

Overview

Leventhorpe Academy is an outstanding mixed, 11-19 secondary school and sixth form in the historic market town of Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire. The school became a Business and Enterprise Academy in August 2011. The intake at age 11 is drawn mainly from the pleasant and prosperous towns of Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford and from the surrounding villages. Demand for places in the school is high with over four applications for each place and some students travel significant distances to attend.

The school places a high priority on academic achievement as demonstrated at the last full OFSTED inspection in 2012 when the school was graded "Outstanding" in each of the five categories judged by Ofsted under the 2012 inspection framework: Achievement of Pupils, Quality of Teaching, Behaviour and Safety of Pupils, Leadership and Management and Overall Effectiveness. Staff are expected to play their role in ensuring the best possible outcomes for every student. Pass rates are 100% in nearly all subjects and percentages in the highest grades are well above the national average. Teachers, students and parents place a very high value on behaviour and care.

April 2013 saw the opening of a £1 million Learning Resource Centre whilst the £6 million Leisure Centre (sports hall, fitness suite, dance studio, all weather pitch and floodlit tennis courts) is greatly valued by the local community as well as the school. A large number of classes are offered and the facilities are available for hire. There is also a swimming pool onsite which is made available to other schools and the local community. In recent years, Leventhorpe has experienced an intensive capital build programme, including a re-modelling of Design and Technology facilities, a £150k investment in ICT provision and most recently the addition of a fully equipped Learning Resource Centre and sixth form study facilities.

Catalyst Teaching School Alliance

Leventhorpe is a Teaching School and an important partner in "Catalyst", the Bishop's Stortford Teaching School Alliance. Teaching School Alliances are groups of outstanding schools that take a leading role in the training and professional development of Teachers, Support Staff and Headteachers, as well as contributing to raising educational standards through school to school support. Leventhorpe is the lead school for Initial Teacher Training within Catalyst and has strong links with universities. The school hosts placements for trainees in a wide choice of subjects and is a partner school with Cambridge University for PGCE as well as the University of Hertfordshire.

All staff are encouraged to gain mentoring qualifications and for newly qualified teachers there is strong support and excellent opportunities for professional development. This includes involvement in action research projects, a well-established aspirant leadership programme and SLT secondments.

Significant investment has been made in staff training to develop approaches to teaching and learning. There is a strong focus on developing high performing teams at different levels in the organisation. This has helped to form a culture with shared visions and values and a constant drive to improve learning opportunities for students. In 2012 Leventhorpe was awarded National Support School Status in recognition of the school to school support it provides and the Headteacher, Jonathan Locke, is a National Leader of Education.

Subject departments are organised on a Faculty basis. The responsibility for the preparation of schemes of work and for monitoring their delivery lies with the Head of Faculty. Each student undergoes a termly assessment in each subject.

The School upholds the traditional values of uniform, discipline, homework, punctuality and polite behaviour. Each of Years 7 – 11 is organised into six mixed ability tutor groups and each tutor group is assigned to one of six Houses: Rivers, Cutforth, Newsom, Fawbert, Lawrence and Barnard. House Heads oversee the academic and social development of students in their House as they progress through the School. Years 12 and 13, although assigned to a House, are overseen by the Head of Sixth Form. Form tutors monitor their form's progress and liaise closely with pastoral heads.

Extra - Curricular

An extensive extra-curricular menu is available to all students. Leventhorpe holds the Qiss Award which recognises the wide choice of extra-curricular clubs and activities available to all students. A comprehensive timetable of clubs offers something for everyone, from Astronomy and Science to Japanese and Big Band Club. Emphasis is placed on supporting students not just in lessons but also outside the curriculum by giving them the opportunity to explore their interests and to learn something completely new. Staff and students' interest and enthusiasm in these groups is high. Music and drama productions are staged frequently and there is a particularly strong tradition of excellence in Music with many visiting teachers offering individual music tuition. 10% of students are admitted on the basis of musical aptitude. Boys and girls are encouraged to represent the school in all sports.

Additional Information

The school has approximately 180 staff (full and part time) around half of whom are teachers. All subjects are fully staffed with highly qualified teachers.

The school takes its name from Sir John Leventhorpe, Lord of the medieval manor of Shingle Hall, one of two manors in Sawbridgeworth. The school logo is a replica of the brasses of John Leventhorpe and his wife and date from 1445. The original brasses form a permanent memorial in Great St Mary's Church in Sawbridgeworth.

Sawbridgeworth is very close to the Hertfordshire/Essex border, with London, Cambridge, Chelmsford and Hertford all readily accessible. It is well-served by road and rail links and Stansted Airport. Unemployment rates in Hertfordshire are below the national and southeast averages. The school is situated on the edge of town adjoining open farmland. There is a wide range of housing available in the area.