

FERNDOWN Upper School



www.fernup.dorset.sch.uk



Welcome

The Journey Begins Here...

Your choice of school is an important decision. Nothing is more important to us than the **welfare, happiness and achievement** of your child. Ferndown offers a personalised, fully inclusive approach that places students firmly at the centre of all we do.



Philip Jones
Headteacher

We prioritise the care and safety of our young people, as we believe that a happy student is a motivated one, who will then also achieve.

By providing an **exciting curriculum, we inspire students to fulfil their potential.** With achievements celebrated, creativity encouraged and individuality respected, each student's unique qualities are developed to prepare them for later life.

'Around the school, pupils are friendly and respectful. They cooperate well with each other and show pride in their school community.'
Ofsted 2026

The Ferndown Way

We also **promote the traditional values** of, empathy and integrity to ensure that students develop into responsible and compassionate adults. This is built upon the foundation of our school ethos - **The Ferndown Way**.

This ethos is based on three main principles: **High quality-first teaching** for students of all abilities and interests; ensuring our **academic and pastoral systems** support every student and in doing this, making sure every **student achieves and fulfils their potential**.

This results in an **excellent academic record** and the enviable achievement that all our students secure places in apprenticeships, sixth forms, employment or university.

The school has now served our local community for over 50 years, I look forward to welcoming you and your child to the Ferndown Family.

Philip Jones
Headteacher





We succeed

'Alongside impressive academic achievement, leaders ensure that pupils are very well prepared for their next steps.' Ofsted 2026

Success beyond exams

Our school has achieved many great successes beyond the classroom in recent years;

- **National Finalists** in the National Design Ventura competition for five years running.
- A number of students achieving **National or International Level Awards** in Netball, Judo and Triathlon.
- **Regional Champions and CONNECT Award winners** in the FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics competition.
- In Textiles, we have won the **Valter Trust Cockraine Shield** for Innovation and Technology for the last two years.
- Our teachers have won **Educational Awards** such as Pearson Secondary School Teacher of the Year.
- Our students, over the past three years, have raised over **£20,000 for various charities**.
- **Global Education Award** for our commitment to student exchange programmes.
- Dorset & BCP's **first ever T Level Provider** with a custom made teaching block housing specialist resources.
- Winner of the Careers Development Institute **'Careers Programme of the Year'** Award in 2026.
- Our **Year 14 Foundation Art Course** acts as a stepping stone between A-levels and university.
- We have been **oversubscribed for the past 7 years**.

We care

'Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from high quality pastoral care and a wealth of wider opportunities alongside their academic learning.' Ofsted 2026

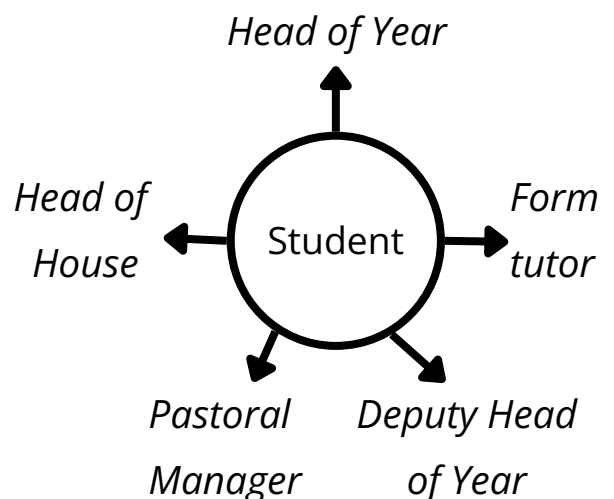


A Child Centred Approach

We take **pride in the pastoral care of each of our students.** Each student has five key staff that work together to support their academic progress and their pastoral care.

The Head of Year, their Form Tutor and their Head of House work collaboratively to ensure students have a comprehensive support package.

This is further enhanced by each year group having a non-teaching Pastoral Manager. These are trained professionals whose sole responsibility is the welfare of all students. They have the time during the school day to deal with problems straight away, thereby stopping any issues from escalating. We also have a dedicated SEND team managed by our SENDCo. These staff work hard to ensure our pastoral care and academic provision is adapted to those with additional educational needs.





