

# Darland High School Prospectus 2015-16.

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## A Introduction from the Headteacher.

Welcome to Darland High School!

This prospectus is designed to give information about our school and convey something of its spirit and culture. Of course the best way to find out about our school is to pay us a visit, which you are welcome to do. The purpose of this prospectus is to provide you with information about the way we educate and care for our learners.

External organisations have been ready to recognise the progress being made at Darland. Over the past few years, the school has achieved the following prestigious awards:

- **Healthy Schools Award.** (Awarded in recognition of the work done in promoting and serving healthy food and providing opportunities for exercise.)
- **Active Schools Award.** (Awarded for the work done in providing a model PE curriculum together with a wide range of extra-curricular activities.)
- **Basic Skills Quality Mark.** (Awarded for the work done by our Basic Skills Teaching Assistants in coaching students in Years 7 and 8 who have literacy difficulties)
- **Inclusion Quality Mark.** (We are only the second secondary school in the area to receive this prestigious award, recognising the work we do to provide opportunities for all)
- **Eco Schools Green Flag.** (Darland is one of the very few secondary schools in the region to have achieved this award. Our dedicated team of eco – enthusiasts have created two ‘eco gardens’ and have introduced a number of high profile energy saving initiatives in the school.

Past students have expressed amazement at the extent to which the campus has changed since they were students here. Undoubtedly, the most noticeable improvement has been the building of the Griffin Centre, a modern two story building, housing our ‘state of the art’ science laboratories and ICT suites. Recently we have seen the creation of a new library, complete with a full ICT suite, a remodelled foyer, new cookery facilities for students, refurbished tennis courts and the completion of wireless internet access for students throughout the school. The impact of these environmental improvements on the performance and attitude of our students is tangible and is something we have been keen to share with primary schools during our transition activity days. As our numbers grow, (current numbers on roll are 832 with Years 7 and 8 oversubscribed), we look forward to further improvements to our learning facilities.

## B School Organisation

### • Aims of the School

The aims of Darland High School are summed up in our school motto “Aspire, Apply, Achieve”. At Darland we know that for pupils to succeed they must have aspirations. We encourage all our pupils to aim high and foster in them a belief that they can fulfil their dreams. We ensure that all the pupils in our care understand their potential in all aspects of the curriculum. However we are realistic enough to appreciate that success does not come without effort and that is why we see application as the means of achieving potential. We report three times a year on pupils’ application and their progress towards their targets (in individual subjects and in skills) so that pupils, parents and teachers can work together to deliver achievement. Time is also dedicated to discussing progress individually with each student once a term. We have a Darland culture that celebrates and enjoys success in all aspects of school life. Most importantly, the school motto was chosen by all those who work in the school: pupils, teachers and all staff - it represents our belief that together we can achieve success for all our pupils.

- **School designation and numbers on roll.**

**Classification of School:** Local Authority Community Co-educational Comprehensive School.

**Age Range:** 11 - 16

**Number on roll:** 832      **Capacity:** 840

**Number of places available in each of the five year groups:** 168 (excluding pupils in our Additional Needs Resources).

**Language of the School:** English

**Admission arrangements:**

The Local Authority is the admissions body for the school.

Students starting in Year 7 in September 2014. In common with the other six community schools, the LA asks that all parents looking for places for their children for the following year should make submissions by 6/11/15. Applications can be made on-line or by using a paper form. Please see [www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/education/admissions\\_secondary.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/education/admissions_secondary.htm). for more details. Parents will be notified of the place allocated to their child by 1/3/16.

- **Timings of the school day**

There are five one hour lessons every day. The timetable is structured over a 50 period cycle, encompassing two weeks. This means that over the year, each week is named either Week 1 or Week 2. There are 190 days in the school year.

<b>08:50</b>	<b>Doors open (warning bell)</b>
<b>08:55</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>09:20</b>	<b>Start of Lesson 1</b>
<b>10:20</b>	<b>Start of Break</b>
	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>10:35</b>	<b>Start of Lesson 2</b>
<b>11:35</b>	<b>Start of Lesson 3</b>
<b>12:35</b>	<b>Start of Lunch</b>
	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>13:15</b>	<b>Doors open (warning bell)</b>
<b>13:20</b>	<b>Start of Lesson 4</b>
<b>14:20</b>	<b>Start of Lesson 5</b>
<b>15:20</b>	<b>End of Lesson 5</b>
<b>15:25</b>	<b>Departure of school buses</b>

- **Term dates**

***AUTUMN TERM 2016***

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016

## **SPRING TERM 2017**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017

## **SUMMER TERM 2016**

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

(NB – There will be five training days to be allocated across the year, when the school will close to students. These are not confirmed at time of going to press, apart from training days on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016)

### **• Pastoral and Academic organisation**

Each student is a member of a form and is looked after by a Form Tutor. The Form Tutor may not necessarily teach the student, but is responsible for monitoring the welfare and academic progress of all students in his / her form, as well as taking the register every morning and teaching PSE to the form. Form Tutors usually stay with the form as the students progress through the years, ensuring continuity. Each year group consists of between 7 forms. Each form takes the initial letter of the local estate; TREFALYN. Students have Year Assemblies once a fortnight and these are led by the Progress Coordinator (Head of Year). These assemblies are used to celebrate student successes and to award Achievement Points badges. There is a spirit of healthy competition between the forms, who compete termly for attendance and achievement awards.

