TCS

Testbourne Community School

Achievement · Excellence · Integrity

PROSPECTUS 2026-2027

CONTENTS

03 Vision, Culture & Ethos

04 Our 100 Year Legacy

05 Our Curriculum

06 Teaching & Learning

07 Extra-Curricular & Enrichment Opportunities

09 Supporting Students with SEND

11 Pastoral Support & Care

12 Inclusion, Trauma Informed Practice & Relational Practice

13 Personal Development

14 Equality & Diversity

15 Recognition

16 Community

17 The Testbourne Way

VISION, CULTURE & ETHOS

"Pupils are supported to be confident and articulate. They embrace the school's value of personal integrity, building a sense of responsibility for their own choices and their learning." – Ofsted, 2023

At Testbourne, we have an important mission: we do everything we can to help children become more **independent, resilient and responsible**. This is because we know that having these skills and attributes will best help children to be successful in college, training, employment, university or in whatever future path they choose. These skills help us **prepare students for adulthood.** Underpinning our mission to develop more independence, resilience and responsibility is our desire to develop children's personal characteristics so that they become considerate and productive young people of the future, making a positive contribution to society. These characteristics, summarised by our **Testbourne Standards of Excellence,** are the foundations of the behaviours we expect:

Kindness and Respect

We are kind, caring and compassionate. We respect people for their differences and embrace the principles of equality.

Honesty and Integrity

We tell the truth, even when it does not show us in the best light. We do the right thing, not the easy thing, because it is right, even when no-one is looking.

Ambition

We try our best and never settle for the minimum. We can work independently and show resilience when work or life is challenging.

Leadership

We set a good example to others, and we take responsibility for our actions and inactions.

The Standards of Excellence are the cornerstones of our school ethos, and an integral part of our school culture. Our recognition system is based on these standards meaning that any child may demonstrate the behaviours and personal qualities that lead to praise and encouragement.

The final contributor to our school culture is the positive relationships between students and staff. There is a genuine warmth in our relationships, and our school embraces a relational, trauma-informed approach to education that means staff exemplify the behaviours we want to see in our students while understanding the importance of relationships.

To succeed in our mission, we must have the highest expectations for children and what they can achieve.

We must believe in them and enable them to believe in themselves. And we must be equally as ambitious and committed for them as we expect them to be during their time in school. We have been the deliberate architects of our cultural expectations and ethos for almost a decade, meaning that **behaviour is very good**, the school is calm and productive, lessons are rarely disrupted, students are respectful of each other and the **relationship** between staff and students is positive and respectful.

This means that at Testbourne, cohorts have had a significantly higher proportion of students than the national and Hampshire averages who, when they leave school, go straight into education, employment or training. This is alongside **consistently higher than national average attainment and the highest attainment and progress of any secular school in the Basingstoke and Deane and Test Valley areas.** We are confident in our ability to ensure that children leave us having achieved their potential and are as prepared for their future as they possibly can be.

OUR 100-YEAR LEGACY

There has been a school on the site of Testbourne Community School for over 100 years.

In the early part of the last century, the school was called Whitchurch Secondary School and was based on the main school site, here in Whitchurch, along with a second site, the Lordsfield campus in Overton. The seniors were located on the current site and the juniors (equivalent to year 7 and 8 now) were located at Lordsfield. Many of you may know that the Lordsfield campus became Overton CE Primary School!

In the late 1960s, a new and radical headteacher, Robert (Bob) Davies, was appointed. He was brought to Whitchurch Secondary School to lead it through an important experiment: the formation of the country's first community school. The current site was developed, with investment from several parties including local community groups, to become a school campus that, short of some upgrades and modernisation, is almost unchanged from that time. Whitchurch Secondary School ceased to exist, and Testbourne Community School was born.

Then, like now, the school was hugely successful, outperforming the national results in public examinations by a considerable margin and being the first school to welcome the community through its doors to use its facilities when the students were not using them.

