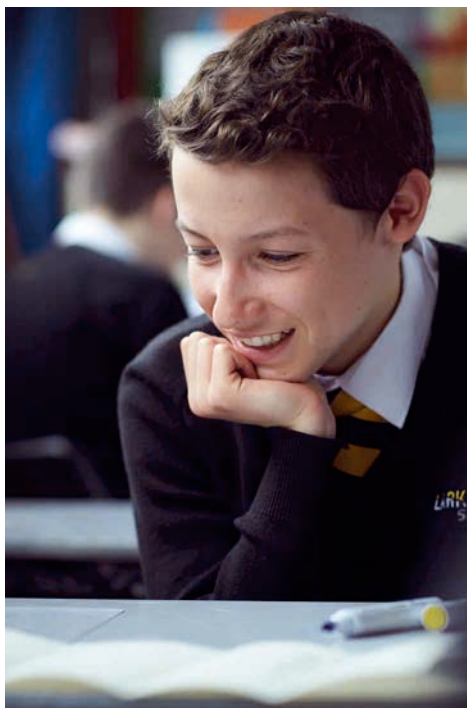



LARKMEAD

School



one community individual minds creating futures



Our Key Values:

Respect

Trust

Openness

Understanding

Warmth

Humility

Ambition

Making a difference

At Larkmead, students will find an ordered and inclusive community that treats them with respect; a supportive environment in which any type of bullying or discrimination is not tolerated and they can grow in confidence. Our students are trusted with more responsibility as they become young adults – aspirational young people equipped to succeed, with the ability to make a real and positive difference in a demanding and changing world.



We nurture:
Independence
Creativity
Initiative
Aspiration
Empathy
Hard Work

Our school ethos

Larkmead School is a caring and carefully fostered 'learning community' built on trust and respect, in which every student matters. It is a community that encourages and enables every student to enjoy their time at school, to exceed expectations, to be proud of their achievements and to be aware of their responsibility in the wider world.

Welcome to

LARKMEAD

School



Larkmead is a happy, successful school that nurtures character through our ethos of “one community, individual minds, creating futures.”

As “one community” we value each member of the Larkmead family. Our caring and supportive culture develops students and staff, with a focus on mutual respect, well-being and the power of working together. Our excellent pastoral care supports and encourages every student through compassion, security and confidence. Our positive and effective behaviour for learning enables all students to succeed and make good progress.

‘Individual minds’ encourages personality, flair and diversity, the spark in our students and staff that makes Larkmead such a thriving and exciting school. Our students learn new skills and develop new passions through curiosity, challenge and celebration in a school where they can be themselves and flourish.

‘Creating futures’ means inspiring ambition, resilience and ingenuity. High expectations provide the springboard for success every day, in examinations and on into the future. A Larkmead education is for life, giving each of our young people the opportunities, passion and confidence to head out into the world, ready for the exciting challenges ahead.

Great teaching and learning across the school are supported by our culture of research and collaboration. Each student gets the very best experience to enable them to achieve their ambitions, developing as actors, artists, coders, cooks, craftspeople, dancers, engineers, explorers, geographers, historians, linguists, mathematicians, musicians, performers, scientists, writers and so much more.

Our thriving Sixth Form is integral to our school, providing our younger students with role models of hard work, engagement and success. Larkmead Sixth Form is part of our pathway to creating exciting futures through further study, employment, apprenticeship or university. We welcome students from Abingdon and beyond to join in this success.

Our school benefits from strong partnerships. Larkmead is a member of Vale Academy Trust, a family of local schools sharing expertise, resources and inspiration in our determination to provide the very best for our students. We work very closely with primary and secondary schools across the Abingdon Partnership, and we collaborate in the Sixth Form with Abingdon & Witney College, Fitzharrys and John Mason. Our collaborations with Abingdon School, St Helen & St Katherine, universities, employers and many others provide fantastic opportunities for our students to shine.

Students benefit from a truly impressive range of enrichment opportunities. We are proud to have earned the prestigious Arts Mark Gold award, recognising all of the great confidence boosting creativity that our students enjoy. With Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold, success in the sporting arena, clubs, workshops, visits and special events, every student at Larkmead has the space and setting to shine.

Our prospectus and website give you an insight into what makes Larkmead such a positive community. To discover more and meet our fantastic students, please contact the school and we’d be delighted to share all that makes Larkmead special.

Jonathan Dennett

Headteacher
Larkmead School



“The stimulating and caring ethos in the school enables pupils to make strong progress and achieve well.”

