

## A Brief Introduction...

### About Us

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre is an 11-18 specialist Sports College located within the City of Durham. It is a split-site school with approximately 300 11-16 students on the Bradford Crescent site (referred to as Gilesgate Campus) and approximately 1200 16-19 students based at the Providence Row site (referred to as the Sixth Form Centre). Total numbers at the School are approximately 1,500. The two sites are some 1.5 miles apart, with Gilesgate Campus being at the eastern end of the City of Durham, close to the A1M and the Sixth Form Centre being in the City Centre. In addition to the two main sites the School has developed satellite post-16 provision in a range of subjects in a variety of places including the long-term lease of Riverdale developed as a Business and Enterprise Centre, Freemans Quay which sees the delivery of A level PE and Sport, Soccerena and Ramside Hall Golf Academy facilitating BTEC National Sport and Belmont School Community Arts College who through their specialism deliver A level Performing Arts, Media, Dance and Photography.

The majority of our 11-16 students live in communities which are deprived relative to County Durham averages and national averages, free school meals currently remain above 30%. Students arrive at the school from potentially 9 different primary schools. The School is a National Challenge School. 70% of students in year 11 achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs in 2009, 39% included English and Maths. The School's contextual value added for students KS2-KS4 is 1023 and KS3-KS4 1031.

The Sixth Form Centre presents a different picture where students enter from over 30 different secondary schools from across County Durham and Sunderland. 48% of the 2008 cohort are in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowances, the highest proportion of any school with a Sixth Form in County Durham. A large majority of students leave the Sixth Form Centre to enter University, 71% of whom in 2008 are first generation higher education students. Provision at the Sixth Form Centre is predominantly at Level 3, and mainly at A Level, with some BTEC Courses, and The International Baccalaureate from 2010.

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre has at the heart of its learning community a clear vision, defined school priorities, a shared mission statement and concise core values where it embraces the Every Child Matters, Every Colleague Matters and Every Parent Matters agendas. The School is a specialist Sports College established in 2000, re-designated in 2004 and 2009. It has an on-site Community Association. Community Youth Provision has been expanded and integrated into the delivery of the KS4 curriculum and there has been a major expansion in sports provision through the Sports College. The development of Extended Schools provision is rapid. The School has undertaken a needs analysis with partner Primary Schools, stakeholder surveys, has part access to a key worker and is currently establishing its management and leadership structure, with a newly appointed Extended Services Development Officer. The School has adopted a holistic approach and is embedding its Extended Services into wider educational and area wide strategies.

As the information suggests, Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre is a thriving organisation where it seeks to 'Promote opportunity and nurture talent within a caring community' for all of its stakeholders. Through sustained effort and a clear focus and direction it is a truly embracing and dynamic organisation.

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### The School Buildings

Gilesgate Campus was built in the 1970's and 1980's. It was built for 900 students and therefore has plenty of space. The building is in good condition and is subject to planned maintenance. There has been a major commitment to ICT provision within the building enhanced through the use of wireless connectivity. There are excellent sports facilities that include new tennis courts, a gymnasium, sports hall and an all-weather floodlit pitch. A major redevelopment of the main entrance was completed in March 2004. The hall and dining area have also been refurbished creating a useful large teaching space as well as social facility for students during breaks and lunchtime.

The Sixth Form Centre is predominantly housed in a 1913's former Girls' Grammar School. It was purpose converted to Sixth Form accommodation in 1983. Rooms tend to be crowded! The building contains a Science Block, a 250 seat Theatre and student facilities. In March 2004, the Centre vacated old and condemned accommodation on the old Post Office site and opened a new Resource Centre. A Visual Arts Centre opened in September 2005 and Freemans Quay swimming pool and sports hall opened in September 2008. In 2008 the School formally opened a new Business and Enterprise Centre, Riverdale, which is a short walk from the main building and has been leased to accommodate the rising numbers of students studying at post-16.



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### School Organisation

Despite the unusual nature of the school, the school has a relatively conventional organisation. Curriculum learning has been organised into Faculties – English, Mathematics, Science, Arts, PE/Sport, Design and Technology, Modern Languages, Business & Vocational Studies (BVS) and the Human Sciences. History, Geography and Religious Studies operate as separate Departments and ICT, SEN and Administration operate as service Departments. The school is developing its own Learning Support Centre and accesses the usual range of outside professional services. There are currently 150 full time and part time teaching and learning support staff, 3 ICT Technicians, 4 Resource Assistants, a Graphic Designer, a range of Curriculum Technicians, 9 Administrative Assistants and 5 Caretakers. The school uses a range of inclusion services provided by the Children and Young People's Services and has contacts with a range of providers, like the Connexions Service.

For the most part, school structures operate across the two sites, so Heads of Faculty and Subject Leaders take on the responsibility of organising course delivery on both sites. However, the Human Sciences Faculty currently operates exclusively at the Sixth Form Centre. About 50% of staff teach on both sites and hence travel, about 40% are dedicated at the Sixth Form Centre and 10% at Gilesgate Campus.

Pastorally, all students are arranged into tutor groups with the work of the Form Tutors being co-ordinated by Directors of Learning. At KS3 one DoL leads on Student Welfare and the other on Student Attainment and Achievement. This is mirrored at KS4. There are seven DoLs in the Sixth Form Centre, all of which have year 12 and 13 tutor groups assigned to them as well as additional responsibility e.g. Partnership and Collaboration, Student Welfare and KS5 Curriculum. The School has an active Student Voice which is demonstrated by Student Councils and Subject Panels. Formal meetings take place on a regular basis and are minuted accordingly.



