

Duncombe School

An Independent Preparatory
School and Nursery



Building a firm foundation





“

We believe parents are central to our success; we maintain an open door policy and warmly invite you to visit us in order to gain a full appreciation of Duncombe and our ethos.” Jeremy Phelan Headmaster



Welcome to Duncombe

At Duncombe we equip pupils with a firm foundation to enable them to excel during their school careers and beyond.

Families are welcomed into the Duncombe community to participate in a journey of enrichment – academically, holistically and morally – through a personalised learning environment that has a broad basis allowing pupils to identify their strengths and aptitudes, ensuring they become confident, contented and courteous individuals.

Outstanding teaching allied to the school's phase structure and the multitude of opportunities offered both inside and outside of class, fosters the creation of future leaders. Children have an understanding and interpretation of the world around them which is supported by Christian values while respecting and recognising the beliefs and cultures of others.





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The curriculum is outstanding, characterised by the extent to which it caters for the learning needs of each child and the development of their individual well-being.” School Inspection Service 2014



Outstanding teaching and learning

The excellent reputation Duncombe School has enjoyed since opening in 1939 is continuing with our outstanding teaching and learning provision.

Innovative, creative and personalised lessons nurture a passion for learning in our pupils. The wide and varied curriculum includes two modern foreign languages, music, sports, history, art, religious education and geography as well as the fundamentals of English, mathematics and science, alongside study skills.

From Year 2 pupils attend lessons tailored to their abilities in mathematics and English and from Year 4 students are placed into sets for core lessons, allowing our specialist subject teachers to focus on each child, identifying their strengths

whilst also preparing them for independent learning and secondary school.

Small class sizes, dedicated class teaching assistants, cross-year house and school council systems and form teachers ensure pupils feel happy, supported and secure in their educational environment. Parents are provided with two written reports each academic year, and invited to three parents' evenings as well as several informal sessions, including coffee mornings, with the senior leadership team and other staff throughout the year.





The perfect start

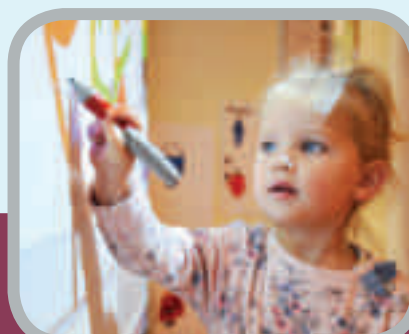
As two year olds, our pupils are immediately embraced by the extraordinary educational provision we offer.

Tuition in music, information technology and foreign languages as well as physical education begins in Treetops, our purpose-built Early Years setting. The leadership team ensure the fundamental skills needed to learn are established through the use of the latest modern technology in a creative way, via practical games, the use of iPads, songs, storytelling and role play. These techniques help children embark on their journey towards structured learning.

Treetops' spacious garden is key to the pupils' initial discovery of the world and science, whether

planting bulbs or playing in the mud garden, while the extra-curricular Forest School based in The Dell, the woodland area in Duncombe's grounds, helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem outside the classroom.