Our school tutor groups are in year group tutor groups. Each student is assigned a form tutor and becomes a member of one of our four houses; Cheetham, Ashton, Read and Thornton, named after four ex-students who displayed the **qualities we wish our students to develop**.

Heads of House and Form Tutors are responsible for the progress and wellbeing of their tutor group. Tutors work with each student to develop their **individual talents and to achieve their unique goals**. The Heads of House put together a weekly programme and this is delivered by the tutor team.

Tutor programmes include weekly assemblies, discussions and debates, personal development, careers education and academic mentoring.

There are regular interhouse competitions including sports and other activities. Each student can earn positive points through the year for participation in activities and work in their lessons, contributing towards their tutor groups house point total. Each term prizes are awarded to students and their tutor groups for their successes.

Cheetham
House



Bravery & Resilience

Ashton House



Curiosity & Excellence

Read House



Courage & Determination

Thornton



Ambition & Loyalty

A photograph of several students in a classroom, wearing school uniforms and focused on their work. One student in the foreground is writing with a yellow pencil.

An Outstanding Curriculum

'The well-designed curriculum is broad and ambitious.' Ofsted 2026

Broad and Balanced Key Stage 3

Ferndown provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is designed to **challenge and engage** students. We have resisted the drive to narrow our curriculum and we offer a full range of technology and creative art subjects starting from Year 9. Our Upper School curriculum from Key Stage 3 and 4 is amongst **the most diverse** in the area, all taught by specialist qualified teachers. The following subjects are studied in Year 9.

Art

Computing

English

Geography

Music

PSHE

Biology

Design Tech

Ethics

History

PE

Spanish

Chemistry

Drama

French

Maths

Physics

Textiles

Students also study citizenship, careers education and digital citizenship via PSHE lessons, tutor time and off-timetable drop-down days. All our students will also have **three specialist science teachers** to deliver their Biology, Chemistry and Physics lessons.

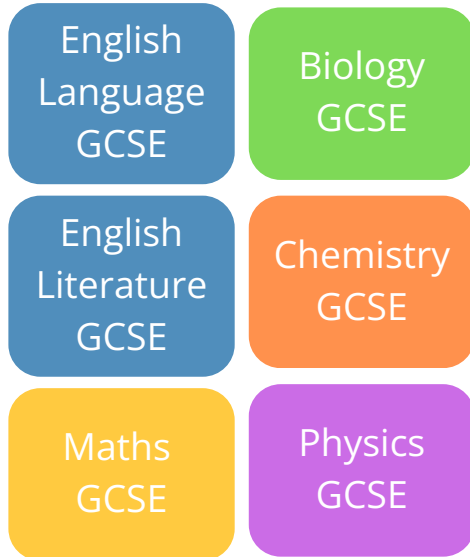
All our lessons are taught in various specialist settings. This includes the use of the Sports Centre, dedicated computer labs, 13 science labs and our Art Atrium.

Serving our community for over half a century

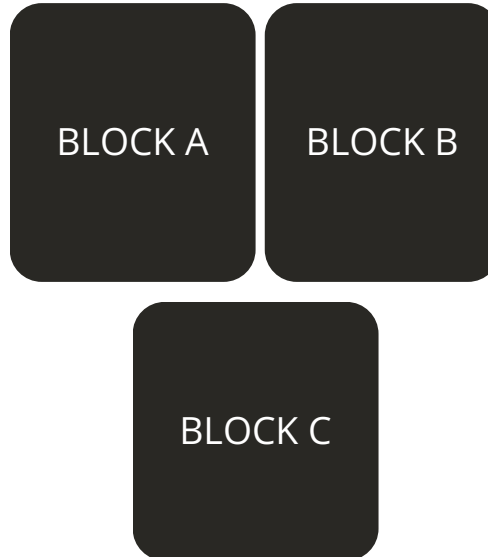
Genuine Choice at Key Stage 4

We believe in providing a curriculum that is delivered by **high quality specialists** and that students are given as wide a choice as possible. During Year 9, students select three Key Stage 4 Options.

