



September 2018

Dear Parent or Carer

It is an exciting time at Framwellgate Sixth Form and we are very pleased that the Sixth Form has been rated as 'good' in the recent Ofsted inspection. The report reflects the improvements the school has made over the past year, which continue into the academic year and beyond. Some of the highlights recognised by inspectors are:

- Teachers have high expectations of students and teaching is tailored well to students' interests and prior knowledge.
- Students on both academic and applied general programmes make good progress from their starting points.
- Students feel well supported and are offered a wide variety of opportunities.

Your child has some important decisions to make over the coming months, decisions which will affect their futures. For example, they will need to decide whether they want to continue their academic studies or follow a work based route; if the former is the case, they will need to decide what kind of study they wish to undertake and then, which is the best place for them to undertake that study.

I hope that, for the large majority of students in Year 11, we can meet their needs here at Framwellgate School Durham and help them achieve their ambitions. On Thursday 28th September the majority of year 11 students will participate in a Sixth Form experience day. During this day students will participate in sixth form lessons of their choice. Students will also experience the Sixth Form STEP programme and are free to use Sixth Form facilities throughout the day. This will also be a non-uniform day for students, but we do expect them to attend school with their planner and equipment, ready to learn. Students will also receive the 2019 Sixth Form prospectus.

On Tuesday 9th October at 6.30pm Year 11 students and their parents or carers are invited to our Sixth Form Open Evening where there will be presentations from Curriculum Leaders about the courses on offer.

There are many advantages and benefits to a post 16 education at Framwellgate School Durham:

Continuity: The majority of students across the country who attend schools with sixth forms, stay in the same school for their post-16 studies because they are happy, and have good relationships with their teachers who understand them well and know what they are capable of. FSD students who have remained here in the Sixth Form cite this as one of the major benefits of the school.

Achievement: In 2018 the average points score and percentage of top grades at FSD were both higher than in the previous year. In addition, over a quarter of all A' level entries were graded A* or A, and our inclusive approach ensures that students performed above target across a range of A' level and vocational subjects.

Tracking of attendance and regular monitoring of performance: In the nicest possible way, there is no hiding place and students will be challenged and pushed to achieve their absolute best.

Small class sizes: This is important. As Sixth Form funding has reduced nationally, in many institutions, class sizes in the Sixth Form have increased substantially. Because our Sixth Form is

relatively small compared to some, the impact of these changes hasn't been felt as much, and we are able to keep class sizes in the majority of subjects down to below 20 (in fact, 20 students would be deemed a very large class here). Students receive more attention and individual support and are taught in a tutorial style environment, which helps prepare them for university.

Internships: Students joining our Sixth Form are able to apply to join our internship programme, which offers amazing opportunities for those who want to gain work experience in particular academic or vocational areas as well as receiving guidance, help and support from mentors in their chosen area.

Dedicated Sixth Form Team: Our Sixth Form students are supported by the Head and Deputy Head of Sixth Form, an experienced team of STEP tutors and the Guidance Manager, who is based in the Sixth Form Hub. This team are there to help students explore their post 18 options and tackle any potential barriers to learning in the Sixth Form.

Sport: Each Wednesday afternoon we offer sports and fitness sessions to the Sixth Form, run on our site by Durham University. Students are also encouraged to use our sports facilities at other times in the week

A new curriculum: In line with the majority of schools across the country, we have moved to a new, 3 subject linear curriculum which is complemented by other accredited enhancement options, making students more marketable to universities or employers (for example, the Extended Project, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Higher Sports Leadership Award).

Pathways: The opportunity to follow an academic pathway, vocational pathway or to combine the two is relatively uncommon as most Sixth Form providers specialise in one or the other but is increasingly being seen to improve progression rates and support the needs of all students; we offer these pathways at FSD.

Other enrichment opportunities: These include leadership roles in school, the opportunity to support or mentor younger students and courses such as sign language or first aid. We encourage all of our Sixth Form students to participate in, or lead, our extra-curricular activities (in music, drama, sports, science etc.)

The majority of our students last year went on to take up places at top universities in a variety of academic and vocational degree courses including engineering, physiotherapy and sports development. Our current Year 13 students are equally talented, having accepted offers to take up places at universities such as Cambridge, Warwick, Leeds, Northumbria, Teesside, Manchester and Durham. We can offer our students everything they need as Sixth Formers: good quality teaching, the opportunity to achieve the best grades and access to the best quality guidance and support. All of this in a supportive and caring environment which they know well.

We hope that this programme of Post 16 advice will help your child think further about the future. In the meantime, please see course information at framdurham.com and do not hesitate to contact me at mersh-roberts.l@framdurham.com if you require any further information.

Best wishes,

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