The Academy
at Shotton Hall

2027
PROSPECTUS



A place where every child matters

It is my pleasure to welcome you to The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee, an outstanding school in every sense of the word, and one that I am incredibly proud to lead.

Over many years, The Academy at Shotton Hall has consistently upheld its reputation as one of the very best schools in the region. We are also one of only a tiny percentage of schools to have received multiple consecutive 'Outstanding' judgements from school inspectors Ofsted, three to be precise, an accolade that all staff have worked incredibly hard to achieve.

Shotton Hall students get a fantastic educational experience that I believe is on par with the best schools in the country.

Your child is unique and regardless of their starting points, every child here is given the best chance to be good at lots of things... and brilliant at others!

We also make sure children actually enjoy coming to school. School days should be happy days, so making good memories is a special part of what we do here. Our school performances are always a hit, extra-curricular activities and trips broaden students' horizons, and our sporting achievements foster a healthy competitive spirit.

I love coming to work every day and seeing the positive impact we have in this happy, high-achieving school and I am delighted that you are considering us for the next step in your child's education. I look forward to meeting you at our open evening.

A Hook

Alex Hook
Head of School

We are outstanding

We have been awarded three consecutive 'Outstanding' ratings by school inspectors Ofsted, and in 2026 our GCSE results were once again among the best in the region.

Multiple outstanding awards have only been achieved by a tiny fraction of schools, which means we are members of a very exclusive club!

Our most recent report is full of praise, stating that "pupils and staff have a relentless focus on academic achievement which is possible due to the impeccable behaviour throughout the school." They also stated that "pupils show high levels of respect for staff and their peers" and learn in "a supportive environment helps to shape pupils to become confident, articulate and kind."

You can read the full report on our website.

Through setting out high expectations from day one, students understand the importance of trying their best and working hard.

Year-on-year their ambition and hard work translates into Shotton Hall students consistently achieving some of the top GCSE results in the county and very often the country.

You can see our latest published exam results on our website.

"Pupils appreciate the exceptional education they receive." **Ofsted**



Ofsted Outstanding Provider



About *our school*

The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee is a mixed comprehensive school for 11-16 year olds who come to learn each day in a fantastic school with state-of-the-art facilities and resources.

Our school is a fun and inspirational space with bright, modern classrooms, which provide a stimulating and lively setting for learning.

Our ICT facilities include an Apple Mac media suite, interactive whiteboards, iPads and 3D TVs.

We also boast a well stocked library, specialist equipment in science and technology, professional level dance and drama studios and a fully fitted theatre, worthy of our fantastic performing arts productions.

Our extensive sporting facilities include a sports hall, tennis and basketball courts and acres of playing fields, which have contributed to the many successes of our young sportsmen and sportswomen.

In addition we have two cedar-clad eco-buildings at the rear of the school providing us with extra classroom space and science labs.

Student Council

Our student council ensures that every student has their say on issues around the school. Our head boy and head girl, along with other elected students, represent the 'student voice' on issues such as uniform, catering and rewards.

Rewards

We believe that offering the opportunity for students to earn rewards throughout the academic year encourages them to achieve their best. Students who demonstrate effort, dedication and a commitment to their studies can earn reward points through our merit system.

School trips and our annual awards ceremonies also celebrate the successes and hard work of our students. Excellent attendance and behaviour is also routinely rewarded.

"Pupils strive to meet the school's high expectations in all aspects of school life. They flourish in this happy, safe and successful school." **Ofsted**

Teaching & learning

Every day our talented teachers bring learning to life through outstanding lessons that, in the words of Ofsted, are "precisely planned" and enable students to become "skilled in the subject."

An exemplary assessment system, as well as individual support and encouragement, ensures that students frequently exceed challenging targets and achieve exceptional outcomes in examinations.

Information and guidance are provided by a range of independent advisers, and intervention support is targeted at students who need some extra help to ensure they reach their potential.

Literacy and numeracy
An important area of cross curricular work at the Academy is our whole school literacy and numeracy strategy - Locks and Keys. Our nationally praised scheme ensures literacy and numeracy skills are embedded into every department and every lesson - not just maths and English. If you think that numeracy has nothing to do with art... think again!

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC)
We are particularly proud of our SMSC provision which cuts across the whole curriculum. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural topics and issues are woven into all lessons, helping students to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the wider world by learning about the beliefs, cultures, difficulties and needs of other people.





Excellence *every day*

British values
An important aspect of cross-curricular work is the promotion of British values - democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. At The Academy at Shotton Hall, students encounter these principles throughout everyday school life which are embedded into lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Achievement through partnership
We know through experience that working with parents is one of the best ways to enhance success in school. We therefore welcome and encourage all communication between parents and carers and school. Our home/school agreement ensures that we achieve our targets in standards of work, behaviour and attendance. In addition, consultation evenings, email/text updates and termly reports keep you informed of your child's progress and welfare.