Core Qualifications



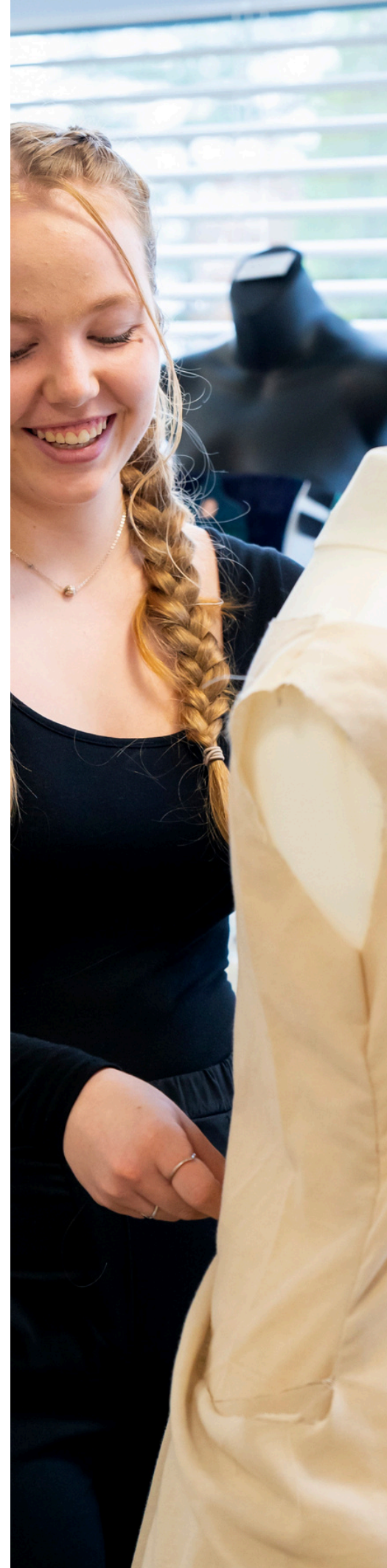
KS4 Options



Our students will study their options alongside their Core Curriculum which consists of English (Language and Literature) GCSEs, Maths GCSE, core PE and three single Science GCSEs. A curriculum development that was noted as an example of **Excellent Practice by a UK All-Parliamentary Report** in March 2020.

All students study GCSE Ethics & Philosophy and sit their GCSE exam at the end of Year 10.

Aside from all subjects studied in Key Stage 3, other current options at KS4 include: Business Studies, Food & Nutrition, Health and Fitness, Health and Social Care, Media, Photography, Product Design, Sociology and Maths Statistics.





High Expectations

Preparing Young People For The Future

At Ferndown, **we have very high expectations of our students**. We expect them to be confident and self-assured with an excellent attitude to learning. We also expect our students to be making good progress in their lessons, to be **proud of their achievements** and of their school. One key way to demonstrate this is in how they dress and behave around the school site.

Students should always be smart, on time and ready to learn with the correct equipment. We are preparing our students to be **young adults of the future** and therefore we place a lot of value upon educating the individual. We do expect that our students conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times around the school site. This means being polite, kind to each other and all staff. The **'Ferndown Way'** promotes life skills that make our students capable of dealing with any situation that they encounter in later life.

Leadership Opportunities

There are numerous leadership opportunities available for our students. In Year 11, students can apply to join the Prefect Team, we have thriving school and house councils and a team of Sports Leaders who help to run a range of events.



Supporting The More Able

Academic Excellence

Our Empower Programme aims to support the most academically able students in school.

Our More-Able Co-ordinator arranges a tailored enrichment and mentoring programme to support those with the **highest aspirations** to reach their intended destinations.

Features of the programme include; University Outreach, The Brilliant Club, Trips, Academic Lectures, Exam Support and Coaching.



This programme provides support for those starting in Year 9 all the way through to Year 13.



Inspiring Excellence

We achieve

Outstanding Achievement

Ferndown Upper students **achieved the best GCSE progress in Dorset from 2019-2023.**

Due to cancelled SATS there were no national progress scores in 2025 and 2026.

