

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am delighted that you and your child have shown an interest in Burnt Mill School as the next stage in their learning journey. We are a caring community where learning counts and people matter, characterised by a dedicated Governing body, well qualified staff, excellent educational opportunities, impressive levels of achievement and a commitment to high standards of behaviour.

All parents are determined to choose the best school for their children – a school where they can be happy and secure, work hard and reach their full potential. As Headteacher, I am committed to ensuring a world class educational experience for your children. We offer a dynamic, innovative curriculum and impressive range of extra-curricular activities to appeal to students of all abilities and with varied interests. This ensures that all students remain engaged and motivated throughout their learning journey with us. This approach also contributes to our impressive and constantly improving examination results.

Burnt Mill's GCSE results in 2008 were 64% A* - C and we are ranked in the top 11% of all schools nationally for the value we add to the children's learning during their time with us. This places us in the top five schools in Essex on this measure. We are also on the top 100 schools nationally for sustained improvement at Key Stage 3. Burnt Mill is one of only 321 schools nationally to be elected to the Specialists Schools and Academies Trust's 'Value Added Club' and one of the only 627 members nationally of the 'Most Improved Schools Club'. This is an outstanding achievement by our students and shows that they can compete with the best in the UK. In 2008 we were one of the only 518 schools nationally to be given an award for the value we add to children's learning. We are well above the government benchmark of 30% 5+ A*-C including English and Maths (37% in 2008, 58% including functional English and Maths) and our results are predicted to rise even further. This has been achieved because of the committed partnership that exists at Burnt Mill between teachers, parents, and students.

Burnt Mill is in many ways a traditional school with traditional values. However, we constantly look to the future and engage with any educational initiatives that will offer your child the best education for the 21st Century and ensure that they are proud to be part of our vibrant learning community. We work hard to ensure that all students have rich and varied learning experience that is varied, enjoyable, challenging and inspires to excellence.


'The level of enjoyment seen in lessons and around school is high.'

'Teachers establish good relationships with students so that the latter are keen to learn. "The school has been innovative in enabling students to take responsibility.'

'Teachers demonstrate strong commitment to helping students learn, often at lunchtime or after school.'

The learning journey for the staff and students at Burnt Mill is exciting and inspiring. We are proud to be a Specialist College of Performing Arts with a reputation in the local community and beyond for the high quality of our performances. As a school, we are at the forefront of new initiatives in developing personalised learning through new technologies; student voice; assessment for learning; improved advice and guidance; whole school mentoring; school organisation and curriculum innovation. If our vision of a school with a clear emphasis on hard work and traditional discipline within a warm and caring framework where a team of professionals are committed to achieving extraordinary results for your child in each moment of every ordinary day matches your requirements, then we look forward to welcoming you on the journey and receiving your application to join the family of Burnt Mill.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Chamberlain', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEPHEN CHAMBERLAIN
MA, BA (Hons), NPQH, PGCE (Mus), MCMI, FRSA
Headteacher and Chair of the Harlow Education Consortium

'The Headteacher provides particularly strong leadership and continues to give a very clear direction to the work of the school. His high expectations are leading to the transformation of the culture of the school' OFSTED 2007

'The key to improvement has been the head teacher's very clear and determined lead. He has built strong senior team and, with their support, brought greater challenge to students' OFSTED 2007

Aims of Burnt Mill School

- To provide an excellent secondary education where every child matters
- To encourage students to have high expectations for their education and future careers
- To foster pride in achievement
- To encourage co-operation and respect for others, tolerance, understanding and empathy
- To encourage self-confidence, responsibility and a positive self-image
- To provide a well ordered learning environment in which students can succeed through enjoyment of their work and become life-long learners
- To contribute to the school, the community and wider society
- To ensure excellence and enjoyment everyday

A Specialist College of Performing Arts

'First rate performing arts productions' OFSTED 2007

Burnt Mill was designed by the DFES as a Specialist College of Performing Arts in 2003. This brings significant additional resources, learning experiences and opportunities to all students not only who have an interest or aptitude in this area. Our performing arts curriculum provision is outstanding, with dance, drama and music strongly represented through a network of clubs at school and community performances.

