

An aerial photograph of Swanage, Dorset, England. In the foreground, a large, multi-story brick building with a dark roof, identified as Swanage School, is situated on a green hillside. The school is surrounded by lush green trees and a well-maintained lawn. In the middle ground, a residential area with various houses and trees is visible. The background features a large bay with several boats, a long pier extending into the water, and a town built on a hillside overlooking the sea. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue.

# The Swanage School

Human scale education for all

*A secondary school founded by and for the community, combining local learning with a global outlook in one of England's finest natural environments*

## Free school summary

## Introduction

A local education offering excellence for all

The aim of Education Swanage is to give young people the opportunity to be educated to a high standard within their own community, providing a rewarding experience they can take into their adult lives.

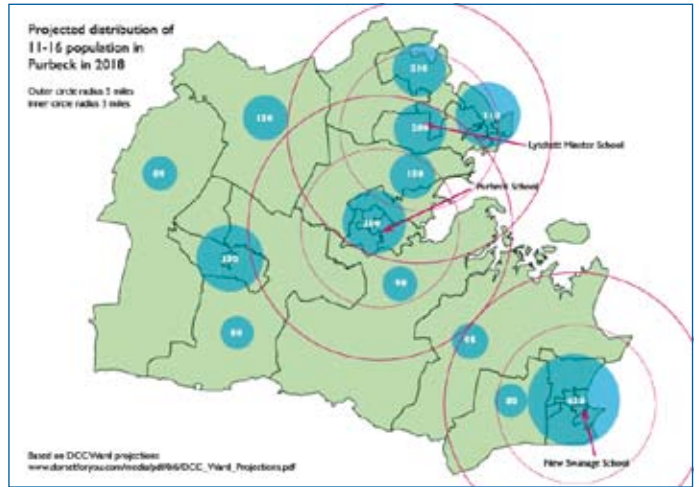
We aim to open a new school in Swanage in 2013, offering parents and young people the choice of an excellent locally based secondary education. The school is required because from 2013 there will be no secondary provision within 10 miles, despite the town population being over 10,000 (see map right).

Swanage is situated at the eastern end of the Jurassic Coast, the UK's first natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is visited by thousands of students from around the world every year. The town is a recognised centre of heritage, literary and arts activity alongside the broader tourism and visitor industries. The Swanage School will be a unique legacy for the future, set in the best outdoor classroom in the world.

The environment matters to the people of Swanage; it is our desire to create a school with a strong environmental focus.

The school will encourage greater innovation in the educational provision available by engaging with and modelling a wider range of approaches to learning. We will provide a value-for-money system of education that focuses on intellectual rigour and traditional values, and that will place the quality of relationships at the heart of the school.

Our aim is that the self-sustaining educational community we create will be at the centre of learning in the local area and over



time will become recognised as a centre of innovation and excellence at both a national and international level.

## Rationale

Following Dorset County Council's reorganisation of local schools from three-tier to two-tier, over 500 local children will have to make a round trip of at least 20 miles a day to access their nearest secondary school. Swanage will become the only town in Dorset with no secondary provision and we cannot find another town in the UK that has to send so many children so far.

We believe that it is not in the educational, environmental or social interests of children and young people to make such lengthy journeys away from their community each day.

The Dorset School's Forum say: *Disadvantaged children, through rural deprivation or any other cause, benefit from attending their local school, either primary or secondary. They are more likely to be able to access the curriculum and any extended school services.*

The consequences of the reorganisation are also likely to be

damaging for Swanage's social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Education Swanage see the reorganisation and a new free school as an opportunity to return full secondary education to the town. There is sufficient demand, based upon consultation with parents, to sustain a small but perfectly viable school capable of carefully managed expansion.

The school will cater for all local young people while raising aspirations and challenging other schools in the area to improve their performance. We believe that the type of intellectually rigorous school we want to create will increase choice and competition, inspire greater achievement in the area as a whole and enable generations of young people to be environmentally aware.

The school will serve the local learning community and lend support to the regional economy and sustainable environmental development within the town and world heritage coastline. This is a unique opportunity to create a school that has strong educational, environmental and ethical values.

## Mission statement

*A school founded by the community for the community, combining local learning with a global outlook in one of England's finest natural environments*

## Vision

Our vision is of a school which creates a distinctive pedagogical style by placing relationships at the heart of its design and organisation as a springboard for learning. This vision will be underpinned by Human Scale and Co-operative values and a curriculum tailored to the characteristics of the school community.

To achieve this goal, we have established a close working partnership with experts in educational provision at the Human Scale Education organisation and the Co-operative College.

The Swanage School will be a human scale school that aims to excel while promoting the wellbeing of all students.

We see our free school application as an opportunity to do something very special; we want to create an exemplar

school, including the building of links with higher education institutions and schools across the UK and abroad. It will be a school where a world-class education combining traditional and innovative learning goes hand-in-hand with research at the forefront of teaching.