Each year group is led by a Progress Coordinator, who leads the team of Form Tutors and monitors academic progress and behaviour. The Progress Coordinators and the form tutors follow the students as they progress through their years at darland. It is to the Progress Coordinator, that parents should make contact should they want to discuss pastoral concerns.

Assisting the Progress Coordinators are four Behaviour for Learning Mentors. As non-teachers they have the availability during the day, to induct new students, organize the peer mentoring programme, supervise our internal exclusion room and investigate discipline issues.

The senior member of staff responsible for pastoral leadership and pupil progress, is Mrs L Easton, Assistant Headteacher.

Subject teachers in the school all belong to one of 7 Faculties, each headed by a Faculty Coordinator. Each Faculty has a suite of classrooms grouped around a faculty office.

### **• Staff Structure**

Headteacher  
Deputy Head  
Assistant Head Curriculum  
Assistant Head Pupil Progress and Wellbeing

Mr P Agnew  
Mr S Corner  
Mr S Roberts  
Mrs L Easton

Additional Needs Coordinator	Ms D Hughes
Assistant Additional Needs Coordinator	Ms S Abel
Faculty Coordinator English / Literacy Coordinator	Mrs C Wasiuk
Assistant Faculty Coordinator English	Mrs J Davies
Faculty Coordinator Maths / Numeracy Coordinator	Dr M Edwards
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Maths	Mrs J Hawke
Faculty Coordinator Science	Mrs N Jones
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Science	Miss K Green
Faculty Coordinator Modern Languages	Miss F Jones
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Languages	Mrs F Wood
Faculty Coordinator Technology & the Creative Arts	Mr T Clarke-Coyne
Faculty Coordinator Humanities	Mrs V Gray
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Humanities	Mrs L Garratt
Head of PE	Mr A Lloyd
PSE, WRE, CEG, ESGDC Coordinator	Mrs G Jess
Faculty Coordinator Performing Arts	Mrs T Lee
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Performing Arts	Mr E Winterbottom
Progress Coordinator Year 7	Miss S Griffiths
Progress Coordinator Year 8	Mrs J Symes
Progress Coordinator Year 9	Mr S Coyne
Progress Coordinator Year 10	Mr G Hamm
Progress Coordinator Year 11	Mrs C Booth
Behaviour for Learning Assistants	Mr M Jarvis Mrs A Thomas Mrs J Hayes Mrs M McClean

## • Student Safety

We take the safety of students very seriously at Darland High School. With 830 students and more than 120 staff on site, the following measures are in place.

- The site is patrolled by duty staff before school, at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of school. It is important to appreciate however, that our morning duty staff start at 08.45am, so students should not arrive before this time. Similarly, no pupils should remain on site after 3.25pm, unless they are attending a school club or other approved activity supervised by a member of staff.
- All students are to remain on site during the morning break and at lunchtime. If a parent wishes for their child to walk home for lunch, they must write to the Headteacher and a pass will be produced providing an undertaking is made that the child will travel home by the quickest route.
- All staff wear name badges to identify them. All visitors to the school, including parents, are required to sign in at the Headteacher's Office, whereupon they will be issued with a badge.
- Parents are informed of all planned visits (curricular and extra-curricular) off site and must complete the consent forms which are attached to the letter informing them of the visit or activity.
- The school keeps a list of all medical conditions of our students and the staff are regularly updated with these needs and trained in responding to specific ailments (e.g Anaphylaxis, Asthma). However, this information is only useful if it is up to date, so the school depends very much on parents providing up-to-date medical information, together with emergency telephone contact details.
- The school has approximately four trained First Aiders and one is always on duty during the school day.

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- The school organises Fire Drills once a term.
- Parents must only drive onto the campus by the main (Chester road) entrance. This is the main entrance to the school site and although there are two other pedestrian entrances (one leading to Darland Lane and the other to Cotswold Crescent), these are locked during the day. We ask that parents collect their children at the end of the day from the Darland Lane exit, at the rear of the school. This is to avoid congestion around the main entrance, which is used by our school buses.

- **School Rules, Rewards and Sanctions**

We know where we are going as a school and we want everyone to be successful. In order to raise the levels of children's achievements certain things need to be in place:

- **Behaviour in classrooms, corridors and playgrounds.**

We expect courtesy, respect and consideration from all members of the school community. Our school rules are simple and the consequences for infringement clearly signposted for pupils. There is a clear hierarchy of sanctions for infringements of discipline ranging from being kept behind for a few minutes after a lesson, to Faculty and School Detentions and Internal and External Exclusion. As with all aspects of school life, we believe that keeping parents informed is crucial and make no apologies for telephoning parents to discuss the behaviour of their children. All infringements of discipline are recorded electronically on the school database and a summary of any 'Behaviour Points' is sent to parents three times a year, but a print-out can be requested at any time by telephoning the school office.