The Burnt Mill Music School meets on Saturday mornings and offers individual or small group tuition on a large variety of instruments as well as a Jazz and Rock School.

We work closely with community partners including Essex Music services, Harlow Playhouse, Theatre Active and local schools. We also offer the new Arts Leaders Qualification and we are an accredited centre for Continuing Professional Development in the Arts for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust providing training opportunities to teachers from all over the UK. We are a lead school in the Essex Arts Colleges Forum; contribute to the national arts college steering committee and local authority arts strategic planning; hold an Artsmark Gold award from the Arts Council of Great Britain and feature as a model of outstanding practice in their promotional material.

A Vision of Education

'Imagine a theme park for the mind that is continuously invented and reinvented by a community of people who are energetic, playful, responsible, caring and committed to learning. See the high level of academic achievement in exhibitions, project awards, and special events that are a way of life. Notice the presence of all age groups making connections with one another through the work they do, the problems they solve, and the experience, strength, and hope they share. See the use of technologies everywhere to invent the future, examine the past, and make sense out of today. Move through a main street filled with business, professional, and service activities; discover the side streets that lead to national and international neighbourhoods where customs, culture and history are an interactive theatre of life. Appreciate the music, art, drama, and physical movement present everywhere and used by all as a way to nurture body, mind, and spirit. Sense the presence of professionals committed to achieving extraordinary results in each moment of every ordinary day; children of all ages discovering the champion within.' The Burnt Mill 'learning journey': an adventure for the mind and a home for the heart.

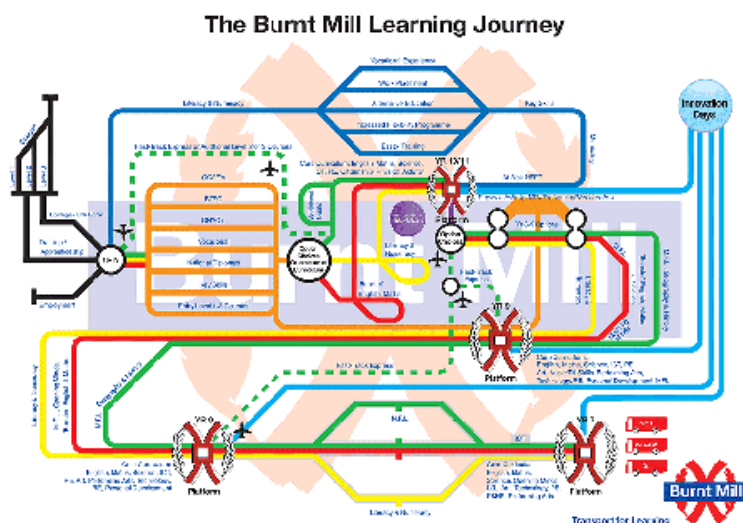
Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The Learning Journey in Years Seven, Eight and Nine

'The variety of courses in Key Stage 4 and different routes through Key Stage 3 help motivate students and sustain positive attitudes to school' OFSTED 2007

The Year 7 curriculum provides a smooth transition to secondary school and our innovative approach to the curriculum ensures that students' needs, interests and ambitions are met. Ofsted in 2007 commented 'Individual learning pathways have been introduced, providing opportunities for students to progress from different starting points, receiving extra support if necessary or accelerating their progress if appropriate. This innovative approach is constantly being developed.' Many students attend our popular Gifted and Talented, Numeracy and Literacy summer schools. When they join us in September they follow a broad curriculum studying the following subjects; English, Mathematics; French; Science; Geography and History; Art; Music; Drama; Dance; Technology (including Food technology and Textiles) Information Technology; Religious Education; Physical Education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).