We have chosen this particular vision because:

■ Swanage is a coastal town of 10,000 in a very rural area. Until the reorganisation to three-tier in 1974 the town's secondary schools attracted pupils from many miles around and it would perhaps be feasible to build a larger school with a very wide catchment area, as is seen in the rest of the county. But we are planning a school founded by and for the community and which does not seek to remove children from schools in other communities. As a small school we can also take full advantage of the benefits a 'human scale' approach can bring.

■ An effective way to drive up standards and pupils' ambition is to create a small, local learning community where teachers can build relationships with each and

every child, parent and family. This can only be achieved if children are educated close to where they live, with a school at the heart of a community.

■ Individual tracking of pupils in the Swanage School will demonstrate our commitment to every child, no matter what their background or however disadvantaged their life might seem. We believe that all young people can prosper. This individual attention is most likely to succeed in a small local school environment where each child is well known.

■ A small local school will provide seamless transition from the four excellent primaries in Swanage and Langton. The Swanage School aims to continue the relationship-based ethos of the primary schools with effective and close liaison and the sharing of good practice. This cannot happen as effectively if the secondary provision is at a distance from the primary schools.

■ Many young people lack motivation and inspiration, particularly in coastal towns and if they come from deprived backgrounds. A lack of community and school engagement and low levels of parental engagement can exacerbate low educational achievement and ambition (Demie, F. and Lewis, K. (2011) *White working class achievement: an ethnographic study of barriers to learning in schools. Journal of Educational Studies. 37 (3), 245 – 264.*). The Swanage School will enshrine community and parental engagement in its organisation to drive up standards.

■ Co-operative values of openness and democracy will ensure that parents and the wider community are empowered to take ownership of the school's success from the very start and into the future.



## Ethos, ambition and values

We believe that ethos, ambition and values are cornerstones to the creation of a successful school.

### Our ethos

Our ethos is centred on the creation of an outstanding school that will improve life opportunities for all pupils. We want each pupil to feel affectionate about their school and as an adult to look back fondly on their education. We want each pupil to leave the Swanage School enabled to progress to further and higher education and the career of their choice.

The lives of children in Swanage will be different once the school has opened. They will be able to walk or cycle to a school that will provide an excellent education while fully engaging them in the community where they live.

The pupils and their parents will be inspired by a local school with a global outlook. A typical week at the school will engage all pupils in the core national, local, extended and community curriculum.

The distinctive vision and ethos of the proposed new school are summarised in our 12-point Swanage School Charter (see below).

### Our Ambition

We will:

- Ensure every young person in our learning community fully realises their potential
- Engage the whole of Swanage as a learning community in raising aspirations and achievement
- Involve employers and businesses as our partners in education, skills and training
- Attract funding to enable the Swanage community to enjoy a wide range of learning

opportunities in a state-of-the-art environment

### Our Values

We will:

- Establish a strong team with the expertise and vision required to deliver excellence in learning
- Ensure our new school becomes a focal point for the skills, abilities and talents of learners of all ages
- Make the Swanage School accountable as an asset of the local community
- Provide a local school under local management, serving every family in Swanage
- Play a key part in securing Swanage's viability and social mix
- Develop a local learning plan to meet the needs of this generation and the next
- Have an important role in sustaining and strengthening the local economy

## The Swanage School 12-Point Charter

The Swanage School will be a 'human scale' school with an innovative, intellectually challenging curriculum where:

- 1 Excellence is encouraged
- 2 It is a pleasure to teach and learn
- 3 Every student's needs are understood and catered for
- 4 Young people are known as individuals
- 5 Students are able to take responsibility
- 6 All aspects of development are encouraged: Intellectual, Physical, Creative, Emotional, Moral and Spiritual
- 7 All students engage in The Swanage School Challenge curriculum extension programme
- 8 Young people's experiences of their school community extend into their adult lives
- 9 Behaviour is characterised by mutual respect for people and the environment
- 10 The staff are supported through extensive continuing professional development
- 11 Parents and local people are welcomed as partners in learning
- 12 National and international partnerships encourage global thinking

## Curriculum and qualifications

The curriculum and learning framework of the Swanage School will be distinctive by awarding its own school 'challenge award', The Swanage School Challenge.

This award will challenge pupils to engage in academic excellence, make a contribution to society, participate in their local community and be global pupils with strong leadership and teamwork skills.

Local partnerships, such as with the dance school and sailing club, will provide alternative forms of accreditation that will be recognised by the school.

Our curriculum and learning framework is designed to inspire excellent levels of achievement, attendance and behaviour at the Swanage School.