- **Sanctions.**

Each Faculty follows the same Behaviour Policy, which is displayed in all classrooms and is printed in the Student Planner. We have a stepped response to dealing with instances of poor behaviour, with short break detentions used for minor incidents leading to lunchtime and after-school detentions for more serious behaviour. For the most serious incidents, pupils are spend a day in the Internal Exclusion Room or are given a fixed term external exclusion. Parents are always informed in advance when it has become necessary to give the student a detention or be placed in the Seclusion Room.

- **Mobile Phones.**

It is a fact of life these days, that most youngsters have phones. At Darland, they are not banned, but they must be out of sight and switched off in lessons, so that learning is not disrupted. Furthermore, they must not be used inside school buildings. The vast majority of our students respect this sensible line, but those who break the rules have their phones confiscated until the end of the day.

- **Rewards**

Just as students receive 'Behaviour Points' when they fail to meet our behaviour expectations, they receive 'Achievement Points' when they impress the staff with their effort, attitude and actions. These Achievement Points (called House points) lead to the award of a bronze badge when the student reaches 30 points, a silver at 50 and a gold at 100 . These are presented by the Progress Coordinator in Assemblies. There is a reward at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms for students in each year group who have consistently high effort grades.

- **Attendance**

Students learn best when they are in school! Darland regularly returns attendance figures which exceed Welsh Assembly targets, but we are concerned that some students have reduced attendance. Holidays during term

time for students in Years 7 and 8 are therefore discouraged because of the impact on learning. For students in Years 10 and 11 (and Year 9 summer term), no holidays in term-time will be sanctioned by the school, due to the continuous nature of much of the assessment for examination courses. All applications for holidays for junior students, up to the legal maximum of ten days during term time must be made to the Headteacher, on a special form available from the school office.

- **Home – School Agreement**

We ask that all parents and students sign the following contract, which is printed in the Student Planner.

**THE SCHOOL:**

We will attempt to:

- conduct the best possible care for all pupils,
- treat each individual fairly and equitably,
- maintain close contact with the home,
- provide regular reports on the pupils' work and progress.

**THE PARENTS:**

We will attempt to:

- maintain a close relationship with the school for the benefit of our son/daughter,
- sign our son/daughters planner on a weekly basis,
- ensure that our son/daughter attends school regularly and punctuality,
- inform the school of any absence,
- support the values of the school, its behaviour and discipline policy,
- encourage a constructive attitude towards the school.

**PUPIL:**

I will attempt to:

- arrive on time, properly equipped and ready to work,
- follow directions straight away and obey all safety rules,
- listen to the person who is meant to be talking,
- be polite and show respect to fellow pupils and staff,
- always work to the best of my ability and allow others to do the same,
- respect the school uniform and the school buildings,
- co-operate with pupils and staff.

Signed..... Headteacher

..... Parent/Guardian

..... Pupil

- **Uniform**

At Darland we believe that a smart uniform is very important; it demonstrates the pride that students take in our school and themselves.

No extremes of appearance are acceptable - this includes hairstyles as well as dress and the school asks for the support of parents in ensuring their children dress and present themselves correctly. Any student not in full uniform or whose appearance does not meet our standards may be sent home. In case of unforeseen problems with uniform, parents should contact the appropriate Progress Coordinator.

*In accepting a place at Darland High School, parents agree to these rules.*

#### **Girls**

Bottle green blazer with school crest – available from our suppliers, Sportswear International

White school shirt with long or short sleeves

School tie with crest – available from our suppliers, RAM Leisure

Black school trousers **or**

knee length green box pleat skirt, available only from RAM Leisure. (this is currently under consultation, but likely to be policy by September 2016)

Plain black or white short socks or black tights (opaque)

Plain black shoes sensible heel and no large logos

#### **Boys**

Bottle green blazer with school crest – available from our suppliers, Sportswear International  
White school shirt with long or short sleeves

School tie with crest – available from our suppliers, Sportswear International

Black school trousers

Plain black short socks

Plain black shoes sensible heel and no large logos

#### **Optional Uniform Item\***

Bottle green V neck pullover (available sleeveless or with sleeves) will be available from the school priced at £14.00

*\*Although the blazer, shirt and tie are the formal uniform, parents may like to purchase pullovers to be worn under the blazer as an option.*

#### **PE Kit**

##### **Boys**

##### *Outdoor Kit*

Green rugby shirt – ordered through school

Black shorts

Green knee length socks

Studded football boots

Gum shield – optional

##### *Indoor Kit*

Plain white T shirt – no large logos

Black shorts

##### **Girls**

Plain white T shirt – no large logos

Black shorts

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White socks  
Trainers

**Trousers** must not be too tight and the style of the trouser must allow a shirt to be tucked in properly. Ski pants, combat trousers, leggings or low-rise (hipster) trousers are not allowed, nor are any adornments to the trousers like big buttons, large belts, buckles etc.

**Skirts** must not be too tight or have splits.

**Shirts** must be traditional school shirt design so that they can be tucked into skirts and trousers properly. They must not be fitted, short or fashion shirts without a proper collar.

**Shoes** must be completely black and low heeled, any visible logos must be small. Trainers, boots and sandals may not be worn.