There will be no progress scores produced by the DfE this year (again due to Covid) but our students attainment (how high the grades are) is anticipated to be at the very top of the Dorset table when they are released later this term by the DfE.

This consistently high achievement is a result of our students' hard work and dedication and the skills and knowledge of our teaching staff, coupled with the outstanding pastoral care that our support staff provide.

Some key points to note are:

- There is **no gender gap at FUS**, our boys and girls achieve equally well. This is a rare occurrence in most schools.
- Our **Pupil Premium and SEND students perform** equally as well as their peers which is uncommon in secondary schools.



Specialist Facilities

An outstanding curriculum requires facilities that can bring out the best in young people.

Sport

- 3 dedicated PE classrooms for theory.
- Sports Centre with Swimming Pool, trampolining and a large sports hall.
- Tennis courts.
- Up to date equipment for a full range of sports and athletics.



Science

- 13 fully equipped science laboratories.
- A Chemistry lab built in 2023.
- A Biology lab built in 2023.
- Specialist equipment for Biology, Chemistry and Physics specialisms up to A-Level.



The Arts

- Drama studio.
- Music centre including practice rooms, dedicated computer network and mixing studio.
- Specialist art rooms that include ceramics, textiles and photography provision.

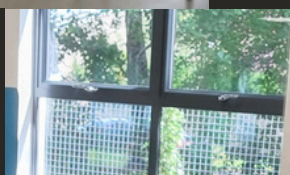


Technology

- Specialist workshops for Design Technology which includes rooms for electronics and graphics alongside a computer suite, laser cutter and 3D printing facilities.
- Two modern catering suites.

Digital

- Over 500 networked computers across 8 computer labs.
- The T-level block which includes: two computer labs plus the physical computing and robotics labs.
- Mac Suite for digital design and photography.



Study

- Our 6th form study centre is a fully equipped study area for individual and group work.



Serving our community for over half a century



Beyond the Classroom

- Art Club
- Alumni talks
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Cardboard Campout
- Chess Club
- Chemistry Lectures
- Christian Union
- Choir
- Crochet & Knit Club
- Design Ventura
- Drama Productions
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Football
- History of Art Club
- Homework Club
- Mensa testing
- Netball Club
- Oxbridge Online
- Pen Pal Project
- Photography Club
- Politics Club
- Revision Sessions
- Rugby
- School Newspaper
- Swimming
- Team Python
- Theatre Trips
- The Big Sleep
- Trampolining
- Youth Impact and more...

Clubs, Mentoring & Trips

We offer an extensive list of extra-curricular activities for our students. This includes a **wide range of sports, arts, technology clubs and other experiences** which are staffed completely voluntarily by our support and teaching staff. Here we list three of **our biggest initiatives** to help our young people with activities beyond the classroom.

Junior Athlete Programme (JAE)

If you take part in sport and are coming to Ferndown Upper School you need to tell us about the current level you compete at.

The school plays a critical role in helping to support young performers.

The JAE Framework is designed to **support young talented performers** within our school.

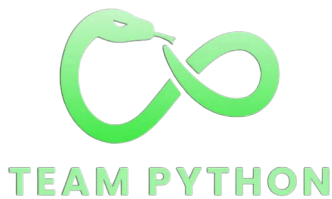
Performers at this level have huge commitments in terms of time spent training/competing and as a result pressures can build causing significant issues that could be detrimental to their sport, their school and social lives.

Team Python

Our well established robotics programme is celebrating 3 years of success at the regional and national finals of the First Tech Challenge competition.

A fantastic opportunity for students to raise aspirations, develop problem solving skills, work as part of a team and engage in a project from start to finish with a range of different roles. From coding and design, to social media and finance- developing real world skills is key to the FTC Challenges.

Open to everyone.



Duke of Edinburgh (DofE)

The DofE is a **life-changing adventure**.

It's about going the extra mile - learning new skills for work and life, getting fitter, making a difference and broadening your horizons. Millions of young people in the UK have already done their DofE.



You'll...

- have lots of fun
- get healthier and happier
- meet incredible people and make lasting friendships
- have amazing new experiences
- find talents and passions you didn't know you had
- gain skills that employers value
- make memories that will last a lifetime

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