The aims of the curriculum:

- Provide an intellectually rigorous community where learning is central
- Enable pupils to have ownership of achievement
- Ensure that pupils know how to develop and realise ambition
- Inspire a human-scale approach with relationships at the heart of learning
- Create an innovative and challenging learning experience

## The Learning Framework

The Learning Framework is intended to be the basis of high quality teaching where the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils supported by excellent leadership and management and an effective care and guidance system.

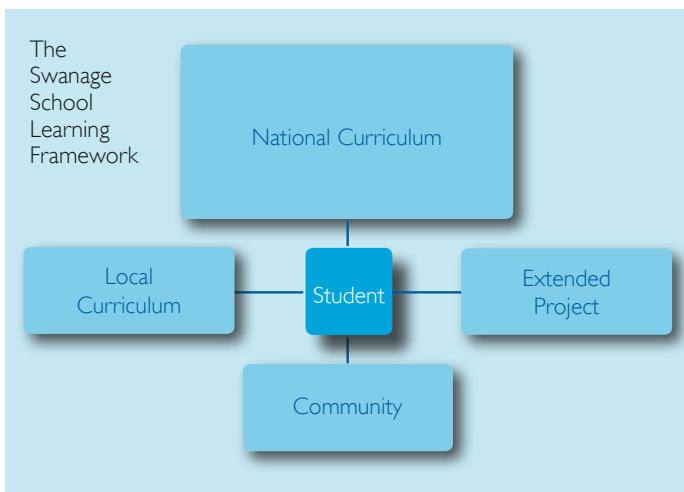
The Learning Framework is designed to cater for individual pupil needs. Throughout the weekly cycle of lessons and the extended curriculum pupils will be engaged in a flexible, broad and balanced entitlement that recognises each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

All pupils at Swanage School are expected to take part in four key elements of the Learning Framework throughout Key Stages 3 and 4:

### 1 The National Curriculum/Baccalaureate

– GCSEs and other statutory requirements (for example PSHE) plus personal options accredited through a range of national qualifications.

**2 The Local Curriculum** – community-based learning that may or may not be accredited, for example sailing, dance, music, sport, renewable energy



workshops, gardening and allotment skills, and local crafts such as stone carving.

**3 The Extended Project** – a study skills programme culminating in a personal research project focused on enquiry-based learning, peer review and an aspect of performance assessment.

**4 Community** – a service to the community or an understanding of the community and how individuals affect and are affected by the community, taking place in school or in partnership with local groups and organisations. For example, assisting in the school library, helping with a local conservation

project or organising fundraising events for a charity.

The Learning Framework is brought to life for pupils by...

## The Swanage School Challenge

All pupils at the Swanage School will be encouraged to achieve this challenge, which comprises achievement in the four key areas of the learning framework. This inclusive model provides pathways for pupils to personalise their curriculum. The challenge also provides a holistic approach for the learner and raises expectations of achievement, attendance and behaviour.



## Education standards and quality of provision

Our targets:

- Year-on-year improvements in academic standards, with at least 50 per cent achieving the English Baccalaureate
- All young people progressing at the age of 16 either on to routes to further/higher education (involving a significant increase in the number of first generation applicants) or into training
- All young people achieving The Swanage School Challenge by 16, recognising their achievement in the national, local, community and extended curricula
- A model of 'Professional Development' for staff recognised nationally for its excellence
- Attendance levels placing the school within the top five per cent of Dorset schools
- Zero exclusions

The quality of our curriculum is characterised by features that will ensure the Swanage School is outstanding. We will:

- Match provision to pupils' needs
- Ensure exceptionally good progress of each pupil
- Provide well-judged advice and guidance about each pupil's progression on to the next stage of life
- Challenge the most able and support those with special needs
- Enable progression within activities planned for each class and year group
- Deliver a rich and varied programme of extracurricular and extended activities including off-site visits, speakers and evening and weekend activities
- Place an emphasis on pupils becoming well-rounded individuals who are knowledgeable about a range of issues and able to

develop and pursue new interests at a high level

It will cater for the needs and interests of all pupils including:

- Gifted and talented
- Pupils with SEN and disabilities
- Pupils from deprived backgrounds
- Those who are learning English as an additional language
- Children who are in care
- Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

### National Qualifications including the English Baccalaureate (GCSEs)

Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum including the EBacc core and GCSEs. Science and humanities subjects will be offered in separate as well as integrated qualifications. Also part of the core provision will be PRE, IT, PE, PSHE, Work Related Learning / Enterprise Education and Citizenship.

**Core subjects:** (compulsory in state schools) Maths; English, ICT; PE; PRE; PHSE and Citizenship



**GCSE options:** (choices must include at least two sciences or dual science, a humanity and a language to cover the EBacc) Biology; Chemistry; Physics; or Dual Science; History; Geography; A Modern Language; Another Language; Art; Design Tech; Expressive Arts; Music; PE; Work Related Learning

### Organisation of pupils

In lessons the pupils at the Swanage School will usually be organised in classes according to their Key Stages. The school will





cater for Key Stages 3 and 4, and lessons will be organised for each year group from 7-11. There will be some 'stage not age' teaching, particularly in the Extended and Local curricula. Careful regard will be paid to individual learning programmes to ensure maximum pupil progress at all times.