**Socks/tights** must not be coloured or patterned.

**Outdoor coats** should fit over the blazer so that they can be worn to and from school in bad weather. Clothes that are **not part** of the official school uniform e.g. baseball caps, neck-warmers, denim jackets, hooded tops, trainers or anything that we consider to be "street culture", are not allowed either on the way to school or in school.

**Jewellery** - students may only wear an inexpensive watch and one pair of **plain studs** in the lower lobes. Hooped earrings including sleepers are not allowed. No body jewellery is allowed (nose, tongue, lip, eyebrow, belly button etc). The school will not be responsible for any injury caused by or to a body piercing. All jewellery brought into school is at students' own risk.

**Hair** should be a natural colour. Hair styles must not be extreme; the minimum length is grade 2. The school will decide what is extreme and if you are in any doubt about your child's hair style, please check with a senior member of staff. Head bands and hair bobbles should be of a dark colour and not excessive. Hair flowers are not permitted. Tramlines, shaved designs in hair or shaved eyebrows are not permitted.

**Make-up** is only allowed if it is very subtle and is applied minimally. The school reserves the right to make that judgement and we will ask students to remove excess. **Nail varnish** is not allowed.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The school is respectful of all faiths and where specific faiths require alterations to the uniform and appearance code, we will do our best to accommodate those needs. Students with a disability, who may need amendments to the uniform, will be accommodated. Parents are advised to contact the Headteacher.

### **Financial assistance**

The LEA operates a clothing scheme to help some families with the purchase of uniform. Application forms for a grant to help with the cost are available from Wrexham County Borough Council.

- **Attendance**

As a school, we take the matter of attendance and punctuality very seriously. Last year our overall attendance improved from 93% to 94%, but despite this latter figure being above both local and national averages, it still means that the

average child at Darland was absent for one half day every fortnight! We employ two people in the school to monitor attendances and chase up on absences on the day. Students are registered electronically in every lesson and should your child be absent, we ask that you telephone the school after 8.30 on the morning of absence. The headteacher has the discretion to authorize absence for holidays of up to ten days in any school year, but as a school, we strongly discourage parents from taking their children out during term time, when valuable learning is lost.

When a child accumulates more than five unauthorised absences in any one term, the school in conjunction with the Local Authority may impose a Fixed Penalty Notice on the parents of the child.

- **Transport**

There are subsidised dedicated 'School buses' which serve the traditional 'catchment area of the school: the villages of Marford, Gresford, Holt, transporting children who qualify for free transport to school. In addition, the school has the following arrangements with local private hire firms who operate the following routes for a half termly or daily fee  
Prices Coaches – Borrass Park and Acton.

Oares A – Marford, Gresford and stops on Chester rd to Wrexham town centre.

Oares B – Llay, Bradley and Rhosddu.

In addition, Arriva operates buses along the Chester rd, picking up from stops outside the school at approximately 12 minute intervals. Although many students like the convenience afforded to them from buying a weekly Arriva Pass, there are often long waits for buses at the end of the day and we urge parents, particularly those of younger children, to buy a half termly ticket for one of our private hire buses.

- **Governance**

Darland is fortunate to have a very active and supportive governing body. As well as the full governing body, which meets six times a year, there are also governor working parties for Finance, Curriculum, Environment and Community. Parents with expertise and interest in one of the latter areas are invited to apply to the Chair of Governors to join that Working Party. We find that this is a good way of preparing parents for the role of governors should they wish to stand for election.

The current governors are listed below.

**Local Authority Governors**

Mr Ashley Rogers (Chair)

Cllr Andrew Bailey (Vice Chair)

Mr Eric Lee

Cllr Hugh Jones

Mr Robert Walsh

**Community Governors**

Mrs Kay Andrew

Mrs Elaine Lacey

Mrs Carol Williams

Mr Ifor Jones

Mr Mike Jones

**Parent Governors**

Mrs Judy Carpenter

Vacancy

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Vacancy

Mr Huw Roblin

Mr Phil Daniel

Mrs Yvonne Davies

### **Teacher Governors**

Mrs Tracey Lee

Mrs Jayne Davies

### **Staff Governor**

Mrs Donna Adcock

The Headteacher is also a member of the governing body.

## **C Curriculum and Assessment**

### **• The Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

During the first three years at school all children will follow a broad based course in English, Mathematics, Science, Welsh, ICT, History, Geography, Religious Education, French, Drama, Physical Education and Games, Design and Technology, Art and Personal and Social Education.

The Literacy and Numeracy Framework has underpinned your child's learning in primary school enabling them to unlock their learning potential. At Darland, we continue the process of development of these crucial skills in order that our pupils are able to work independently and confidently in a variety of work settings. All subject areas undertake to develop aspects of literacy and numeracy skills and students are regularly monitored to ensure that they are making sufficient progress. The school employs specialist Learning Support Assistants who extract students from mainstream lessons for between one and two hours a week, when their Basic Skills fall below expected levels.

In Year 7 pupils are taught in form groups for most subjects, with the exception of Maths, which is set according to ability and PE which is taught in gender groups. In Years 8, pupils are placed in ability sets for English, Maths and Science and in one of three ability bands for the remainder of their subjects. We find that this approach allows us to stretch our learners and provide the correct level of challenge and support.