Bob was radical for the time, only in that he had views that would resonate if he were a Headteacher today but were not the traditional views of a Headteacher in the 1960s and 1970s. He was clear about promoting students' **independence**, including giving them responsibility for choosing what to wear. He knew the importance of developing a sense of community and belonging. He was passionate about treating students well. He believed in **integrity** and was likely responsible for the school badge and the inclusion of that important word in its design. This word still has great meaning for our school and is featured in our strapline and **Standards of Excellence.**

When we first researched the origins of the school, we were surprised by how connected we felt to our predecessor.

If you would like to find out more about the history of the school, or you have information about our origins, please do let us know.

OUR CURRICULUM

"The school has carefully crafted a highly ambitious curriculum through which pupils learn a wide range of subjects. Engaging and interesting topics are taught across all areas that ignite a passion for learning. The precise knowledge that pupils need to learn is identified and builds systematically over time." - Ofsted, 2023

We are proud of the **ambitious curriculum** we offer to our students. We have the **highest expectations** of our students and believe that every child, with the right support, guidance and challenge, can enjoy academic success. This means we do not restrict students' access to curriculum subjects and there are no prerequisites for studying an option at Key Stage 4. Children are free to follow their passion and select option subjects they are interested in.

For almost a decade, we have offered a broad and balanced curriculum from Years 7 to 9, ensuring that children gain an understanding of all the curriculum subjects, giving them a breadth and depth of knowledge, cultural appreciation, rich experiences and personal development.

In Year 9, children choose their options ready for Year 10. It is recommended that they follow one of two pathways: our Russell Pathway or our Open Pathway. The Russell Pathway, named after the Russell Group of universities, is designed to help children select a range of academic subjects, including a language, to prepare them for future university application. The Open Pathway does not specify that a language must be taken. Students in the Open Pathway, however, can take a language should they wish and can select a suite of subjects identical to the Russell pathway if they prefer. This means that **no child's ambitions are capped**, or interests stifled by being pigeonholed into a category early on. Similarly, children on the Russell Pathway, can negotiate transfer to the Open Pathway if their passion does not lie with languages. This unrivalled curriculum access means that between **50% and 65%** of each cohort **study the English Baccalaureate.** This compares to an average of 40% of students nationally and only 33% of students in Hampshire.

At Key Stage 4, we offer a wide range of subjects. These include the more traditional academic options that parents will recognise, alongside options such as Dance, Health & Social Care and Engineering.

We are committed to providing a wide range of options to suit all students while ensuring high levels of ambition and academic challenge.

TEACHING & LEARNING

"Leaders provide support to a professional and committed staff body who hold high aspirations for all pupils. Staff benefit from carefully targeted training." - Ofsted, 2023

At Testbourne Community School, your child will be taught by highly capable subject specialists. Several of our teaching staff are subject moderators or examiners for their subjects and many of them are mentors or trainers for Early Career Teachers.

Our teaching methods are informed by the latest education research. This includes the use of interleaving and retrieval practice, regular low-stakes assessments, metacognition and modelling. We prioritise reading and develop vocabulary and oracy. Our staff are well trained and regularly updated in the best methods to deliver quality first teaching to support children of all backgrounds and needs. Such is their skill, all students produce high quality written work and achieve well in their GCSE examinations.

We regularly use student focus groups and surveys to inform us about the activities that students enjoy and feel benefit them most. This means we can find the balance of providing effective teaching strategies while motivating children to do well.

"Pupils achieve well at this school. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They present new information clearly and logically. Teachers help pupils to practise recalling previous learning." - Ofsted, 2023

EXTRA-CURRICULAR & ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

"They feel empowered by the motivational speakers that often visit the school. An extensive range of enrichment and extracurricular opportunities are provided. Many pupils benefit from the mix of sporting, academic, musical, and creative activities. A large number of pupils are enrolled on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, developing self-esteem through completion of the programme." - Ofsted, 2023

We understand that extra-curricular opportunities can be instrumental in **bringing learning to life, developing new skills and interests** and **providing life-long memories.**