### **Organising pupils for academic purposes**

Typically, there will be 4 teaching groups for each subject in Key Stage 3 and 5 in Key Stage 4. The number of pupils in each teaching

group will vary depending on the organisation of pupils in each subject area, but our aim is to have between 18 and 24 in a group at Key Stage 3 and between 14 and 20 at Key Stage 4. There is an emphasis on smaller class sizes in Key Stage 4 where the focus is on accredited learning.

The organisation of pupils will match our vision and ethos by placing relationships at the heart of the school. Class sizes and the number of pupils taught by each member of staff will be organised around Human Scale principles. Pupils will have a well known group of teachers while staff will have manageable class sizes where they are able to know each pupil well. The emphasis will be placed on the quality of the teacher and the relationship between the teacher and the pupils, rather than on the size of the class.

However, we recognise that smaller classes are at times necessary for pupils who face more challenges or in subjects that are practical in nature such as design and technology or drama. This may necessitate larger classes elsewhere but the supervision and safety of pupils will be of

paramount importance at all times. It is essential that pupils who face more challenges or attend classes of a practical nature are taught in small groups for supervision and safety as well as building relationships.

### **Organising pupils for non-academic purposes**

The pastoral system of the Swanage School will be organised around a house system with vertical tutor groups that reflect our human scale ethos. A house tutor group would take pupils from each year of the school. With an 84 pupil per year entry there will be three houses each comprising five tutor groups. In each tutor group there will be 28 pupils, with five or six pupils from each year.

The role of the tutor will be essential as the lynchpin to the pupils feeling well known and cared for. The emphasis on relationships will also place an expectation on the older pupils to be good ambassadors for their tutor group by taking care of the younger children in the group.

Pupils will take part in many of the extra-curricular activities such as sports day as part of their house and tutor group. They will also take part in Exceptional Days where the school will focus on the extended curriculum – including peer and performance assessment of students' extended project – as part of their house group. These days will occur regularly and will apply to all pupils.

As pupils progress through the school they will remain in the same house with the same tutor. Pupils will become accustomed to becoming mentors and leaders of younger children and this will in turn foster excellent relationships between young people of different ages within school and beyond.





## Community

Community engagement is central to the ethos of the Swanage School. We will enable pupils to make an active contribution to society and we will promote good community relations. The school will be an integral part of the community and will enhance the local area culturally, economically and socially.

We aim to develop a role for a member of staff or volunteer working on behalf of the school to focus on building relationships with groups within the community. We already have very positive relations with these groups who have expressed an interest in supporting and/or working in partnership with the school:

- Parents and local residents
- Charities and voluntary groups
- Harrow House Language School
- The Mowlem Theatre
- Durlston Country Park
- Swanage Town Football Club
- Swanage Cricket Club

- Purbeck Arts Group
- Ranger School of Dance
- Swanage Sailing Club
- Swanage Gig Rowing Club
- The Purbeck Society
- Swanage Senior Forum
- Swanage Town Council
- Members of Purbeck District Council
- Local Parish Councils
- Faith groups and local churches
- PEAT (Purbeck Environment Action Team)
- Local businesses

## The site and building

The preferred site/building for the new Swanage School is the former Swanage Grammar School. This school was closed in the 1970s as part of the Dorset County Council reorganisation of Purbeck schools from a two-tier to a three-tier system. This building has been used by various groups since this time.

The DfE's capital funding arm Partnerships for Schools has visited twice and has assessed it as being suitable for updating and

converting. The current owner has offered the building for use as a school, subject to planning. Swanage Town Council are supporting the Swanage School.

The vision and ethos for the Swanage School is forward-thinking and takes a holistic approach. The aim, as far as possible under procurement rules, is to include the skills of local trades people to complete the building work. This will provide local employment for people in the building industry. This will include a wide range of skills.

## Environmental principles

Given our wonderful surroundings, sound environmental principles will be placed at the core of the school, reducing waste, sourcing locally grown food and encouraging pupils and staff to walk and cycle to school.

The aim for the Swanage School will be to include renewable energy, allotments for the kitchen, a smallholding and to encourage biodiversity.

The school community will be educated about climate change and ways in which to reduce its carbon footprint. The Swanage School will aim to take part in the Eco Schools Award or a similar project. The school will be a centre of learning that will include environmental principles as a key part of its provision and ethos.

## In conclusion

Education Swanage are confident that the Swanage School is viable and capable of delivering our educational vision for the benefit of the children and the wider community.