Children who experience particular learning difficulties have the opportunity to benefit from the specialist help available in the Additional Needs Department. Our This is usually provided by withdrawing pupils from particular lessons (normally French and/or Welsh) or extra support in the classrooms to give more individual help in smaller groups.

## Timetable allocation for KS3 2015-2016 (Five 1 hour periods a day: two week cycle of 50 periods)

Year	PSHE	PE	Geog	RE	Tech	Humanities	History	Music	French	Welsh	Drama	Art	English	Maths	ICT	Science	Total
7	1	4			4	8		2	3	3	1	2	7	7	2	6	50
8	1	4	3	2	4		3	2	4	4	1	2	6	6	2	6	50
9	1	4	3	2	4		3	2	4	4		2	6	7	2	6	50

In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum consists of two parts, the Learning Core and the Options. In the Learning Core, all pupils take:

English and English Literature, Mathematics, Science (separate sciences available), Religious Education, Welsh, ICT, Physical Education, and Personal and Social Education (PSE) including Careers Education. All students study for the Skills Challenge certificate, a new qualification worth one GCSE and a vital component of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

In addition, pupils choose at least 3 option subjects from a wide ranging menu of over 30 different courses. At Darland, we currently offer: Art, Photography, ICT, Drama, Home Economics, French, Geography, History, Child Care, Media Studies, Music, PE, Resistant Materials and Textiles. These options are continually reviewed and revised in line with the needs and interests of the year group.

Our pupils also have the advantage of being able to choose from subjects (including many vocational courses) offered by the Wrexham 14-19 Network option menu and studied off site. Currently our Year 10 students are able to choose from the following subjects taught at Coleg Cambria: Construction, Customer Service, Engineering, Horse Care, Horticulture, Hospitality and Catering, Performing Arts, Public Service. More Able and Talented students are offered GCSEs in Spanish, Computer Science, Law, Psychology and Economics.

### • Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to meeting the requirements of the 2010 Equalities Act. We believe that no-one should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: disability, age, income, religion/belief, race including colour, ethnicity or nationality, marital or civil partnership status, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or trade union membership. Teaching programmes actively celebrate diversity and counter discrimination. There are a number of policies designed to ensure that there is equality of opportunity at Darland, including our Charging Policy, Equalities Policy, Disability Access Policy and Looked After Children Policy.

### • Careers Education

All students receive Careers Education throughout their time at Darland High School. This is mostly achieved through PSE lessons (particularly in Key Stage 3), but increasingly at Key Stage 4, there are suspended timetable sessions when employers come into school to deliver talks to students on employment in different sectors. Once a year, students also attend mock interviews with a group of local employers. A Careers Officer is based in the school for two days a week.

### • Music Tuition

Music lessons are taught in a purpose built suite of rooms, connected to our School Hall, where our young musicians

regularly perform. Music is a real strength of the school, with our students performing in local and national ensembles and orchestras. Our peripatetic music teachers offer weekly tuition for a small termly fee, to a large number of students playing the following: Woodwind, Brass, Strings, Drums, Vocals. The school also organizes Grade exams on a regular basis. There are several musical groups, including a String Group, Wind band, Choir and Brass Ensemble.

- **Use of Welsh Language in the School**

We take pride in our position as a school in Wales and celebrate the importance of the Welsh language with in the context of a bilingual country with its unique culture and traditions. Through our curriculum, we develop an appreciation of the geography and rich cultural traditions in Wales. Although English is the main language used in the school, we are committed to encouraging the use of Welsh by both staff and students. We are currently engaged in a programme of making signage throughout the school bilingual and in lessons incidental Welsh is used to consolidate the learning that takes place in Welsh lessons. Welsh is a core curriculum subject for every year group. Some students with SEN statements however, may be disapplied from Welsh lessons in order to receive specialist help during timetabled Welsh lessons.

- **Collective Worship**

Darland High School believes that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”. We combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Each year group has two assemblies a week: one led by the Progress Coordinator and the other by a senior member of staff. In addition form tutors lead tutor groups through readings and reflections during tutor time on the remaining mornings per week. The school year has been divided into weekly themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar.

- **Religious Education.**

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that ‘Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils’. Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Furthermore, we believe that RE plays a crucial role in encouraging students to explore their own beliefs and develop respect for others whilst discussing challenging questions. Darland High School delivers RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, which is non-denominational in character. RE is taught as part of Humanities in Year 7 and discretely in Years 8, 9 10 and 11. Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from RE on application to the Headteacher, but since the emphasis of our lessons is ‘learning about religion’ rather than ‘learning to be religious’, we find that this is rarely taken up.

- **Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)**

The School has a responsibility to deliver sex and relationships education in line with the guidelines as set out in the 2002 National Assembly for Wales circular 11/02 on Sex and Relationships Education, the PSE framework for 7-19 year olds. SRE is taught through both science and PSE lessons. Classroom arrangements for delivery of sex and relationship education lessons will be on a form class basis with mixed sex groups. Occasionally there may be a need for single sex lessons. Our school considers its SRE Programme supports pupils through their physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development and helps them to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.