We have created a 'personalised' learning journey for each individual student. The curriculum is designed to meet individual needs with opportunities to accelerate (fast-track) or receive 'booster' lessons as appropriate. Students are set in most subjects as they progress through the school but flexibility is built into the curriculum to allow movement between sets as the need arises. Groups are as small as possible, for example Technology is taught in groups of only twenty students and some classes in some other subjects may be less for some students. The curriculum is enhanced by a vast enrichment programme of academic sporting and artistic clubs, and by six 'innovation days, one per half term whereby timetabled lessons are collapsed to allow students to experience a 'thematic' deep learning experience that is challenging, inspiring, opens their minds to new experiences and allows them to succeed.



Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The Learning Journey in Years Ten and Eleven

'Students and their parents appreciate the quantity and quality of the advice they are given with regard to making subject choices at the end of Year 9' OFSTED 2007

At the end of Year 9 students receive extensive information, advice and guidance in partnership with parents and other agencies to help them select their options for Key Stage 4 and will continue to be grouped in accordance with their academic ability. They can choose from an impressive range of options for their GCSE and GNVQ examinations. These include History; Geography; Religious Studies; Sociology; Business Studies; Spanish; English Literature; Science; Music; Drama; Dance; Physical Education; Leisure and Tourism, Health and Social Care, ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh Programme, Technology, Photography and Media Studies. Our links with other education providers allow a vocational aspect for students who may select BTEC qualifications, applied courses, vocational diplomas and key skills in areas such as engineering, motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty, construction, outdoor pursuits and other recognised qualifications. Students who have fast tracked in some subject areas through key stage 3 and 4 are given the option of additional or higher level qualifications in those subjects.

In addition all pupils study Mathematics, English, Physical Education, ICT, Personal Development, Citizenship and RE. All students are provided with work experience placements in Year 10. We have a range of support through Connexions and our learning mentors to assist students in their choice of careers and further and higher education options and work closely with our partners to ensure that we meet the challenges of the 14-19 curriculum.

At both Key Stages, mentoring by the co-tutor, Director of Learning, Pastoral Support Managers, Learning and Aim Higher Mentors members of the Senior Leadership Team are a key feature of ensuring that close attention is paid to students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes and that learning is connected to what they already know. Assessment and target setting are carried out regularly and are key components in ensuring that students understand their learning targets, how to set goals for themselves and how to achieve them and help to monitor their own progress.

'In the very best lessons, the use of assessment is outstanding' OFSTED 2007

Our enrichment curriculum which includes Business and Enterprise Days, International Focus Week, Creative Partnerships Arts and Maths Project, Languages at Work Week, artists in residence scheme, theatre-in-education programme and host of other exciting activities make the learning journey worthwhile.

Facilities

Burnt Mill offers excellent facilities to support and enhance all areas of the curriculum. Specialist areas include six science laboratories and ICT suite; three music rooms; music practice areas including a recording studio; two drama studios; state-of-the-art dance studio; four art studios and ICT base; a business and information studies areas; two cafeterias; library; six well equipped computer centres and a purpose built and newly refurbished technology centre.

In 2000 we opened an enhanced sports hall incorporating a fitness studio and new changing rooms to complement our swimming pool; gymnasium and extensive outside courts and pitches. Our main PE changing facilities have recently been refurbished to a high standard and include additional access and facilities for students and adults with disabilities.

All staff are provided with laptops for teaching and learning and our programme of installing interactive whiteboards and projectors across the school continues.

Our ICT initiatives in developing Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) and video conferencing facilities for all students and our professional standard student radio 'Radio Piccadilly' are just some of those elements that make Burnt Mill unique.

We have a separate Student Services Reception and medical facility to ensure that students' needs are met by a highly trained and specialist team. They are there to support students on a day-to-day basis providing appropriate information, advice and guidance. We also provide information to students through a network of plasma screens across the school that celebrate achievement, present learning challenges, give up-to date information on national and international news events as well as our daily menus and activities.

As a result of work carried out by our School Council, there is now a covered outside social area for students to use all year round at breaks and lunchtimes and for lessons.

Sport

In 2002 and again in 2005 the school was awarded the sportsmark award in recognition of our sporting achievements.