At TCS, we provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

These include trips abroad, sometimes for leisure or cultural experiences and sometimes linked directly to learning. For example, students have the chance to visit the Belgian battlefields, Berlin, Iceland or go Skiing in Europe. They get to have incredible cultural and educational experiences on day trips to colleges and universities, The Eden Project, Sky Studios, The SeaCity Museum, West End Theatres and so much more. They participate, and are very successful, in local, regional and national competitions such as The Powerboat Challenge and the Lego Mindstorms Challenge. Our students also perform well in sporting fixtures and competitions, both regionally and nationally. Students can develop their character and personal qualities by participating in our Ocean Youth Trust voyages or in the Duke of Edinburgh Award in which we offer both Bronze and Silver Awards. In fact, we are told that Testbourne has one of the highest completion rates for Duke of Edinburgh compared to schools nationally.

In addition to the examples above, we have over 40 sporting, academic, musical and creative clubs, alongside incredible school productions, summer concerts and opportunities to contribute to performances as performers, backstage crew or technical crew. We understand the importance of the whole school experience and we make sure there are many opportunities to help children develop a sense of belonging to our school and its community.

"I just wanted to say how great the whole-school musical was! The cast and crew have clearly worked hard and showed their dedication. Thank you TCS for the opportunity given to our children and for letting them shine on the stage and showcase their talents. Well done to everyone involved!" - Parent

Inclusion For All

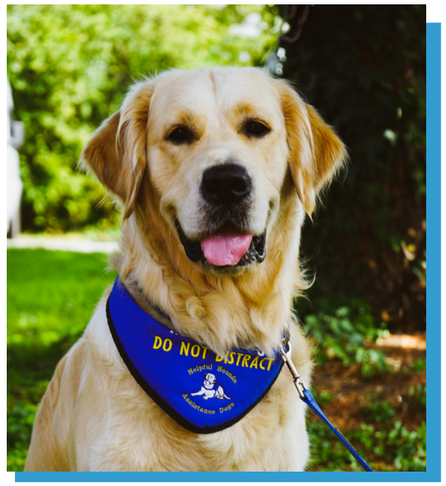
"Pupils with SEND get specific help to make informed choices about their next steps." - Ofsted, 2023

Our approach to inclusion is borne out of the **personal experiences** of our Headteacher and many of our staff whose own children have special education needs and disabilities. Leaders and other staff in the school understand what it means to navigate the complex SEND support system and ensure your child gets the support they need. We also have a great deal of empathy for parents who have children with SEND and know the challenges that this may bring.

At Testbourne, we are equally **ambitious** for children with SEND. We have the same goals that we have for other children: we want them to leave us being more **independent, resilient** and **responsible**. This is because we want this for our own children and know that this will give them the skills and attributes that will mean they can cope with the challenges of college, higher education and adulthood. We have had tremendous success with our approaches over the years and have never ceased to be amazed by what children can achieve if we believe in them and expect it of them.

Our approach to SEND is rooted in providing support to achieve three objectives:

- To teach children how to cope with and overcome difficulties, building resilience and allowing them to become independent.
- To help children overcome any barriers to their learning.
- To ensure that children can access expert teaching in classrooms with their peers.



"Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that develops their understanding of the world around them. High expectations are set for what they can achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)." – Ofsted, 2023

These objectives can be summarised as a **truly inclusive approach.** We want children with SEND to develop a sense of belonging and community that is equal to that of all children. We must always remember that the way in which different children learn has far more in common than it does differences. Additionally, the expert in the classroom can make provisions for most children that will enable them to access learning.

Our support for SEND children is routed in a clear philosophy of meeting our three objectives. We have a team of highly skilled and well-qualified Learning Coaches. Many of these are graduates and some are also qualified teachers. This wonderful team of staff each have a "virtual tutor group" of children for whom they are responsible. This means they know the children, and their families, and can ensure that targeted support is provided as and when it is needed.

We also have a support hub, where at times children may work if this is part of their plan. Additionally, it is where Hernando, our assistance dog, spends most of his time, so is a popular destination for students seeking support at break time and lunch time.

Children's needs are communicated to teachers through their One Page Profiles which summarise any needs and adjustments required. These are regularly updated and are part of the suite of documents used to communicate SEND needs and strategies.