Ofsted 2019

Primary to secondary school transition

The Larkmead Experience starts in Years 5 and 6. We recognise that the transition from primary to secondary school is a huge step – for parents as well as students. That’s why we developed a programme that we believe makes this transition smooth and stress-free.

Firstly, local primary school students are invited to our Open Days. These are held twice a year, usually in the summer and autumn terms. Individual appointments for prospective students are available throughout the school year if these are more convenient.

The transition programme then continues in the primary schools, when Larkmead staff offer workshops for students in Years 5 and 6. This allows students to become familiar with Larkmead teachers and, as some of the workshops make use of the facilities at Larkmead, the students also become familiar with our site.

Once a student has chosen Larkmead School, the programme continues in Year 6. At this point, every student is visited by the Key Stage 3 Coordinator and current Year 7 students, who chat with them about life at Larkmead.



The students have the opportunity to raise any concerns and to have any questions answered. The Key Stage 3 Coordinator also discusses each student with their primary school class teacher. This discussion is very important, as it provides us with knowledge about friendship groups, interests and hobbies, as well as academic information about each child.

We recognise that the transition is even more of a challenge for some of our more vulnerable students. To help them settle in more quickly, we also offer a week-long Summer School – an event that has proved to be highly successful with invited participants.

For the past five years, we have taken the whole of our Year 7 group on a residential trip. This brings the whole group together, helping to build friendships and further ease the transition from primary to secondary school.



One community



“Pupils behave very well at the school. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers.”

Ofsted 2019

Student support and wellbeing

We want your child's time at Larkmead to be an enjoyable learning experience. For this reason, we have a number of support teams in place.

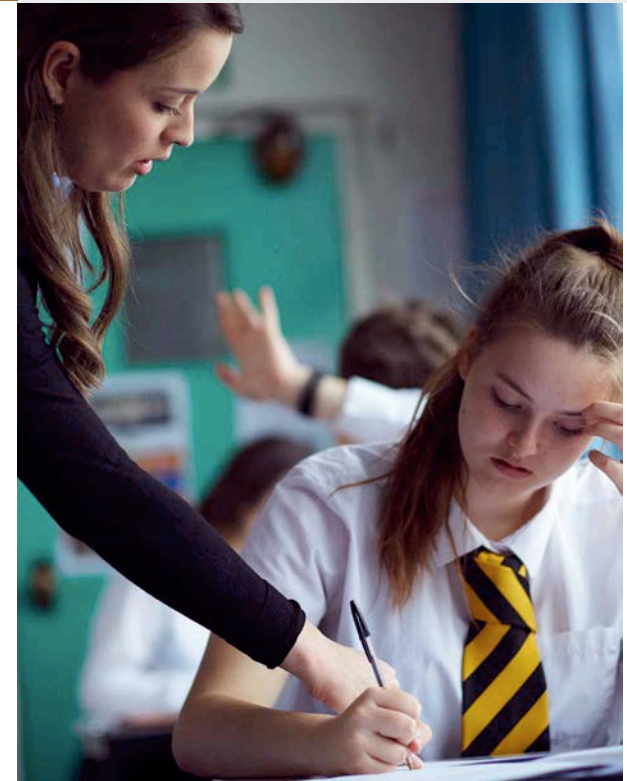
Our tutors have daily contact with students and are the first point of contact should parents or students have any worries. Directors of Learning will become involved if concerns persist.

Student Services is available throughout the school day to assist students and parents with any issues affecting student wellbeing.

Stepping Stones, our pastoral support department, offers pastoral care and support for vulnerable students or those experiencing any difficulties. They work closely with our Directors of Learning and external agencies and provide a link between school and parents in a friendly environment.

Larkmead is fortunate to have access to a school counselling service, working with the highly regarded Abingdon Bridge, who can offer specialist help and assistance to students and parents. We also have a trained school nurse, who works closely with the pastoral team.

We also have peer mentors – sixth form students who volunteer for the role. They help students in the younger years to gain confidence around their peers and to feel happy and comfortable during their time at Larkmead.



“Pupils’ well-being and personal development, including their mental health, have a high priority and are very well catered for.”

Ofsted 2019



Our learning environment

A rich, rewarding curriculum

Our rich, vibrant, stimulating curriculum offers a wide range of subjects to suit all learning interests – everything from Dance to Media to Citizenship to Sports Studies. The curriculum at Larkmead is continually developing to offer an engaging, enjoyable and exciting range of subjects and experiences for all students. Naturally taking into account the local and national context, it maintains at its heart the principle of individualised learning, offering the very best and most appropriate experience for each student.