Every student in the school experiences a range of PE lessons including games, gymnastics, swimming and dance. We also give students the opportunities to choose P.E and Dance at various levels as an examination option. We also offer qualifications in officiating, sports leadership and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Our curriculum innovations have also included options in Tai Chi, yoga, street dance, pilates, aerobics and the use of dance mats to engage students in a wide range of healthy physical activities and health related fitness opportunities. Every student has the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular sport and there are representative teams for many sports in each year group. Inter-house sport competitions are also arranged with the annual swimming gala and sports day being particular highlights.

An Extended School

At Burnt Mill we recognise and value the contribution that extra-curricular activities bring to the personal and social development of all our students. We offer an extensive and exciting range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.

These range from visits to theatres, day trips to France, outdoor activities centres, university taster days, business placements and field work. There are also a number of reward trips for students during the year for outstanding behaviour and attendance.

We are school that aims to prepare our students to be global citizens and we have extensive international links with Canada, the United States, Spain and, more recently China. Students have made visits to Europe (France and Spain), America and Canada for skiing, student exchanges with China, languages development and performing arts visits. Our recent links with our partner school, the Lida Middle School in Suzhou, China has resulted in a number of visits and exchanges and included a visit from top Chinese official Mr Li Yuanchao in 2007. Our international focus week saw students making Chinese kites, silk making, learning mandarin, tai chi, Chinese cuisine, calligraphy, opera workshops and the history of Chinese inventions and exports.

'The programme at Burnt Mill School in Harlow is a great example of what can be achieved through these partnerships' Councillor Stephen Castle, Cabinet Member for Education, Essex County Council

As an extended school, we also offer breakfast club activities to allow students to receive additional support with work before school and enjoy a healthy breakfast. They can choose to work in our learning resources centre/library supported by one of our Every Child Matters Coordinators/House Leaders or have a healthy start by swimming or working out in the multi-gym with our PE staff. There are also other activities before and after school including Latin and Mandarin classes, revisions and coursework clinics, homework clubs, polymath teams as well as a range of sports and arts activities.

'Extra-curricular provision is particularly strong, with a very wide range of activities, both sporting and artistic. Many students participate, which further contributes to their good social and cultural development' OFSTED 2007

Personalised Learning

Burnt Mill is an inclusive school and we aim to support all students who have individual needs to achieve success.

Able, Gifted and Talented programme

At Burnt Mill we have a culture of success. We have a programme for the most able that is unique to us. This includes summer schools for year 6, 7 and 8 students; master classes to improve SATS results in year 9; enrichment programmes, setting by ability, university 'taster' sessions, and early entry for GCSE where appropriate and the opportunity to study for additional qualifications. We also offer an extensive 'Aim Higher' programme with support from specialist learning mentors to encourage students into higher education programmes.

Extended Learning and Student Support Centre

At Burnt Mill we recognise that some students may have individual learning needs or at times need support to help them learn. Students who require additional support are identified through our student referral system. With a clear learning support policy in place children who have learning difficulties are supported in the classroom and/or withdrawn as necessary to work in our learning support and study centre. Students have access to arrange of specialist ICT packages as well as other literacy or specialist learning packages. Our unique Student Support Centre and our network of excellent teaching assistants and learning mentors provide additional support to students in social skills, emotional literacy, behaviour management and curriculum support. Our student support centre is staffed throughout the school day by our inclusion Manager.

We also offer extensive one-to-one counselling sessions for students provided by our links with Connexions, Young Concern and the Rayner Trust through our Student Services Centre as well as drop in sessions with the School Nurse. We also have our own student 'listeners' from KS4 who are there to support students in the school on a daily basis. They are easily identifiable by their blue badges. The school has specialist provision for secondary age pupils who are Hearing-impaired, and we work closely with Tanys Dell Junior School to ensure a continuous programme of support for students. 2008 will see the completion of a new Children's Centre within the school offering support to children and their families from Burnt Mill and our family of schools as part of the Harlow Education Consortium Children's Centre Network. This will also mean greater support, information, advice and guidance to children and families in the areas of health, education, employment as well as providing a professional base for colleagues working in education, social care, educational welfare and health from the Teams Around Schools, Children and Communities.