"One-Page Profiles accurately identify to staff the additional help that pupils with SEND need to aide their learning. Teachers implement the strategies effectively within lessons, paying close attention to the tailored support each pupil requires. The school's 'Learning Coaches' provide skilled assistance and motivation to identified pupils to help them learn." - Ofsted, 2023

PASTORAL SUPPORT & CARE

"Pupils attend school well. They line up promptly and sensibly for their assemblies at the start of the day. In lessons, most pupils focus diligently on their work and disruption is rare." - Ofsted, 2023

The aims of the pastoral support team align with those of the whole school. Their goal is to support children so that they can become more **independent, resilient** and **responsible** and to remove barriers to learning. We have a highly skilled, experienced and dedicated team of tutors, year leaders, and a wider team of support staff including ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), attendance officers, pastoral support assistants, student welfare officers and counsellors. In addition, we have a large safeguarding team, ensuring that children are safe when in school and beyond.

Our team is led by highly experienced, qualified and knowledgeable staff. These are our Pastoral Support Team Leader, and our Deputy Headteacher for Pastoral Support, who oversees all pastoral and safeguarding matters.

INCLUSION, TRAUMA INFORED PRACTICE & RELATIONAL PRACTICE

"The school is a calm and purposeful environment. Pupils feel safe and most behave very well. They are respectful of each other and have warm relationships with staff." - Ofsted, 2023

We cannot overstate the importance of **relationships** in education. The most important aspect of our approach to dealing with teenagers is the development of warm and caring relationships**.** This involves modelling calm and productive behaviours, being kind and forgiving, understanding the impact of childhood trauma and providing clear boundaries. This does not mean that expectations are lowered and that children are not accountable for their behaviours; it simply means that the way we educate children about how to behave and regulate is supportive rather than punitive. Consequences are reserved for only when they are needed.

To support children who may struggle with unproductive behaviours we have a range of strategies. First and foremost, we have high and clearly articulated expectations and boundaries. Our experiences, and indeed our students, tell us that behaviour is best when expectations are clearly explained and consistently upheld. We aim to include rather than exclude wherever possible so, unlike many schools, we do not have any form of internal exclusion or its equivalent. Instead, we operate a revolutionary **Return to Learning** process where any child struggling to attend a lesson, or exhibitng behaviour that escalates beyond the class teacher's ability to act, is assumed to be dysregulated. They are then taken to Return to Learning and are helped by dedicated staff to regulate and get back to their lessons. Such is the success of this process that our school is regularly visited by other schools to view it in action and our Headteacher is asked to work with other schools to train staff and set up equivalent systems and processes.

We find that our **inclusive approach** helps to ensure that children get opportunity to make calm and regulated choices and avoid escalations. Our principles are founded in the work of Paul Dix, Maxine Harris, Roger Fallot and others.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

> "The school provides a thoughtful and well-considered personal development programme. Pupils learn valuable lessons for future life, such as how to protect their personal information and stay safe when online." - Ofsted, 2023

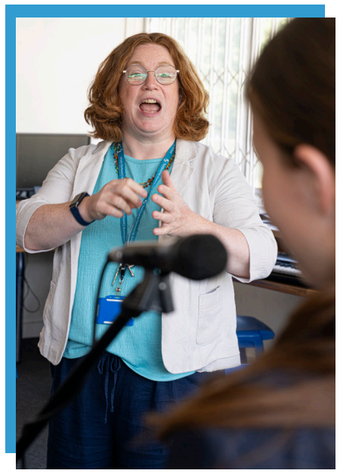
We have a broad personal development programme teaching children, at appropriate times, everything from financial literacy to relationship and sex education. The programme is designed to help children understand risks and know how to keep themselves safe.

We also provide comprehensive careers guidance alongside incredible opportunities, such as our Careers Week, for children to access employers and experience the world of work. Children have access to guest speakers from industry, mock interviews, 1-1 careers advice from a Hampshire Futures careers advisor, and much more.

