of ethnic minority groups (12%).

However, in many other respects the school is atypical. For example, students benefit from an extensive curricular and extra-curricular programme. Participation and the achievement of high standards are actively encouraged and planned for. One particular strategy to this end has been the school's successful application for 'specialist' status. Whilst the school has many strengths and every curriculum subject is valued, the impact of the performing arts in raising standards has been evident for some time i.e. 'performers' are well motivated and achieve good examination results. The Governing Body thought it a logical step for the school to become a performing arts college so that the number of students gaining important interpersonal skills can be maximised. (The aim is to provide every child with the opportunity to perform and so develop those important and transferable personal qualities such as self-confidence, self-discipline, creativity and teamwork.

In line with the change in Government policy, the school has successfully applied for a second specialism which is "Mathematics and Computing". Both the Mathematics and ICT facilities are very successful and innovative. The extra resources that this specialism brings are being used to broaden the range of technology available at Blatchington Mill and develop a 'Virtual School' project.

The DfES classified Blatchington Mill as "high performing" and invited the school to apply for a third specialism from April 2006. A 'Vocational' specialism fits extremely well with the school's Development Plan and personalised learning agenda. An increase in participation rates for vocational courses at all levels (i.e. 1, 2 and 3) is anticipated and a degree of collaboration with other schools has already been established.



The school enjoys an excellent reputation throughout the conurbation of Brighton and Hove and is, as a consequence, heavily over-subscribed (over 400 'first preferences' for the 300 places available in September 2007). Over recent years the ability profile of students enrolling in the school (as measured by NFER tests) has increased until recently and with it our expectations of their achievements in public examinations (e.g. SAT targets at 80%; 5 A\* - C at 69% for 2007).

The school was formed in 1979 through the amalgamation of three selective schools (one grammar and two secondary moderns). Two of the schools were situated just 100m apart and became the new campus consisting of two 'wings'. In the intervening years, successive building projects have been positioned to 'bridge' the gap between these wings. Following the school's first Ofsted Inspection a new driveway was constructed to segregate pedestrians from vehicles. This, in turn, allowed a successful planning application for a substantial building project costing £1.75 million. Completed in September 2000, this 'joined' the existing accommodation and comprises new classrooms, Science laboratories with preparation room and a new music block consisting of two large teaching rooms, space for music technology, a recording studio and numerous practice rooms. The scheme also helped create a dance studio from a former dilapidated squash court and a theatre by refurbishing a hall. More recently a sports hall has been erected.

The new construction is fundamental to the school's future development, which involves promoting community use of the facilities and ultimately establishing a three-session day where young people and adults can share learning opportunities when appropriate.

More recently the school has found a large space in which to create a Research and Information Centre (The RIC). In addition to housing the school's collection of printed material, the RIC has numerous computer terminals linked to the internet, digital cameras and audio/visual material. Students are using this facility as part of the school's 'taking responsibility for your own learning' initiative.

A third Ofsted Inspection took place in May 2007. Inspectors found the school to be "good with some outstanding features". A copy of the Report can be viewed on the school's website.

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Headteacher

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