Students in Key Stage 3 are organised into ability bands in some subjects, streamed in other and taught together at certain times. We use the first term of Year 7 to compile the groups, drawing on our experience of working with the students for that initial period of time.

For Key Stage 4 students the options system has been expanded to enable individuals to follow the courses that best suit their own learning styles, interests and career aspirations.

Students can follow a traditional academic route, take on a wider range of practical subjects, make the most of our school's Arts specialism or select from an increasing number of new courses, including Computing and Media.

Many of these subjects can then be studied at Key Stage 5 level.

Individual minds



“Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs on offer.”

Ofsted 2019



Our wider opportunities

A strong Student Voice

Larkmead has an established, and always developing, Student Voice committee. This mature structure of tutor, year and whole school representatives – elected by their peers – plays a significant role in the management and functions of the school. Student Voice meets with Larkmead’s Leadership Team on a regular basis, acting as a critical student friend to the management of the school and as a sounding board for innovation. It is represented on the Governing Body and a student-led panel is part of every prospective teaching appointment in the school.

The public face of our students can be seen in the success of our Public Speaking teams – including being placed second in the South of England National Rotary Public Speaking Competition.

Student leadership

Larkmead’s elected Student Voice committee symbolises a wider sense and importance of ‘student voices’ at the school. We recognise that our community should be co-constructed with all key stakeholders – and none are more key than our students. For this reason, you’ll find our students at the heart of school development and innovation.

Enterprising achievements

Students at Larkmead School display their enterprise skills in many creative ways. Young Enterprise is an annual sixth form business venture that’s organised on a national scale for innovative young entrepreneurs. Our school team recently topped the county, seeing off competition from all schools with their ‘business stand’ at the Said Business School in Oxford.



Artsmark Gold accreditation

As a school that specialises in Visual and Performing Arts, you might expect the Arts to be at the very heart of everything that we do – and it is. We are very proud to have achieved the Artsmark Gold accreditation and we're now preparing to apply for the highly prized Platinum Award.

At Larkmead, students are introduced to many new art forms, either through curriculum time, extra-curricular clubs or by working with professional artists. They acquire skills and a sense of enjoyment that will remain with them throughout their lives. Many of our most talented students are mentored by London-based professionals.

Visits at home and abroad

Larkmead offers an ambitious programme of visits, both at home and abroad. Recent visits include the Stock Exchange, the Tate Gallery, the National Science Museum, London theatre visits, Oxford Colleges, Universities and Pineapple Dance Studios in London.

Overseas trips have seen Larkmead students visiting France, Germany, Belgium, Morocco and New York.

Extra-curricular Activities

All Larkmead students are encouraged to join our rich programme of extra-curricular activities and this is recognised through our rewards scheme. Students can take part in activities and performances in Dance, Drama and Music as well as a host of other activities, such as Chess, Debating and Carnegie Book Award Shadowing. We also hold a Youth Club for students, which takes place after school one evening each week during term time.

Physical education

This is an important part of the curriculum – we are committed to the philosophy of 'Sport For All' at Larkmead. We believe in developing excellence and the value of competitive sport, but we also seek to instil an appreciation of the enjoyment and health benefits that a lifelong involvement in physical activity can bring.

We have excellent sports facilities at the school, with many of our facilities being available to the local community outside of school hours and at weekends. We have recently opened a Multi-Use Games Area, allowing year-round opportunities for netball, tennis, football and much more. Our students can now enjoy a vastly increased range of opportunities as a result of our membership of the Vale Academy Trust.

Larkmead students always have the opportunity to get involved in the numerous sports clubs held at lunch and after school – whether it's football, netball, athletics, badminton or rugby.

We understand, that mainstream physical education is not for everyone. Our Sports Plus programme aims to give every student the opportunity to be involved in sport, whatever their ability. We tailor the programme to suit each student's needs. Using advice from the Physiotherapy Service, Occupational Therapy Service and Physical Disability Outreach Service to include a physical exercise programme that incorporates any already existing physiotherapy programmes.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

The popular Duke of Edinburgh Award thrives at Larkmead. The scheme is offered to students in Year 10 and above and includes leisure, recreational and outdoor activities, alongside the opportunity for students to become involved in service to the community. Once again, our membership of the Vale Academy Trust widens opportunities for our Duke of Edinburgh students.

Inclusive Sports Festival

Each year, we host an annual interschool Inclusive Sports Festival. Disabled students from schools all over Oxfordshire are invited to participate in a fun day and to enjoy activities that they may not previously have had a chance to experience. This event has been supported in the past by inspirational role models, such as double Paralympic Judo medalist Ian Rose.