- **Homework**

Your child's teachers aim to set rigorous and meaningful homework. The purpose of homework is to support and extend the learning that takes place during the school day and to train our pupils to be effective, independent learners. For a student in Year 7, we expect at least two subjects to be done at home each weekday evening, more at weekends. The Learner's Planner is used to record the work set and record the hand-in date, following the published homework timetable, which each pupil receives in the Autumn term. The School has invested in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), powered by Moodle software, on which subject areas have placed many important learning resources. This is a very valuable resource, since students can access many of their homework assignments through it.

- **Assessment and Reporting**

Every child receives challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9 Levels) and Key Stage 4 (GCSE Grades) which are discussed with them by both their subject teacher and their form teacher. In addition, all children in Years 7, 8 and 9 receive an end of year target, which helps them to focus on the work they need to do over a shorter time span. This discussion of targets, together with the on-going record of progress kept by the pupils in their planners, helps individuals and their parents keep track of progress. In the examination years leading up to GCSE we monitor student performance even more closely and each pupil attends regular meetings with senior staff to help them focus on achieving their targets. Parents are critical in the process of progress monitoring and as well as receiving on three occasions throughout the year, reports on the progress their children are making in their different subjects, there is an annual cycle of parents' evenings for all year groups including guidance evenings for parents of students in Years 10 and 11. At the time of the parents' evening, parents receive written reports from each subject area together with a report from the form teacher.

## **D Support for Students**

- **Transition arrangements**

The following Schools are designated Cluster Schools for Darland: St Peters CP, Rossett, All Saints CP Gresford, The Rofft Marford, Holt CP and Park CP Llay. We have a long tradition of organising activities for pupils from these schools from Year 4 onwards and our staff meet regularly with primary teachers from these schools to plan and moderate work. Well over half of our annual intake however, are from primary schools outside these cluster schools and we see it as a priority to work to integrate these students as effectively as possible. Any child can be worried about moving to a new school and we work to make this transition as smooth as possible. Prior to your child joining Darland High School, the Learning Coordinator (Head of Year) for Year 7 visits their primary school to collect information about your child. We then have a day in the summer term, when pupils joining in September, attend lessons and learn about life in Darland. In the evening, there is a guidance meeting for parents, where they can meet their children's form tutor. Throughout the transition process, we work with your child's primary teacher, who helps us ensure that our forms are based on existing friendship groups and that there is a continuum of learning from Year 6 to Year 7.

On starting school in September, all Year 7 forms will be assigned two Year 10 'Peer Mentors' to help them find their way to lessons and to organise themselves. Your child will stay in their form group for most of their lessons and so a 'team spirit' is quickly built up under the guidance of the form teacher, who is the first point of call for any pupil when concerns come to light.

- **Additional Learning Needs**

According to the revised Code of Practice a child has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty, which calls for special provision to be made for them at some time during their schooling.

The school has resourced provisions for Social / Communication needs, Dyslexia and provides support for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties, sensory and physical impairment and speech and language difficulties. Our Additional Needs Department has expanded in the last year and the suite of rooms it occupies have undergone complete refurbishment. There are now 6 small classrooms in the department, where children who have been identified with Additional Needs as well as those with a formal Statement receive lessons from a team of specialists. Our ALN department is a busy, but happy place, with the emphasis on integration with the mainstream school. Extensive transition takes place before students with ALN arrive at the school and our ALN Coordinator, Mrs Daniela Hughes, is always on hand to speak to parents about any concerns.

The Department adopts a flexible approach to meeting the needs of all pupils with ALN and provides advice and support to all staff. Students with Statements of ALN and those with Extended School Action Plus, are entitled to varying amounts of support time in lessons. In addition, dependent on need, students are withdrawn from certain subjects (namely Welsh and / or French) for specialist support in the provision centres.

(Further information available in the School SEN Policy)

- **Peer Mentoring**

We have some 15 older students who have been trained as Peer Mentors. These students undertake valuable mentoring work with students in Years 7 and 8 who may feel vulnerable and /or be struggling with social relationships on transfer to secondary school. Organised by one of our Behaviour for Learning staff, Peer Mentors are attached to junior forms and help students organise themselves during registration. At lunchtime they are available for younger students to make an appointment to see. Often this is just for a chat and a snack, but it has been found that this help from older students has been very beneficial in raising the confidence of our new students.

- **Learning Coaches**

As well as having four Behaviour for Learning Mentors, working to resolve pastoral issues, the school also staffs a Learning Coach room for each morning of the week. The Learning Coach is a trained Teaching Assistant, who provides support on a one-to-one basis for students who may have arrived at school upset / worried, or who may be finding school life difficult.

- **Agencies active at Darland**

The following people visit Darland on a weekly basis and through the Behaviour for Learning team, students can make appointments or be referred by form teachers:

School Nurse, School Counsellor, Youth Worker, Educational Social Worker, Police Liaison Officer.

We also have a successful 'Student Assistance Programme' running, whereby pupils can volunteer to meet in small groups under the guidance of trained members of staff to discuss life issues in a safe and confidential environment. Issues may range from feelings of low self esteem to anger management and personal growth.