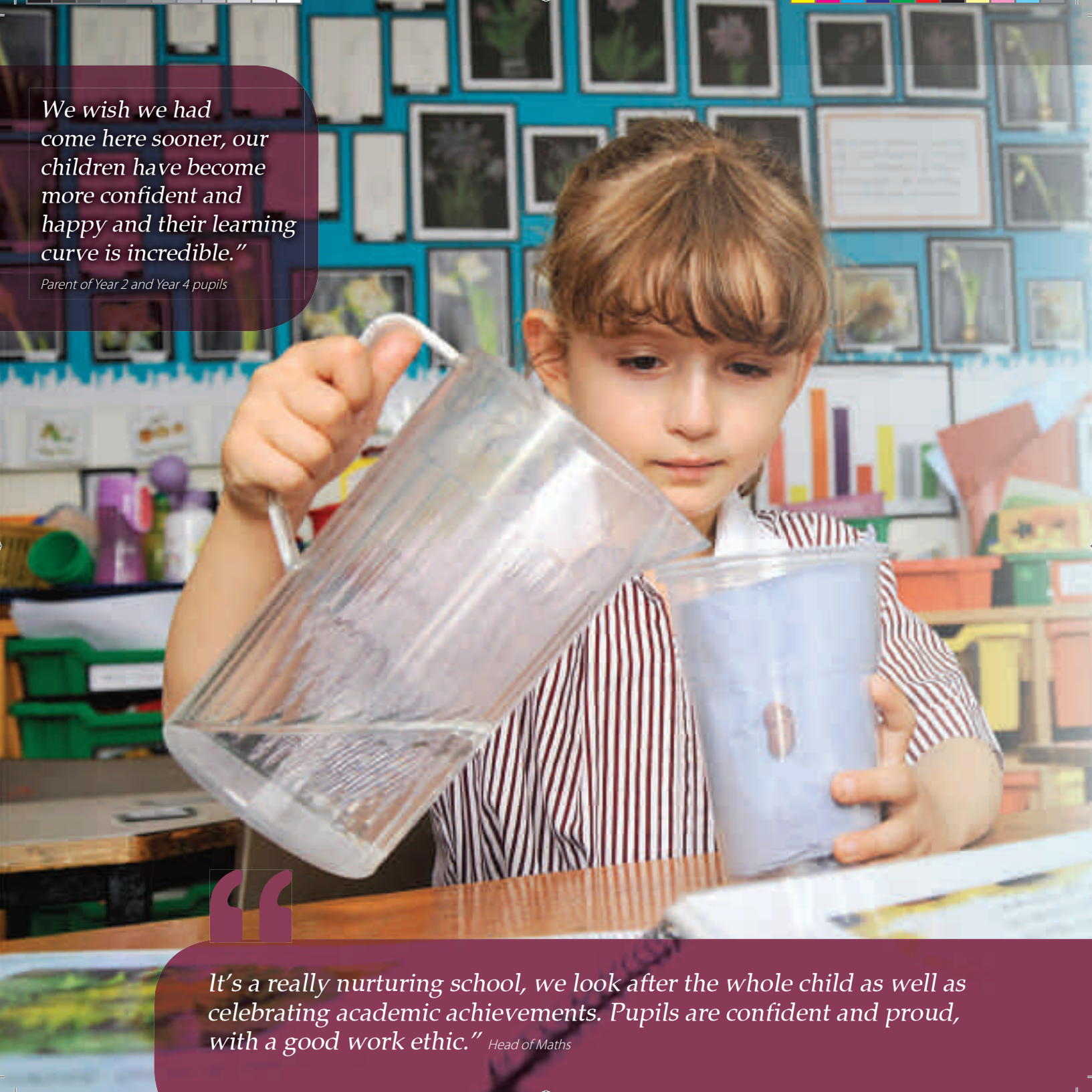
Treetops children are gradually integrated in to Main School, through experiences such as weekly visits to the library and participation in assemblies. Additionally, senior pupils become buddies to the reception class, reading to them and becoming a trusted friend ahead of their progression to Year 1.





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Resources are exceptionally good and used highly effectively both inside and outside the classroom to create an interesting learning environment. The overall quality of care is outstanding.” *School Inspection Service 2014*

A young girl with brown hair and bangs, wearing a red and white striped school uniform, is focused on pouring water from a clear plastic pitcher into a blue plastic cup. She is sitting at a wooden desk in a classroom. The background is a blue wall decorated with numerous framed pictures and certificates. To her right, there are colorful storage bins and a bookshelf. The lighting is bright and even.

We wish we had come here sooner, our children have become more confident and happy and their learning curve is incredible."

Parent of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils

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It's a really nurturing school, we look after the whole child as well as celebrating academic achievements. Pupils are confident and proud, with a good work ethic." Head of Maths



Stimulating young minds

Pupils' individual strengths and needs are our focus from the very first day of Lower School. Our well resourced support staff and highly trained teachers ensure students are enabled to develop academically and socially.

Duncombe's Golden Rules are instilled in pupils from the outset, ensuring an environment of understanding and mutual respect which facilitates effective learning.

Our drive for strong literacy and numeracy skills is spearheaded through traditional lessons, specialist subject classes and booster sessions with our individual needs' team to ensure pupils gain the

best and most secure knowledge foundation. Every class has a teaching assistant, allowing pupils more opportunities to clarify queries, extend their understanding and be the focus of additional monitoring from adults. The success of our pupils is highlighted at the end of year Speech Day, and the Lower School performance provides the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and present themselves in public.





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Duncombe School is amazing. I will miss the atmosphere when I leave. The teachers are all very supportive; they give you lots of new ideas and help you.” Year 6 pupil



Investing in the future

From Year 4, pupils study at an appropriate level alongside their peers, under the stewardship of subject teachers.

