



Information for Applicants



Welcome from the Headteacher

I am delighted to welcome you to Denefield. Denefield is an ambitious, successful and over-subscribed school located in the western Reading suburb of Tilehurst. We are driven by a desire to ensure that students achieve 'Success for Life' – learning the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their examinations and qualifications as well as developing the CHARACTER values to thrive in modern life. Denefield was named School of the Year at the 2021 Pride of Reading Awards – the first secondary school ever to have won this prestigious accolade. Our most recent (2023 & 2024) examination results put student progress and attainment in the top 20% of schools nationally.

Our aim is that **every student**, regardless of ability or circumstance, leaves Denefield with the foundation for a rich and fulfilling life. Success for life is underpinned by the curriculum we teach, the qualifications that students gain and by the CHARACTER values that are embedded throughout the school. Denefield students are happy, confident and polite making this an excellent environment in which to work.

Denefield offers a rigorous and engaging **curriculum** at GCSE and A Level, with creative and practical subjects alongside traditional academic courses. The school has a faculty structure, with three core faculties of English and Media, Maths, ICT and Computing, and Science and Social Science, as well as four foundation faculties of Humanities, Languages, Business and Travel, Creative and Performing Arts, and Physical Education and Health. The seven Heads of Faculty drive teaching and learning in the school, and staff are supported by a full programme of training and professional development, clear schemes of work, and a consistent but flexible approach to pedagogy summarised as our 'Lesson on a Page'.

Students at Denefield work hard at the school's nine CHARACTER **values** – confidence, happiness, articulacy, resilience, ambition, courage, tolerance, empathy and respect. They have the opportunity to develop these during subject lessons, in assemblies and house competitions and as part of our timetabled Success for Life curriculum. Students also build their CHARACTER values through participation in sports teams and competitions, attendance on school trips and residential in the UK and abroad, and involvement in the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities offered at the school.

We have very high **expectations** of students in terms of behaviour and culture. Students and staff deserve disruption-free classrooms. We have clear, consistent and certain systems in place to enable this, supported by a proactive and visible senior leadership team. As a result visitors to Denefield routinely comment on how calm and purposeful the school is. I am also particularly proud of the school's supportive pastoral system. Every student is assigned to one of four houses and is part of a vertical tutor group. Our four heads of house are responsible for behaviour and culture, and we have three welfare managers who oversee students' welfare and mental health. Many students are involved in the running of the school, by involvement in clubs and activities and the many community engagement activities on offer.

Denefield's **sixth form** curriculum is designed to ensure students can access the most competitive universities, including Russell Group and Oxbridge, with three students gaining places at Oxford for 2024. Many students also progress to the most sought-after apprenticeships such as with AWE, Bayer and Microsoft. We have a Sports Coaching and Player Development programme which leads to advanced sporting qualifications and performance in addition to A Level qualification. Our Sixth Form leadership team play an active role in the school, and students are expected to undertake community service in the school or wider society.

Denefield is located in Tilehurst, some four miles from Reading town centre. Our estate backs on to farmland and woods and is generous in size, extending to some 23 acres and boasting well-maintained buildings and grounds. In recent years the school benefited from £9m of **investment**, creating an expanded canteen area, along with new facilities in the Science and Art, Design & Technology departments, as well as a new display and assembly space – fittingly called the Da Vinci auditorium. Our floodlit 3G pitch opened for school and community use in December 2021 and provides a first-class facility for PE lessons, training and competitive matches. We have recently been granted approximately £1m from the Department for Education to provide solar-powered air conditioning for approximately 20 classrooms and offices and this will be installed over the coming months.

The school can only be as happy and successful as the **staff** it employs. We work hard to ensure that staff have a positive work-life balance. We have centralised behaviour management systems and a standardised curriculum with faculty members sharing the preparation of lessons and resources. We aim for only one after school event or meeting per week, and have significantly reduced the number of times we collect student data. Many staff live close to school and a significant number send their own children to Denefield. Staff are a close-knit community and regularly socialise together.

Staff benefit from:

- Supportive faculty structure with collaborative planning and preparation to increase efficiency and minimise workload
- High quality professional development and the opportunity to train and mentor student teachers
- Excellent student behaviour based on respect and high expectations alongside a dedicated and supportive pastoral team
- Priority places for children of Denefield staff
- On-site nursery
- Onsite parking
- Free flu vaccinations
- Highly subsidised cycle to work scheme
- Subsidised canteen
- Employee assistance programme.

Tilehurst is also a fantastic place to work and live. Tilehurst railway station is located approximately a 15 minute walk from Denefield. It has regular Great Western Railway services between Reading (5 minutes), London Paddington (40 minutes) and Oxford (40 minutes). The school is served by the number 16 Reading bus which operates up to four times per hour during peak times, providing a 20 minute journey into and out of the centre of Reading. Henley, Marlow and Windsor are also all within easy reach.

We are not resting on our laurels, and there is much still to do. Denefield is already a positive and vibrant community where standards and outcomes are excellent. Our strategic plan focuses on five areas that we will continue to develop to ensure that Denefield is consistently the best school locally and regionally - for students, for staff and for the local community.

I hope that you will take the time to visit us and to reflect carefully on the potential this post will offer you. If you like what you see and wish to be considered for the role, please complete the relevant application form. Please include details of the skills, qualities, attributes and experience you would bring to the role based on the information provided in the job and person specification.

At Denefield we take safeguarding very seriously and we are committed to safer recruitment and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our comprehensive recruitment and selection processes aims to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants. Successful candidates are subject to rigorous pre-employment checks. All short-listed candidates will be subject to online searches and any successful candidates will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. All candidates will be required to submit the names of two referees, one of which must be your most recent employer. CVs will not be accepted.

We are equally committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity. We aim for our workforce to be representative of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best. We are committed to providing equality and fairness in our recruitment and employment practices and not to discriminate on any grounds. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

I hope you will consider joining my team and I look forward to receiving your application form. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or indeed one of my colleagues, should you wish to discuss the role further or arrange a visit.

Mr E Towill MA (Oxon)
Headteacher