- **Anti-Bullying policy**

The school has a detailed anti-bullying policy and takes all instances of bullying seriously. We deliver regular assemblies and PSE lessons on bullying and encourage students to confide in an adult whenever they experience unpleasant behaviour that could be described as bullying. Should students feel uncomfortable about coming forward, we remind them that they can post a note in the lunch-money post box, which will be passed to the Head of Year. No two instances of bullying are the same, but we have found that the following strategies are highly effective:

- Partnering vulnerable students with a 'Peer Mentor'. These are prefects in Year 11 who have received special training to help them coach younger students in self assertion techniques. They are available at form and lunchtimes for younger students to meet and chat to.
- Talking through the consequences of bullying with the person accused of bullying and if possible, bringing him / her face to face with the victim in a highly controlled environment.
- Involving parents at the earliest practicable opportunity.
- Asking those who feel they are being bullied to keep a log of incidents.
- Using the support agencies we have on site to best effect. (e.g. School Nurse, Counsellor, Educational Social Worker)
- Moving pupils away from one another in class and in some cases, moving pupils to a different form.

## **E Opportunities for Students**

- **School Council and Prefects**

We value our pupils and try to involve them as fully as possible in the life of the school. Our pupils are regularly consulted about school improvements. We have a very active School Council, which is made up of representatives from the Year Councils, which in turn are made up from representatives from each form. They manage a budget and are a vital asset in helping us improve our environment and are involved in school development planning and in staff appointments. Each year, a group of Year 11 pupils are appointed prefects (identified by their gold ties), helping us to run the school by acting as role models, running clubs and assisting in school events. The Head Boy and Head Girl also attend Governors meetings to bring our governing body up to date with the views of the pupils. We also have between 10 and 15 Year 11 students who are trained as Peer Mentors (identified by their silver ties). These students ensure that Year 7 students are accompanied to their lessons in the first two weeks of term and staff a drop in centre throughout the year for younger students who are feeling lonely and 'out of sorts'.

- **Sporting Opportunities**

Football is played with a passion at Darland and in the last ten years, our teams have been finalists five times in the Welsh Cup, winning trophy three times.

The P.E. Department offers a wide variety of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. These include: netball, soccer, rugby, basketball, athletics, tennis, rounders, dance and kick boxing. Pupils play regular inter-school matches and compete very successfully in local leagues and county tournaments. The 5x60 scheme runs very successfully at Darland allowing pupils to try out different sports and to discuss what activities they would enjoy. Of course examinations are important. We want our pupils to leave school with the highest academic qualifications possible. However, we also want our pupils to leave with a passion for learning and a passion for life. Our extra-curricular programme complements the taught curriculum and brings an added dimension to school life.



- **Outdoor Education**

For many years the Staff and Governors of Darland have recognised the important role that Outdoor Education can play in a young person's development. With the benefit of the school's support and commitment this subject has become an important part of the curriculum. In Year 8 all pupils take part in a Skills and Outdoor Education Programme. The course is based in Llangollen, making use of the tremendous facilities this area has to offer. Pupils are away for two days, with an option to spend one night spent under canvas. The emphasis is very much on co-operation and teamwork, with pupils being responsible for their own food and organisation within each tent group. On the first day pupils take part in Wallys Great Adventure; a problem solving event requiring them to work as a team, navigating their way around a set route, solving problems along the way. The day is designed to build on the work covered in the Skills curriculum and gives pupils an excellent opportunity to further develop and practice these vital skills. On the second day pupils choose an individual activity such as Climbing, Mining, Orienteering, Canoeing or Gorge Walking.

- **The School Library**

Our newly decorated library is staffed by a full time librarian, assisted at lunchtime by a small army of pupil librarians. Pupils use the library in lesson time and it is also available as a drop in centre, when students can access the computer suite housed there.

The library is a hive of activity at lunchtime with pupils researching, studying, producing The Griffin, preparing presentations for assembly, working on ESDGC projects and promoting healthy eating in addition to taking out books. Unusually for a high school, a high percentage of our boys are regular library users. The library is also the hub for quizzes and competitions which promote reading. Darland pupils are fortunate that the extended opening hours allow pupils access to the range of library facilities until 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

- **Other Opportunities to enhance Learning**

Every year, the school organizes a ski trip to either America or Europe, which is always well subscribed. In addition there are Modern Languages trips to France, Humanities visits to the Battlefields of Belgium and Welsh visits to Cardiff. The Geography department augments the GCSE syllabus with fieldtrips to Llandudno and Snowdonia.

In the autumn term, all Year 7 students take part in a sponsored walk up Moel Famau in Flintshire. This challenging 5 mile walk provides a great opportunity for the students to gel as a form group and to get to know their form teachers who walk with them. The monies raised go to a charity that the Year 7 Year Council chooses as their charity for the year.

All year 7 pupils take part in a visit to diverse and historical Chester as part of their Geography lessons. The English and Drama departments arrange theatre visits to the Liverpool and Manchester theatres, to Theatr Clwyd and to the Globe Theatre, London to bring literature to life. Touring companies are booked to enable all pupils to benefit from live performance and from workshops.