Core lessons are taught in ability groups, while classes in modern foreign languages, music and sports are taught by specialists in their fields. This system allows for in-depth monitoring and assessment of pupils' strengths, enabling them to develop individually and preparing them for life beyond Duncombe.

Robust feedback ensures that pupils are aware of their own abilities and provided with the knowledge to enhance their learning, while visiting speakers,

educational trips and residential visits help to consolidate and extend their understanding of the world around them.

Our students perform exceptionally well in statutory examinations as well as senior school entrance tests and interviews. In their final Year 6 term we strive to give them opportunities to discover and develop the essential life skills of money management, team building, leadership and citizenship through a thoughtfully designed enrichment programme.





Leadership and responsibility

As pupils progress they are offered more opportunities to develop initiative, leadership and enterprise.

The house system engenders a family atmosphere as children from across the years work together to raise funds for charity, compete, and share in each others' successes. Year 6 pupils are eligible to be appointed as prefects, house and sports captains and all Year 6 pupils undertake duties during wet play times. All pupils are also invited to apply for other roles of responsibility such as members of the 'green team' and pupil council.

Throughout the years, independence is developed through, for example, supervised overnight stays at school which graduate into residential trips

within the UK and abroad. Pupils also have several opportunities to represent the school in academic, creative and sports events, both locally and nationally.

Duncombe pupils are encouraged to reach out to the community; whether by providing entertainment at a care home, donating Harvest produce to the district food bank, singing at Christmas celebrations or participating in local arts festivals as well as events with the Mayor of Hertford such as the Remembrance Day observance and Mayor's tea party for older citizens.





“The school promotes confident, polite children who are able to talk to adults and deliver presentations.”

Parent of pupils in Year 5 and reception



Sporting excellence

Physical activity is integral to Duncombe's core timetable and after-school provision, illustrating our firm commitment to promoting healthy, active lifestyles among our children.

Pupils undertake both physical education and games lessons with specialist coaches every week. Our grounds encourage active playtimes with the adventure playground, all-weather court and 100 metre track, as well as opportunities to explore the environment in our Forest School within our secure woodland setting. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 attend swimming classes off-site and the Upper School holds an annual swimming gala.

The plethora of after-school activities have been chosen to suit the diverse interests and demands of our pupils, from tap to golf, tennis to street dance. There are opportunities to compete with other schools, as well as against each other, at football, netball, rugby, hockey, cricket and rounders, in teams that are both competitive and inclusive.





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Sport has a high profile within the curriculum and is a subject that the school does very well.”

School Inspection Service 2014



Practised performers

Whether musically gifted, quick witted or dramatically driven, Duncombe pupils have a multitude of opportunities to share their talents with the school and the wider community.

Performance skills in the widest sense are nurtured within our children, developing an essential part of their repertoire for adolescence and adulthood. This begins in Treetops with lessons in notation and singing, and the nursery and reception Christmas plays, through to learning the recorder in Years 2 and 3, and taking part in the Lower School Speech Day production. In Lower and Upper School pupils play instruments for music assemblies or an evening concert, and Year 6 perform in a full production at

the end of the school year, not to mention the form assemblies that every class from Year 1 to Year 6 presents.

With a variety of individual instrumental and after-school groups to choose from, all pupils have a chance to shine and develop an innate ability to perform, speak and debate publicly - as well as gain Trinity College grade exams and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art qualifications.





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The school is helping the children grow as a whole. My daughter is building relationships across the years.”

Parent of Year 2 pupil



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There is a lot of choice, through the clubs we build up relationships with the children in other classes and years. Also prep is very helpful before you go off to matches.” Year 6 pupil



Beyond the school day

Horse riding, chess, ballet, self defence and photography are just a snapshot of the additional activities available as part of our 'wrap-around' care.

Whether starting the day at the 7.30am breakfast club or finishing with a fencing lesson until 6pm, we ensure all activities provide a long-term benefit to our pupils; enhancing their communication skills, promoting a healthy lifestyle and providing a counter-balance to their academic abilities.

During breaks in the academic year bespoke holiday clubs are available for Treetops and Main School pupils which may be booked according to individual family needs and provide further unique experiences for pupils.

Pupils in the upper years are invited to attend prep before extra-curricular activities. This guided homework session reaffirms classroom teaching and ensures work is complete, allowing families quality time together once the working day is over.





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