



VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL



Inspiring Excellence

Welcome

“What shines through is the way staff work together and really know each student”
YEAR 9 PARENT



At Vandyke Upper School we aim to provide outstanding teaching, exciting opportunities and memorable experiences for our students. We provide a caring environment where all students are supported, as well as challenged, to ensure that there is no limit to what they can achieve.

We prepare students for a world that is changing rapidly by encouraging them to become independent, determined and confident learners who never give up.

Situated on the eastern edge of Leighton Buzzard, Vandyke has places for 1450 students in Years 9-11 and in our large Sixth Form. The school attracts students from beyond our natural catchment.

A HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL WHERE EVERYONE MATTERS

At Vandyke we believe that the ingredients for effective learning and high achievement include outstanding teaching, high expectations and an atmosphere within which relationships flourish. We pride ourselves on the school's high standards and inclusive reputation.

Our many visitors are impressed by the calm and purposeful atmosphere and the very positive relationships between students and staff. They remark upon the politeness and friendliness of Vandyke students. Those who look more closely are impressed by the quality of teaching: staff are dedicated, hard-working and highly professional.

We value the achievements of students in different fields, stretch students academically to achieve highly and have high expectations of their conduct and attitudes towards each other.



A partnership of success and achievement

“There is a harmonious learning environment throughout the school” OFSTED, MAY 2018



It is important that students make a good start to their Vandyke career. We work closely with parents/carers, partner schools and students to make sure that this happens. Homework is set for all students. We believe that regular homework contributes to students making good progress and develops valuable skills of independent learning. We ask parents/carers to support this policy by encouraging students to complete homework carefully and punctually.

A partnership with parents/carers is central to the school ethos. Students and parents/carers receive termly written progress reports supported by formal opportunities for discussion about progress with tutors and teaching staff. We invite parents/carers to a series of information and consultation events throughout the year as part of our commitment to work closely together. Our Annual Survey invariably provides much positive feedback as well as suggestions for further improvements that we take very seriously.

Vandyke provides an exceptional learning and teaching environment with outstanding facilities.

We expect students to work hard and try their best in an atmosphere of co-operation and care, challenge and support.

Opportunities for growth, fun and adventure



The academic strength of the school is mirrored in our extra-curricular programme. This is ever developing but currently includes Young Enterprise, public speaking, the school chess team, charity fund-raising, theatre trips, World Challenge expeditions and study tours to France and Germany, China, USA, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

Opportunities in the performing and visual arts are an especially important part of life at Vandyke. High quality specialist facilities support outstanding performance through our innovative Arts Factory collaboration that co-ordinates arts provision including clubs, show-cases, competitions and trips. Concerts and drama performances take place in the dance studio, drama studio, activity space or “hub” and splendid theatre and we have a strong bond with the county Music School which is based at Vandyke. Vandyke holds the prestigious Artsmark at platinum level in recognition of our outstanding commitment to the arts.

We want all students to experience the joy and benefits of regular exercise and to make healthy lifestyle choices. Our extra-curricular programmes in PE and Sport are extensive. In addition to representing many teams, all students are encouraged to participate in a wide range of sports and health-related activity including badminton, table tennis, dance, trampolining, yoga and outdoor pursuits alongside traditional winter and summer team games. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme is especially popular.



***“Choosing Vandyke was the best
decision we could have made”
YEAR 11 PARENT***



A dynamic and successful Sixth Form

“Although we have more independence, our teachers make sure we achieve our full potential” YEAR 13 STUDENT



Most Year 11 students join our Sixth Form where a wide range of courses is offered, taught by experienced, specialist teachers. A comprehensive guidance programme and enrichment opportunities are important parts of the overall Sixth Form curriculum. Students make a commitment to hard work and to independent study. Most students move on to university or high quality apprenticeships. Each year students gain places on a wide range of degree courses, many at prestigious institutions including Oxbridge.

The Sixth Form has its own facilities including study centre, hub and Sixth Form café. Students play a leading role in the school that includes organising charity Smile Week, as well as a social programme for Sixth Form students including the Summer Ball.

A balanced and challenging curriculum

“Students are pushed and challenged to make the best possible progress” OFSTED, MAY 2018



Vandyke prides itself on providing a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum and an impressive guidance and support programme to meet the needs of all students.

Exam results are one important indicator of the school's success. Performance at GCSE and A Level is exceptional with students making strong progress from all starting points. We ensure that all students are challenged to aim high and are supported to meet this challenge.

Care, guidance and support for students are second to none and are founded on respect for self and others. Students join a tutor group and belong to one of our four houses so that each student is known as an individual and feels valued for their achievements. The guidance programme, including assemblies, plays a key role in building a strong sense of belonging and pride in our school.



***We hope that you are inspired by what you have read and that you will visit Vandyke soon - you will be very welcome.
With best wishes
Tim Carroll, Headteacher***



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