Prospectus
2020/2021
Welcome to Blatch

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. We are graded by Ofsted as ‘Outstanding’ for behaviour and safety.

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 online Open Evening and the opportunity to talk to us on the phone all help you to feel confident in choosing Blatchington Mill for your child’s education at this critical and vital time.

“School is a place to find yourself – to learn at the very limits of your potential and in doing so discover who you really are.”

Ashley Harrold
Head teacher
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.

2019/20 was an unusual year - schools were asked to provide 'centre assessed grades' for all departing year 11 students as nationally students were not able to sit exams with school partially closed. These grades were judgements of the likely grade each student would have achieved had they actually sat the exams in the summer. These professional judgements were based on coursework, classwork, home work and any internal assessments already taken, such as mocks. As a school we spent a great deal of time on these to make sure every student received a set of grades that they deserved, reflecting their hard work over their school career.

This was an extremely hard working and dedicated year group that had made exceptional progress over their time at Blatch and so we were delighted to be able to put forward grades that enabled our students to go onto the next exciting steps in their education.

There were success stories across the range of subjects, with students attending Blatch being awarded grades significantly higher than national averages. In Combined Science, for example, 13% more students achieved a pass grade 4 than the national average. Similarly, in English Language 18% more students were awarded a pass grade 4 and 7% more achieved a grade 7 than the national average. In maths 18% more students enjoyed a strong pass grade 5 than the average across the country.

In Drama and Music students excelled, with a phenomenal number of students leaving with a grade 7 or higher, indeed 22% and 43% more than the national average from grade 7 respectively. In language, students of Spanish achieved well above national average in every key grade bracket. There were also superb performances in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, with 100% of students achieving strong passes and the majority doing so with a grade 7 or better.

These outcomes were very much in line with what we would have expected from Blatch students and it is fair to say that we continue to be a school where students thrive academically and achieve brilliant outcomes.

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 and enquiry. 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 closure in 2020, 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. As of September 2020 all our teachers are creating pre-recorded versions of all lessons, and providing live support, to ensure that whether students are learning in school or at home, the quality of education they receive is consistently high and never disrupted.

Blatch is also a founding member of the Pavilion & Downs Teaching School Alliance - delivering teacher training and professional development to other schools through our Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs).

Blatchington Mill has also been selected as one of only nine schools nationwide to be awarded MFL Lead Hub status. As part of the scheme we are recognised as experts in language teaching and we support schools around the city to develop teaching and learning of Modern Foreign Languages. We will 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.

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.

nurturing a learning culture

Students learn

a key part of our ethos is the belief that we should provide an education that is broad and balanced. We want our students to be able to access a wide range of subjects, and we believe that this is the best way to prepare them for the future.

We also believe that it is important for our students to be able to learn in a variety of ways, and we provide a wide range of opportunities for them to do this. For example, we have a range of clubs and activities that our students can join, and we also provide opportunities for them to take part in sport and music.

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Our focus on learning is also reflected in our teaching. We believe that it is important for our students to be able to learn in a variety of ways, and we provide a wide range of opportunities for them to do this. For example, we have a range of clubs and activities that our students can join, and we also provide opportunities for them to take part in sport and music.

As part of our commitment to providing a broad and balanced education, we also place a strong emphasis on developing our students’ skills in communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. We believe that these skills are essential for success in the modern world, and we work hard to ensure that our students develop them.

Finally, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for our students. We understand that every child is unique, and we work hard to meet the individual needs of each student. We believe that every student has the potential to succeed, and we are committed to helping them to realise their full potential.

In summary, our ethos at Blatch is one of high aspirations, high expectations, and a commitment to providing a broad and balanced education. We believe that our students have the potential to achieve great things, and we are committed to helping them to reach their full potential.
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 frequently perform beyond school.

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.

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 currently 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, as well as having students in the Harlequins Rugby Academy, Ealing Trailfinders Rugby Academy and the Sussex Netball and Cricket teams.

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

Year 8
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’.

“\nThe teachers really care about how much you are learning.\n\nYear 11\n"

Although we are currently hampered by the ongoing pandemic, 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.

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, visited galleries and music workshops locally, nationally and across the world.

Blatchington Mill is also a provider of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. Last year our students completed 832 hours of voluntary work in our local community 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

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 LGBT+ student group which provides a safe space for students to talk about a variety of issues with their peers. We have 24 students who have been trained as LGBT+ ambassadors. These students help to promote LGBT+ awareness within school and work with staff to ensure that Blatchington Mill is an inclusive environment for all LGBT+ students.

We have students involved in many community events, supporting local and national charities and making sustained commitment to work in the local area.

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 BAME mentoring programme which runs for six weeks, comprising of 5 weeks mentoring and a final week of celebration of the participants’ achievements. We are so proud of this programme and our students have benefited hugely.

