# CHESTNUT GROVE ACADEMY

## Candidate Information Pack

Leading learning in partnership
WTSA
WANDLE TEACHING SCHOOL ALLIANCE

Chestnut Grove Academy

WLT WANDLE LEARNING TRUST

# ‘A CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY’

“ A tradition of academic rigour combined with creativity characterises our ethos and we feel passionately that this is a winning combination.”

Chestnut Grove Academy is a school that is unique in its vibrancy, creativity and dynamism. Everything we do is based on the recognition that our students are our greatest asset. Our curriculum springs from the vision of well-rounded academics, artists and entrepreneurs we want our students to become and our teaching and learning is shaped by the diversity, individuality and affinities of our students.

Chestnut Grove’s motto is ‘A Creative Learning Community’, which captures our spirit of unity, supportiveness and a relentless drive to grow in knowledge and improve ourselves. We perceive creativity not just as a commitment to promoting creative subjects, but also as the ingenuity, imagination and enthusiasm that are integral to the process of learning. Furthermore, we believe that diligence, resilience and academic discipline are of vital importance in promoting attitudes to learning that will enable our students to confidently enter highly competitive job markets.

We communicate and reinforce the vision and ethos of the Academy to the school community through the acronym ‘PROUD’, which was developed by our students.

It stands for:

- **P**ositive and engaged
- **R**esilient and independent
- **O**pen-minded and creative
- **U**nified and community focused
- **D**etermined and committed

Whilst encapsulating the attitudes we nurture as prerequisites of academic excellence, ‘PROUD’ also promotes unity, mutual respect and solidarity through a sense of pride in belonging to Chestnut Grove, which is shared by all students and staff.

Academic excellence is the foundation of a Chestnut Grove education. We achieve some outstanding examination results, with students making excellent progress at both GCSE and A Level. This has enabled a record number of our students to gain entry into the University of their choice, with many heading off to Russell Group universities including Oxbridge.

When students join Chestnut Grove they become part of a vibrant and cohesive community where the child’s social development is valued just as much as his or her academic development. An effective pastoral system supports students and gives them a strong sense of belonging.

# New building, new opportunities

Having recently completed a major rebuilding programme we are now in a very strong position to materialise our vision of excellence. The stability and unstoppable strategic drive of the senior leadership team have enabled us to make rapid improvements at a time of considerable change and successfully transition towards our new curriculum and organisational model.

Our focus over the past three years has been on securing accountability at all levels through robust leadership and the introduction of a knowledge-rich, broad and balanced curriculum. Examination results, behaviour and the quality of teaching continue to improve, reflecting our unwavering commitment to always surpass ourselves. Although proud of our successes so far, we recognise that there is plenty of work still to be done - complacency is alien to us as we nurture honest self-reflection and robust self-evaluation.

The school has recently been approached to expand to seven forms of entry. This is a clear vote of confidence in a school that is already heavily over-subscribed. The increase in student numbers will bring with it a new building which will enhance current facilities even further.

# Curriculum

## Intent

*The Chestnut Grove curriculum provides a rigorous, knowledge-rich, transformational education, encapsulated through our PROUD values, which prepares our students to succeed at university and lead fulfilling lives. It is the embodiment of our ethos of a creative learning community, which marries traditional values with dynamic approaches to teaching and learning.*

## What is distinctive about our curriculum?

### Learning Pathways

When designing our curriculum, we start with the vision of well-rounded individuals, great writers, academics and entrepreneurs and then work backwards, mapping out students' progression over five years (from Year 7 to Year 11) in the form of Learning Pathways. Learning Pathways consist of Step Descriptors, which break down the curriculum and create subject-specific progression maps. Whilst we acknowledge that the content and approaches to teaching and learning can differ greatly between the subjects, our underlying principles ensure the cohesiveness of our curriculum: all Learning Pathways reflect our high expectations of all students; our pedagogy based on the interrelatedness of knowledge, understanding and skills; and our focus on long term retention rather than short term performance.
Our taught curriculum is enhanced by the Enrichment Curriculum at all stages of the school, which enables all students to access a wide range of clubs, trips and visits by guest speakers.

### Languages and Art Specialisms

At Chestnut Grove Academy, we pride ourselves in our tradition of nurturing arts and languages. We believe that both are essential in creating communicative and versatile individuals who will be able to confidently enter future job markets, as well as develop a deeper appreciation of the world around them. Each year up to 30 students are selected for Year 7 on the basis of their aptitude in each specialism and are provided with a bespoke pathway designed to bring their talents to fruition. During Key Stage 3, our specialist students receive an additional lesson per week in either Art or Italian and are placed in specialist sets to ensure their talents are stimulated from the very beginning.