Outside learning opportunities

The Larkmead School Garden flourishes in more ways than one. The garden was set up by a group of students and was officially opened in 2013 by BBC Radio Gardening Expert, Steve Relton.

It provides an invaluable outside learning space for students with special education needs and has been extended to include a new polytunnel. This enables students to grow greater varieties of plants throughout the year, while also providing additional space for more students to get involved.



Residential experiences

Larkmead attaches great importance to the range of residential experiences it offers. These are designed to encourage personal and social development by giving students opportunities to be away as a group, experiencing some independence from home. Some of the courses we participate in are closely related to specific subjects such as the Battlefields Tour, a visit to Auschwitz in Poland and the Geography trip to the Netherlands. We make use of the PGL Adventure Centre at Osmington Bay in Dorset to enable all of our Year 7 students to take part in a challenging residential experience.

Activities Week

The school is very proud of the final week of the year, when our whole philosophy is encapsulated as students participate in an array of on- and off-site activities, offering experiences and opportunities that they will remember long after they have left Larkmead. These experiences range from Arts-based activities, in keeping with our specialism, to extreme physical challenges such as mountain biking, kayaking and climbing, to trips abroad. The year ends on an exciting note of adventure and challenge for students and staff alike.



"I was so impressed by the students at Larkmead. Together we looked at the importance of original thinking and developing our ideas independently - something that is clearly instilled within the ethos of the school.

The poems they produced were fantastic - really thought-provoking and full of life. I'm looking forward coming back to steal them at a later date!"

Mark Grist - Author



Valued alumni links

We are proud of all of our students – past and present. Our alumni include representatives of all the professions as well as professional footballers, dancers and singers, as well as owners of niche businesses and directors of large companies. We are fortunate that our links with these and other key players in industry allow us to further enhance opportunities for current Larkmead students, by enabling them to work alongside practitioners and learn from their wealth of knowledge and experience.



Published authors

Our students have been fortunate to work with 'writers-in-residence' over recent years, producing published anthologies of short stories and poetry. We are very proud that Larkmead has a growing community of published authors within the student body.

Creating futures

“The sixth form is an inclusive and encouraging environment where students make rapid progress. As a result of effective academic and pastoral support, students are successfully prepared for a wide range of higher education, apprenticeships and employment.”

Ofsted 2019

Careers Advice

We recognise that we play a vital role in preparing our students for life and we are fortunate to have our own dedicated Careers Advisor acting as the invaluable lynchpin between school and industry. The Advisor is available at all times during the school day to discuss future options with students, including staying on at school, going to college/university, apprenticeships and the world of work.

From Year 8 our students start preparing for a life within work as they are challenged through schemes such as Young Enterprise.

Students are expected to complete work placements in year 10 and CV writing and interviewing skills play an essential role in helping our students plan for their futures.

Our annual Careers Fair offers all students the opportunity to meet with employers, university and college representatives to explore future options further.





Creating futures

The successful futures for our students will depend on three key elements:

- The values that underpin our community characterising our students and their outlooks
- The skills that underpin the learning community that is Larkmead School
- The qualifications that will open doors for our students allowing them to aspire with confidence in a demanding, changing and exciting world

Sixth Form Opportunities

We are proud of our vibrant and friendly sixth form. We strive to help students gain both academic success and acquire transferable life skills. We understand that universities and employers look beyond academic success and students are given opportunities to develop skills outside of the classroom setting. The popularity of the sixth form is illustrated by the rise in numbers year upon year.

Sixth formers enjoy their own purpose built common room. In addition they have two dedicated study areas set aside for research and private study with access to computer facilities.

Arrangements for monitoring support and guidance are well developed and described as “very good” by Ofsted. Students are attached to tutor groups that are smaller than elsewhere in the school and there is an emphasis on small tutorial meetings.

Choice – The Abingdon Sixth Form Partnership

Students at Larkmead benefit from a partnership across Abingdon Town comprising the three secondary schools and a further education college. In a typical year, students can choose from over 30 As/A2 subjects, from Art to Theatre Studies, Biology to Psychology and Law to Philosophy. Our options grid also gives the students considerable flexibility in getting the combination of subjects that is right for them.

Larkmead is extremely pleased that in recent years all of our Sixth Form students have secured their first choice universities, or have been able to follow their dreams to become professional performers or secured highly regarded placements in industry.



www.larkmead-school.com

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