Homework
We place great importance on the role that high quality, relevant homework plays in achievement. At the Academy, homework is seen as integral to learning and throughout the year, students are given carefully planned homework projects that challenge them to work independently.

The Year 8 'Curious' English project is a particular highlight for children where their creativity is allowed to run wild with fantastic results.

Home learning
Students are able to learn online via Student POD - an online resource that your child can access anywhere and at any time.

Digital exercise books, assessment feedback and online tutorials are also used to enhance students' learning experience.

"Parents also appreciate the opportunities the school provides. Many describe it as a 'fantastic' place that has improved outcomes for their child." Ofsted



You've got a friend

We pride ourselves on the attitude and behaviour of our students and it is a constant source of pride to receive unsolicited praise from the public and visitors on our students' exemplary conduct.

When people visit our school, they always tell us what a friendly and happy place it is. From the first day at school in Year 7 to the final goodbyes in Year 11, students are cared for as individuals and given every opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

From time to time, everyone needs a helping hand. At our school, we have a highly experienced pastoral team and support system that gives every student access to support, advice and guidance when they need it. From extra academic support, through to dealing with any worries or personal problems, we have the right people in place to help every child through difficult times.

We understand that for some students it's not always easy to go straight to a teacher for help, so we also have a 'peer support' system where students can confide in each other.

Primary school transition

Our warm and welcoming environment eases the transition from primary school, which we know can be a daunting prospect for some children. Older students act as 'buddies' so that each new student has a friendly face to help them to feel safe and secure, and settle in quickly. There is also an early review meeting for parents in October so you can see first-hand how your child has adapted to life at The Academy at Shotton Hall.

School's out

...but that doesn't mean it's over for the day, with plenty of clubs and extra-curricular activities on offer.

Performing arts

We believe in the power of performing arts to develop confidence and self esteem in young people and are proud to be a specialist provider of performing and community arts. Throughout the year, our performing arts department puts on a variety of fantastic performances that give the professionals a run for their money!

As a parent or carer, if you have witnessed your child involved in a musical or dramatic production, you will know how much good it does for their confidence. We therefore offer lots of opportunities for students to take part in performing arts. Whether acting, singing, dancing or helping out backstage, what matters is being part of a team and extending their experience beyond the classroom.

Sport

We excel at sport and students here are given every opportunity to do well in their chosen activity. Our recent successes include regional titles for rugby teams, recruits to the Sunderland Football Academy and Durham County Cricket Under 15 female squad and both girls' and boys' titles in county table tennis.

Clubs

We also have an enormous range of clubs open to all ages and abilities including: Debate Club, Wildlife Club, Football, STEM Club, Reading Club, Table Tennis, Harry Potter Club, Yoga, Netball, Indoor Rowing, Dungeons and Dragons, Ancient History and Mythology Club, Cheerleading, Rugby, Trampoline and many, many more!

"Pupils enjoy a rich variety of exciting wider opportunities. They try new things, visit new places and listen to expert speakers." Ofsted





LEFT: The annual NELT summer concert, held at The Glasshouse in Gateshead, is an opportunity for children from all NELT schools to perform together for their families.

North East
Learning Trust

Founding school of the North East Learning Trust

The Academy at Shotton Hall founded the North East Learning Trust (NELT), a successful family of 14 schools across the North East.

Our school vision, that 'every child experiences excellence every day' was so important at Shotton Hall, that we used it as the inspiration to set up our own multi-academy Trust – the North East Learning Trust.

As its lead school, we have seen the Trust grow to become a family of 14 schools with an impressive series of rapid school improvements under our belts. Without exception, every school that joined us as 'inadequate' or 'requiring improvement' as judged by Ofsted, has improved by two whole grades to become 'good' or 'outstanding' – this success is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our talented regional network of staff.

NELT is deeply committed to teacher development. It operates North East SCITT, a dedicated training arm for new teachers, ensuring the highest standards of teaching expertise are embedded from the start of new teachers' careers.

Additionally, as a National Teaching School Hub, we are one of 87 centres across England offering quality training and development throughout teachers' careers.

The Academy at Shotton Hall is also a National Research School, one of just 23 in England that up-skill teachers using cutting edge research

The Trust is led by outstanding educators, including CEO Dame Lesley Powell DBE, who actively contributes to regional and national educational development.

We have also built up a wide network of specialist teachers and other experienced professionals to support schools to reach their full potential.


Goodbye!

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