Every year in the summer term, the school timetable is suspended for a day and students take part in a wide range of different activities to develop their Key Skills. The programme of the 'Active Skills Days' changes from year to year, but has involved rapping in Welsh, competing in a 'Come Dine With Me' competition, solving a forensics based CSI Darland problem and trying wheelchair basketball.

We take the development of entrepreneurial skills seriously and each year students from Year 10 form a Young Enterprise company, working through all the stages involved in bring a product to the market. The company members also mentor link companies in our primary schools, an involvement which culminates in an Enterprise Fayre held in April.

## **F Working with parents**

### **• Contacting the school**

An efficient two way communication is vital between parents and the school is vital for the learning of your child. Teachers are always prepared to discuss any problems affecting your child and if you are concerned about anything, we urge you to telephone the school at the earliest opportunity to arrange to speak to your child's Progress Coordinator (Head of Year). You may email the Headteacher using the following address [headteacher@darland.wrexham.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@darland.wrexham.sch.uk) . This is the email address to use should you wish to send a message to any of your child's teachers, since the School Office will forward your message to the person concerned. If the issue is very urgent, please come to the school in person, although we will be best placed to help you if you telephone first. For non-urgent communication, we recommend that you write notes in your child's Planner, which is an excellent means of communication, since it is seen by both subject and form teachers.

The school makes every effort to keep parents in touch with what is happening. Parents are sent a calendar at the beginning of the school year. The school newspaper, The Griffin, is published at the end of every half term and there is a wealth of information from key dates to success stories on our comprehensive website, [www.darland.wrexham.sch.uk](http://www.darland.wrexham.sch.uk) . There are many additional letters which are sent by the 'pupil post' and in addition the school will text parents to inform them of important letters and events. We are very pleased with the way our texting service has been operating, but parents must ensure that we have up-to-date mobile telephone numbers for it to operate effectively.

Every pupil at Darland High School is issued with a Student Planner, which acts both as a diary to record homework tasks and as a resource for literacy and numeracy. The Planner also contains maps of the school, policies on uniform and behaviour, together with tracking pages, where the pupil records their progress in different subjects. We ask all parents to help their child by checking the Planner on a weekly basis.

### **• Parents Evenings**

It is very important that parents make every effort to attend the annual Parents Evening for their child. These are held at different times throughout the year depending on the year you child is in. The evening starts at 4.15pm and consists of five minute interview slots with your child's teachers. School reports are issued at the the start of every Parents' Evening and parents are advised to arrive early to allow them to read the report together with their child, before meeting the teachers. For parents of children who have just started in Year 7, there is an evening set aside in October, when parents are asked to make an appointment to come and see their child's form tutor. The purpose of this meeting is to check on how your child has settled in and to discuss the targets that have been set for him / her.

There are also other guidance evenings throughout the year, such as the Year 9 Option Pathways Evening in March, the Year 10 guidance evening in October and the Year 11 Revision evening in November.

### **• Parent Teacher Association.**

The PTA is a group of parents and staff who organise events to raise money for the extra-curricular needs of Darland High School. Examples of successful events recently have been quiz and bingo nights, table top sales and Year 7 discos. Last year the PTA raised over £5000 to buy the school a nearly new minibus. The PTA report to the Governors' Community Working Party, which always welcomes ideas from parents as to how we can serve the needs of the community better.

## **G School Policies Available On Request**

The following Policies are to be found on the School Website or may be obtained in printed form by application to the School Office.

1. Anti – Bullying Policy
2. Assessment and Reporting Policy
3. Asthma Policy
4. Attendance Policy
5. Charging Policy
6. Child Protection Policy
7. Complaints Policy
8. Controlled Assessments Policy
9. Curriculum Policy
10. Eating Disorder Policy
11. Equalities Policy
12. Examination Appeals Policy
13. Freedom of Information Policy
14. Health and Safety Policy
15. Learning and Teaching Entitlement Policy
16. Literacy Policy
17. Looked After Children Policy
18. Numeracy Policy
19. Personal and Social Education Policy
20. Pupil Restraint Policy
21. Sex and Relationships Education Policy
22. Special Educational Needs Policy
23. Substance Misuse Policy
24. Target Setting Policy

## **H Student Performance (academic and sporting)**

Darland School has a long tradition of success at county and national level in Physical Education and Sport. The school has enjoyed considerable success in both individual and team sports in recent years particularly in Football, Netball, Gymnastics and Athletics. The school boasts a modern sportshall, a good quality Gymnasium and pleasant, extensive playing fields.

In the last academic year Christian Smith became the national 3000 metres champion and Rakim Newton represented the Welsh Under 18 Football team at the age of 16. Demi Evans, Tom Benning-Roberts and Lewis Czerniak all represented Wales in Swimming and teams were county champions in Netball, Cross Country, Athletics and Rounders. The Year 9 Girls Gymnastics team of Katherine Roberts and Emily Owen were national champions at the annual Urdd competition.

Each year students have the opportunity to attend a residential Outdoor Education Centre in Snowdonia and we have a good link with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which is based in the Gresford community. Students benefit from

a comprehensive school and 5X60 extra-curricular programme in a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional activities.