Home-School Partnership

The education of your child is a partnership between home and school. We look for the support of our parents in ensuring that their children attend school regularly, are punctual, properly equipped, follow our Behaviour for Learning Policy and are in full school uniform. Our students are proud of their uniform and house ties and we believe that it does so much to promote a positive attitude as well as enhance the role of students as ambassadors in the local community. Parents are encouraged to check homework is completed and visit the school for our progress evenings and target setting days.

We welcome parent contact concerning individual children. There are regular communications between school and home. These are in the form of reports, and letters or telephone calls when appropriate. Throughout the year there are consultation events that coincide with students' full and interim reports. Each student has a personal planner, which is seen and signed regularly by tutors and parents. General school news is communicated weekly in our school newsletter '**Burnt Mill News**' (burntmillnews@burntmill.essex.sch.uk). These are also available with other information from our website: www.burntmill.essex.sch.uk

We believe that the form tutor is a vital role within the school and will be your first point of contact to discuss your child. Burnt Mill is unique in that each tutor group has two form tutors who are members of the teaching or associate staff. This ensures that students are supported both pastorally and academically and can be more effectively mentored by the form tutor team. The form tutor is the first point of contact for parents. There is also a Director of Learning for each year group who works closely with the tutors to monitor academic progress, personal development and to ensure that students are happy and successful as they progress through the school. Each year is overseen by an Assistant Headteacher, who effectively leads their own 'mini school' within the year teams. In the first instance they, with the Director of Learning have responsibility for both the pastoral and academic aspects of the year group and all matters related to behaviour and discipline.

We have a thriving Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for each House. The PTA fosters good relations between home, school and the local community. Parents are encouraged to give active support to the PTA and the House Committees will be pleased to hear from parents who would like to be involved. Most recently they have funded the provision for lockers in the school and the purchase of a new minibus.

Student Voice:

The House System

Burnt Mill is proud of its well established House system that fosters a sense of community and pride in the school. There are five Houses; Hunt, Cockcroft, Eliot, Sheppard and Moore. Each student is assigned to a different House lead by a House Leader. Their role is to ensure that students are encouraged to participate in the many House activities and contribute to the healthy system of competition for House points through the extra-curricular Baccalaureate scheme. Each house also has representatives on the Student Council. The council, who hold a budget of £5000 each year, works closely with the Headteacher to ensure that students' views are taken in to account in the leadership and management of the school.

As a result of their views the school has made significant improvements to the learning environment, involved students in lesson observations, reviewing the teaching in departments and developed and adapted our system of rewards and consequences.

Two Year 11 students are elected by their peers each year to sit on the Full Governing Body as Head Boy and Head Girl. As well as reporting to the governors they will also host events in school and this year hosted the Staff Teaching and Learning Conference. Sharing the leadership of the school in this way encourages a sense of responsibility as well as helping them to develop their confidence, maturity and raise self-esteem.

Hunt - Blue Cockcroft - White Eliot - Yellow Sheppard - Green Moore - Red

“ I have always felt extremely happy at Burnt Mill School because the teachers are so friendly and always help me to achieve my best. I've made lots of friends during my time here.”

“Burnt Mill is giving me the best possible education and I know I can go on to achieve even more in further and higher education. It has also given me the self confidence, drive and aspiration to be part of a learning community where I am valued and able to contribute to society.”

“Being a member of the House Council and Head Girl has enabled me to make a real difference in improving the school for everyone. We know our views are really valued by Mr. Chamberlain, the staff and Governors.”

Jess – Head Girl

HOW TO FIND US:

Buses The school is served by a regular bus service from the town centre. Students from Roydon have the availability of a special bus service.

Rail Harlow Town mainline station is within easy reach of the school.

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Headteacher Stephen Chamberlain MA • BA Hons • NPQH • PGCE Mus • MCMI • FRSA