### Creativity

At Chestnut Grove Academy, creativity is at the heart of the curriculum: we perceive it not just as a commitment to promoting creative subjects, but also as the ingenuity, imagination and enthusiasm

that are integral to the process of learning. Furthermore, we believe that diligence, resilience and academic discipline – encapsulated in our PROUD values - are of vital importance in promoting attitudes to learning that will enable our students to confidently enter highly competitive job markets.

## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Curriculum

Highly innovative and relevant, our Health curriculum builds on the Rights Respecting Schools' framework and ensures that our students can confidently respond to the unforeseen challenges of the world in constant flux. It has been recognised as outstanding and described as "an up-to-date and exemplary curriculum for preparing pupils for citizenship and adult life in our increasingly diverse society" (Accord's Chair, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain MBE, 2016).

Every academic year culminates in our Creative Project Week, designed to support the school's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) curriculum and celebrate our art specialism. Vibrant and dynamic, Creative Project Week provides our students with an immersive experience of all types or visual and performing arts through creative workshops, excursions, academic projects and sporting events that link together in one holistic theme.

## Statement of Principle

At Chestnut Grove Academy we believe our curriculum policy provides the highest quality education for all students, regardless of ability, race or cultural background. We seek to ensure that the curriculum:

- Is planned, **broad and balanced**
- Is rigorous by promoting a **depth of learning**
- Covers the national curriculum where this is appropriate
- Is rich, varied and **appropriately** challenging and engaging
- Is relevant to future employment as well as encouraging lifelong personal growth, and provides independent careers advice
- Provides **extended learning opportunities** outside the classroom
- **Allows choice** and the ability of students to play to their strengths
- Maintains the highest standards of **literacy and numeracy**

## Equal Opportunities

Under the Equality Act in 2010 the Academy acknowledges our legal duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to practice and policy for children with SEND/EAL.
We believe that the curriculum should be **inclusive** of all abilities. We recognise that the curriculum offer for SEND students may need to be adapted.

## Organisation of the curriculum

## Timetable

Students have 25 hours and fifty minutes of formal classes per week and all students are offered a wide range of clubs and activities as part of our **enrichment curriculum.**

## Developing the Whole Child

Chestnut Grove is the proud winner of the 2016 Accord inclusivity award which commended the school for its inclusive approach to RE and PSHE education. We do not shy away from controversial issues and believe in preparing our students adequately for adulthood so that they can make a positive contribution. Whilst academic achievement is of the upmost importance, we are committed to educating the whole child and we are confident that we achieve this effectively.

## Enrichment

The after school club and extra-curricular enrichment programme at Chestnut Grove is an important part of what we have to offer our students. Students are encouraged to extend their horizons, develop their talents and take part in interesting activities outside of the already packed curriculum. It also provides a safe environment for students who are looking for something to do in the hours directly after school. Since the extension of our club scheme (until 5pm every day) in November 2013, the programme has gone from strength to strength.

Clubs run at lunchtimes and after school, and include a variety of activities; from active pursuits including: dodgeball, dance, football, table tennis, rugby, netball and boxing; to other indoor hobbies such as cooking, chess, pottery club and screen printing club. We also have an extensive programme of performing arts clubs throughout the year, and our own Rock Band and Jazz Band! In addition to this, we offer interventions run by teachers, including English, Maths and homework clubs. Many of the clubs give students the opportunity to take part in competitions, concerts and tournaments; which supports our sense of school community.

# Leading Learning

## Leadership

Chestnut Grove's Senior Leaders are exceptionally committed, innovative and will typically go beyond the call of duty to ensure our students are getting the best possible education. The cohesiveness of the team derives from the shared sense of moral purpose and supportiveness between the members. If you share our work ethic and have the required set of skills, I warmly invite you to apply for this post.

## Wandle Teaching School Alliance

We are proud to be part of the Wandle Teaching School Alliance, a collaborative cross-phase and cross-sector organisation which works across local authorities including Secondary Schools, Primary Schools, Special Schools, Early Years providers, Pupil Referral Units and a Hospital School.  The WTSA offers an extensive CPD programme, school to school support, initial teacher training and annual collaborative training events.

## Wandle Learning Trust

In December 2017 we established the Wandle Learning Trust with Chesterton Primary School, a Multi-Academy Trust founded on the successes of the Wandle Teaching School Alliance. A reflection of our sustained drive for improvement, The Multi-Academy Trust will provide staff and students with a range of opportunities as it grows and develops in partnership with Chesterton Primary School.

I hope the information presented has given you a useful insight into our amazing school and that you will be encouraged to apply for a post with us.

***Mr Christian Kingsley***
***Headteacher***