Within school we have an active student body who contribute to their community through the prefect system, the school council, peer mentoring, buddy reading, our environmental group, the equalities and diversity group and more. This means students get a chance to develop leadership and other life skills while contributing to the wider community.

Many of our students **volunteer in the community**, often helping those less fortunate than themselves.

> "Character education is highly valued. Pupils develop their leadership qualities in a range of democratically elected roles." - Ofsted, 2023



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

At Testbourne, we believe every student should feel a sense of belonging and our approach to Equality & Diversity reflects that. We hold dedicated Equality & Diversity meetings twice every term, inviting students to share their ideas and suggest inclusive events that celebrate the backgrounds, identities, and experiences of our pupils. Led by a team of prefects, our Equality & Diversity Group, as well as our Modern Foreign Languages department, encourage students to embrace cultural celebrations throughout the year. Through collaboration and student leadership, we foster a school culture where respect, representation, and belonging thrive.

We are proud of our culture because it also promotes a high degree of appreciation and acceptance of difference, kindness, and standing up for what is right. This means that students help us to create a culture of equality and they are understanding of diversity. Perhaps most significantly, **"they are not concerned about bullying and know that discrimination is never tolerated."** - Ofsted, 2023.

We work hard to ensure that everyone, irrespective of background, need, ethnicity, gender, biological sex, disability or any other characteristic is welcome in our school. This is one of the reasons we feel Testbourne is so special.

> "Pupil's voices are heard. They make a strong contribution to the school's focus on creating a culture of equality. Pupils are understanding of and value diversity." - Ofsted, 2023

RECOGNITION

Our school values **recognition** over and above material reward. This is because we are passionate about helping children appreciate the power of **intrinsic motivation**; that is, we encourage children to want to do well because it feels good to do so.

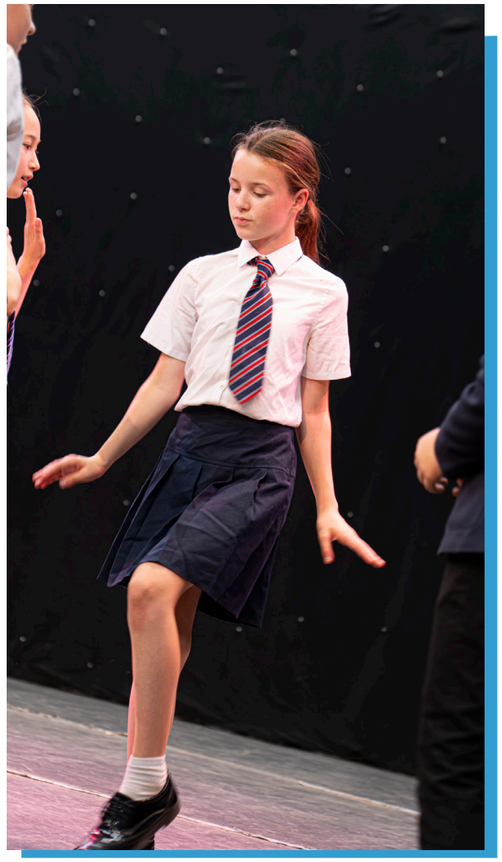
Our recognition system is based upon our Standards of Excellence:

- Kindness and Respect
- Honesty and Integrity
- Ambition
- Leadership

It is deliberately designed to have nothing to do with academic achievement so that all children, irrespective of ability, can receive recognition.

Students can earn recognition points throughout the school day and in extra-curricular activities. These are achieved specifically for demonstrating any one of the **Standards of Excellence.** Parents can track their child's behaviour and attendance using ClassCharts.

Children's personal characteristics are also celebrated in recognition assemblies, through emails and phone calls, in recognition letters and at our prestigious Annual Prize Giving at the beautiful Winchester Guildhall. This is our annual celebration of our culture and ethos, with children receiving certificates, citations and glass trophies for their exemplification of the **Standards of Excellence.**



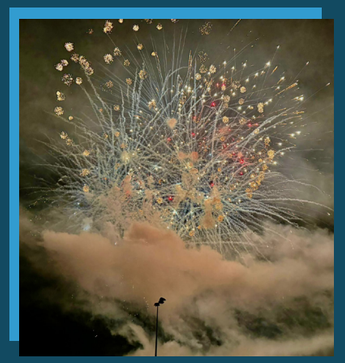
COMMUNITY

As a community school we have established strong links with our local area. We have a dedicated community manager on site who helps to promote and increase participation in the activities we provide and supports our local groups.