We also 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.
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 hold regular forums for parents to discuss school improvement. We also hold workshops in order for parents and carers to build skills and confidence in subjects such as Maths so that they are able to support students with their school work.

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 afterschool homework support where students can receive help and guidance with their learning. We have two separate venues for KS3 and KS4 that offer a quiet space, as well as access to Chromebooks and a supportive teacher.

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.
Friends at Blatch (FAB)

FAB is a lively and effective group of parents/carers and friends of the school.

Their twin roles are, first, to assist senior staff with self-evaluation of the school’s performance and, second, to raise thousands of pounds every year, through a number of special events, for the benefit of the school. They meet twice a term – all parents/carers are automatically members. FAB welcomes all parents/carers at any of their meetings and events.

We welcome the local community into our school, which is always a hub of activity with many community sports clubs – from archery to cricket – using our facilities. Groups also use the Windmill Theatre regularly.

“Blatch is a good school because all the students are friendly and helpful, especially to the Year 7s.”

Year 7
RIC and OLA

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. We also have a number of Chromebooks in the RIC which are networked for student use.

All Chromebooks provide internet access and access to the SIMS app, where homework is set, resources shared with students and work handed in. Parents/carers can log in to see all homework set for their child.

We also have sets of Kindles for students and teachers to use in lessons. 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.

We have also recently introduced a brand new Open Learning Area for our Key Stage 4 students, allowing them the space to take responsibility for their learning and become familiar with the type of independent study that is expected at sixth form college.

Under normal circumstances, our homework club runs daily until 4:30pm in the RIC and OLA, meaning our students can complete additional work in a calm and supportive environment.

RIC and OLA

Rewarding excellence

Behaviour is excellent at Blatch, and we use positive behaviour management to reward and celebrate the excellent conduct, manners and work ethic of our students.

We have a points based reward system called BMS Passport, where students earn points for their behaviour, conduct and attendance. They are also rewarded with points for academic achievement.

Students can log in and use their points to unlock perks in school – skipping the lunch queue or a reward trip at the end of term are examples of items that they can choose to ‘spend’ their points on - a list that is updated constantly.

We believe in rewarding students who do the right thing consistently and make a huge effort to notice those who are quietly brilliant every day.

We also place huge importance on fostering independence in our students. We encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and if they make mistakes, we ask them to attend a ‘restore and repair’ session at the end of the school day where they are able to have a supported conversation with their class teacher. They apologise and are given a fresh start the next day. This system puts the emphasis on understanding why positive behaviour is important, and strengthens relationships between staff and students.
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.

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 issues such as drugs – including tobacco – 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. Community leaders including those from a variety of faith groups and 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.

Student Services is often the first port of call 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.

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. Our year team staff are committed to supporting the academic and emotional development of each student in their care.

The school has recently upgraded our fire safety equipment and our alarms are regularly tested.

There is security lighting across the site ensuring no pools of darkness around campus.

Outside of the core school day our doors are locked and access is via key pads only ensuring additional security for all participants in extra curricular activities.

The site is covered by CCTV cameras which are used to investigate breaches of security. No cameras are placed in toilets or changing rooms and access to the images is restricted to a small number of staff whose access is monitored.

In the summer of 2018 we installed electronic gates at all of our vehicle entrances, these are controlled by staff at our two reception desks as part of our rigorous safeguarding procedure for monitoring and managing visitors to the school.

Blatchington Mill School follows the standards of GDPR and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office.

Online, students are safeguarded and data is protected by internet content filters at Brighton and Hove Council, by our own filters onsite, a Threat Management Gateway firewall and the Securus network activity monitoring system.

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.
At Blatch, all of our lessons are planned using a framework we have developed to ensure learning is accessible to all, deep and secure, and all students make progress. The framework allows significant flexibility for different teaching styles, so no two lessons will ever feel identical – but ensures a consistent approach across the school that benefits all students.

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 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. The framework allows significant flexibility for different teaching styles, so no two lessons will ever feel identical – but ensures a consistent approach across the school that benefits all students.

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.

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.

It won’t matter who your teacher is, the quality of learning will be the same.
Extended classrooms – online learning

We extend the reach of learning with our online learning facilities. Lesson content and resources are available to all students from home, the RIC or any internet connected device (including smartphones and tablets). Students have access to their homework (and the necessary materials), their timetable, forums 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. As of September 2020, our entire curriculum is currently available on Google Classroom via online lessons delivered by our staff, ensuring that there will be no disruption to learning should school ever need to close unexpectedly.

In addition to this, we are proud to share that we now have capacity to loan 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.

For parents and carers, we have rolled out an update to our SIMS parent app 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.
Head teacher:
Mr A Harrold
BA PGCE NPQH

Deputy Head teachers:
Ms R King
BA PGCE MA NPQH
Mr A Capozzi
BA PGCE MA NPQSL
Ms K Claydon
BA PGCE

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