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### Curriculum Organisation

#### Key Stage 3

From September 2009 the School operated a modified KS3 curriculum in line with the new National Curriculum statutory requirements. Whilst normal curriculum continues we are embarking on a collaborative approach to four afternoons a week. Each session has a different theme and focus aimed at developing and broadening students' creativity, independent learning and thinking skills. Students will have access to a range of learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom environment and will also experience working with a range of different professionals and students across their own Key Stage. This is being reviewed during the course of the academic year.

#### Key Stage 4

No two years are the same. Each year we review the abilities of our students and try to fit a curriculum to meet their needs and as a result students follow educational pathways. There is a pattern of provision that generally enables the more able to access a wide range of GCSE options with the least able having a core, but with limited options and more vocational focussed courses. We also operate individually tailored courses for particular students and use support and coordination from our Learning Support team. Qualifications at KS4 generally include GCSEs, BTECs and the new Creative and Media Diploma. From September 2008 the school has also offered linked provision with the other City of Durham Schools which has expanded further in 2009.

Group sizes at KS3 and KS4 tend to be small which is as a result of a bonus of seven staff which are put into the curriculum, funded from post-16 provision. The School has a very good track record of all students at KS4 in the last 2 years continuing on in Education, Employment and Training, many of whom choose to study in the School's own Sixth Form.

#### Key Stage 5

The Sixth Form Centre is open to post-16 students from County Durham and the surrounding areas as well as Sunderland. Essentially at Sixth Form the School offers a wide range of level 3 courses, some 40 of which are to A level standard, with subjects ranging from Art and Design to World Development via the usual routes of the Arts, Sciences, Humanities, Business, Sport and Social Sciences. Sixth Form Centre students who do not wish to pursue a straight A level route of study have the option of studying BTEC Nationals in Sport and Business, Diplomas at the Advanced level from September 2009 and the International Baccalaureate from September 2010. Each year over 70% of the students studying in the Sixth Form go on to Higher Education, the vast majority of the remainder enter employment or work based learning particular to their vocation.

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### The Learning Support Facility

The School is evolving a support scheme for students with challenging behaviour. The Learning Support Facility provides withdrawal and in-class support for students with behaviour difficulties and students who are marginalised by persistent absence and/or refusal to attend. The work is varied and likely to expand. The School has have a strong desire to move to a "one stop" facility that integrates LDD and behaviour and emotional support with LA services. The Learning Support Faculty have a team of eight Learning Support Assistants. Their work is mostly provided through in-class support as well individual withdrawal and small group work. The impact this team makes is impressive.

### Extra Curricular and Enrichment

Learning is enhanced through extra curricular opportunities in a range of subject and other areas including, for example, Sports, the Arts (visual and performing), homework clubs, chess clubs and peer support. Students are free to access as much or as little as they choose. The School is open from 7.30am for students to access the breakfast club and the Learning Resource Centre. The learning theme continues through the day until 5.00pm in the main buildings and 7.00pm in specialist locations for example the Sports Hall, Gym, Visual Arts Centre and Theatre. Homework clubs are offered to all students of all ages with a number of key staff there to support and help.

The Community Association also offer a wide range of extra curricular activities and coordinates a publicised programme of events, activities and opportunities for accreditation, an example of which is the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

At the Sixth Form Centre the study support programmes, at key times of the year, and the enrichment activities running through the year, which support the curriculum, are highly regarded and appreciated by students and staff alike. Educational visits both local, national and international are abundant, as are Higher Education taster days, Aim Higher programmes and working in vocational settings. It is hoped that all prospective staff joining the school will embrace and contribute to these programmes to further enrich the students opportunities.

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### In Summary

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre is an unusual School with one mission statement;

“to promote opportunity and nurture talent within a caring community”

but with two separate constituencies. Our aim is to interpret the vision in two distinct circumstances, whilst maintaining a one-school approach.

In summary, the following perhaps describes what we stand for:

- raising standards of attainment and raising student expectations - a key word between 2009 and 2012 is aspirations
- care and commitment – we say to parents that no student need ever be out of the sight of a member of staff from 7.30am to 4.00pm
- inclusion – we believe that our students are our responsibility and we want to make it work for all, we don't always win and the tension between attainment for all and the needs of a few challenging students taxes us all, however we have had only one permanent exclusion in the last four years
- opportunities – we feel we do much to extend the range of opportunities our students enjoy, this is mostly down to our highly committed staff
- nurturing talent – this is evident in much of what we do and particularly within our specialism of PE and Sport and in our second subject Art and Design
- serving the community – this is a community school dedicated to life-long learning, we have a long way to go to fulfil our role, but it is and continues to be a vital aspect of our work
- embracing the new – if it's good and it works, we will look after it – if it's new and presents opportunity, we learn about it
- learning objectives – the School has developed a formidable reputation for school review -HMI Bond described the school in February 2002 as a “learning school,” we know what has to be done and we are learning how to do it, this has been extended into a commitment to become a Learning Community with all staff both learning and contributing to the learning of others
- funding – the School is relatively well funded – this is due to the size of the Sixth Form and our own abilities to raise funds, our per capita expenditure is the highest in County Durham, therefore, there is scope for imagination and ingenuity.

M.B. Brett  
Headteacher  
September 2010

Note:

Alternative copies with enhanced presentation are available upon request.