We offer our facilities to the community at evenings and weekends. We are proud of our close links with local businesses who kindly sponsor our Prize Giving Ceremony, held at the Guildhall in Winchester.

Testbourne has a thriving and dynamic PTFA (Parents, Teachers & Friends Association) who help raise thousands of pounds each year to support the school. Donations have included a canopy for our playground, outdoor seating, cameras for our photography students, a laser cutter for design technology students, ukuleles for our music department and resources for our gardening club. The PTFA committee make an extremely positive contribution to our school, not only in fundraising, but in organising all the various events which help to bring the school and local community together. These include our annual fireworks display, our Christmas Fayre, school productions, musical concerts, quiz nights as well as other events throughout the year. Our Music department have organised carol concerts for the community and hold an annual Summer Music Showcase to allow students to demonstrate their musical achievements. Many of our students participate in musical groups within the local community, supported by our team of peripatetic music teachers. Our Health and Social care students volunteer at our local nurseries and care homes and our Duke of Edinburgh students volunteer in the community.

We have specialist facilities including a fitness gym; sports hall; an award-winning, full size, all weather 3G pitch; drama studio; dance studio and music technology suite alongside our classroom spaces which are all available to the community.



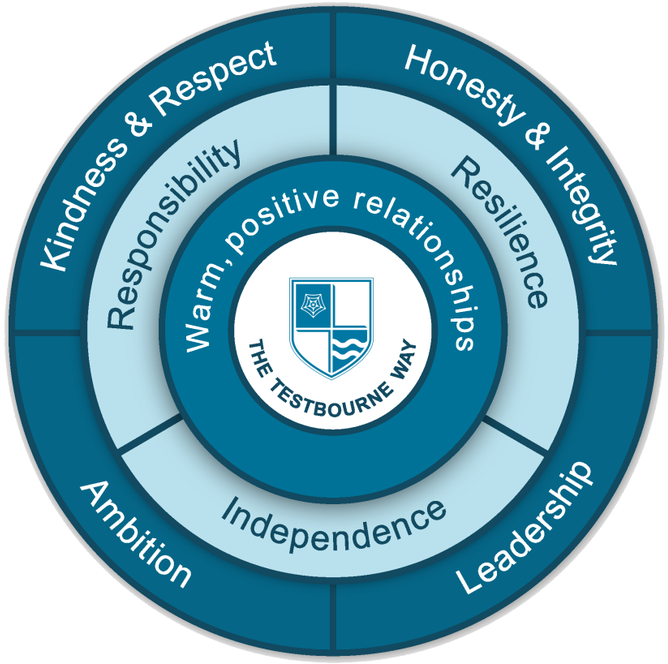
THE TESTBOURNE WAY

We call our culture and ethos 'The Testbourne Way'

This helps us remember that our mission is to help children become **independent, resilient** and **responsible**, and that this is underpinned by our **Testbourne Standards of Excellence.**

And the foundation for all this is positive, warm **relationships**.

We know from almost a decade of building our unique culture and ethos that it enables students to make fantastic gains in their personal development and experience academic success. This means they are exceptionally well-prepared for their future.



We have developed our school culture and ethos with a nod to our founder, Bob Davies, and we based it upon providing what we would want for our own children. If this is what you want for your children, why not come to our Open Evening, one of our Open Mornings or contact **admin@testbourne.school** if you need to arrange a tour or meeting at another time.

Testbourne Community School

Achievement • Excellence • Integrity

Contact us on 01256 892061
or visit
www.testbourne.school/contact

Testbourne Community School allows children to fulfil their potential and prepares them for the future. Join us on Open Mornings and Open Evening to find out more.