



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

INFORMATION FOR NON-MUSLIM PARENTS



WELCOME

A very warm welcome from Star Academies.

Star Academies is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust that runs a diverse network of primary and secondary schools. We are a values-based organisation, committed to enhancing social mobility. All our efforts are geared towards raising the aspirations of children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation to improve their life chances and help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions.

Star Academies is one of the country's leading education providers, and our schools promote excellence in everything they do. In every school, the entire staff team – working in partnership with parents and the local community – is committed to nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

Our schools work together as Star Partnerships in five cluster areas – Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands and London. Schools within the Partnerships collaborate to share expertise and maximise opportunities and experiences for our pupils.

Star Academies employs the very best staff and invests heavily in their continuing professional development. Staff benefit from an extensive range of nationally accredited training provided by Star Institute.

This short guide is aimed specifically at non-Muslim parents and carers who want to know more about our faith-based schools and what they have to offer to non-Muslim children and families.

ABOUT STAR

Star Academies runs a growing network of high achieving primary and secondary schools in Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands and London. Educational excellence and social mobility are at the heart of everything we do. We have many years of experience of helping children and young people to raise their aspirations and achieve outstanding results.

A Star education is all about excellence – helping our pupils secure places at Russell Group universities, in FTSE companies and in the professions.

As a Trust, we want to improve shared understanding between different faiths and to prepare our pupils for their adult lives in multi-cultural 21st century Britain. We want to enable all our pupils to live their lives according to the values of self-discipline, compassion, mutual respect for all people regardless of difference and respect for the earth itself. These fundamental values underpin our British society.

We comply fully with all equalities legislation. Our faith schools go beyond the letter of the law and take extra care to make sure that pupils of all faiths and none can feel part of the Star “family”.

THE STAR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Star schools aim to deliver all round excellence. We offer a personalised educational experience within a culture of high expectations. Every young person is treated as an individual and is set personalised, aspirational – but achievable – targets. Their progress is monitored regularly by staff and action is taken if any pupil seems to be in danger of not achieving their potential. Parents are encouraged to get involved and to support their child’s education at home. We recruit the best teachers and associate staff, nurturing the brightest young talent and fast-tracking high-achievers. All our staff receive high quality training and personal development.

THE CURRICULUM

We have three main elements to our curriculum – educational excellence, character development and service to communities. All of our schools have a leadership specialism.

Pupils are generally expected to follow pathways that ultimately lead to GCSE and A-level qualifications. We recognise that some pupils might have particular learning needs and we provide additional support and learning opportunities for those who need it.

This strong academic focus is complemented by leadership and character development programmes, including sport, cultural and creative activities. These help our pupils develop important skills, such as teamwork, which are so important in adult life and in the world of work.

The final element of the curriculum is service to the community. We believe that by encouraging young people to “give something back”, they develop into more confident, rounded adults with a strong sense of self-worth and a belief that they can make a difference to the world around them.

Primary Curriculum

Our primary curriculum is designed to foster thought, curiosity and a desire for learning in all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, strengths and needs. It provides a solid foundation for future learning at every stage and is designed to deliver the rounded educational experience that we seek for every pupil from the start.

Secondary Curriculum

Our secondary curriculum emphasises the importance of intellectual study and focuses on traditional learning. We believe that this will best equip our pupils for the pathways that lead to university, the professions and success in whatever career they eventually choose. We are determined

that our pupils will compete on equal terms with pupils coming from the most privileged circumstances. We provide them with an academic, but rounded, education that gives them the best possible chance to succeed.

Our secondary schools dedicate 80% of curriculum time to delivering ‘English Baccalaureate’ subjects:

- English Language (*and Literature*)
- Mathematics
- Science (*Biology, Chemistry and Physics*)
- History
- Geography
- Spanish, Arabic, French and other Modern Foreign Languages
- Computer Science

The remaining 20% of the curriculum is different in each school, and will include subjects such as:

- Sport
- Religious Studies
- Creative and Performing Arts
- Design and Technology
- Citizenship
- Personal, Social and Health Education

Sport

We put a lot of emphasis on sport in our schools. Sport helps young people develop skills and attributes that benefit them well beyond the sport itself. They learn team work, leadership, self-discipline, focus and competitiveness – all of which will stand them in good stead in their future careers. We recognise that some young people don’t consider themselves as “sporty” and encourage them to try out different sports via taster sessions or to consider more “behind the scenes” roles such as helping organise events and competitions.

Modern Languages

The British Council's Languages for the Future report (2013) identified the need for Britain to significantly improve its competence in other languages – more people, learning more languages – if it is to capitalise on the economic and cultural benefits of the global economy. The report ranked the importance of different languages to the UK's future prosperity, security and influence in the world in the years ahead. Spanish was ranked as the most important, Arabic as second and French as third. We offer these three languages, and more, in our schools.

Religious Studies

We follow the religious education curriculum agreed for each local area. We ensure that our Religious Studies lessons give our pupils an understanding of, and respect for, the beliefs and practices of the major world faiths including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

LEADERSHIP

Our Leadership offer is designed to instil the three interdependent Star Leadership Virtues of Performance Leadership, Moral Leadership and Civic Leadership – virtues that together ensure our pupils not only 'do their best' but 'do the right thing' and play a full role in society.

We provide our pupils with a unique learning experience, which gives them the skills and confidence to take on leadership responsibilities. Focusing on the Star values of Service, Teamwork, Ambition and Respect, our Leadership initiatives promote maturity, commitment and teamwork and enable our pupils to experience what it is like to stand up and take the lead.

We promote leadership in the broadest sense – not limited to traditional public roles. We are committed to developing

confident individuals who are leaders at home, amongst their peers and friendship groups, their community and, later on, in the workplace.

WORSHIP AND PRAYERS

We are conscious that we serve pupils of all faiths and none. We do all we can to accommodate the worship and prayer needs of pupils from different faiths. We work hard to build good relationships with the leaders of the other main faiths in the local area, including working with them to provide pastoral support where this is needed. Parents are encouraged to discuss any specific faith needs as part of induction. No pupil is forced to take part in worship or prayers.

UNIFORMS

Star promotes excellence and aspiration in everything its pupils do. From Reception to Sixth Form, the school uniform is designed to reinforce this spirit of excellence. It is smart and practical, encourages pupils to take pride in being part of their school and enables them to act as ambassadors for the Star educational experience. Secondary school uniforms are also designed to portray a professional and business-like image.

High standards of presentation are required at all times, with clean clothes, tidy hair and no jewellery (*except where agreed on grounds of faith*).

We respect the right of people from different world faiths to choose whether or not they wear religious wear associated with their faith. The headscarf is part of the uniform for those Muslim girls who choose to wear it. Parents can discuss their requirements for other religious wear such as a turban, skull cap or crucifix as part of induction. The final decision rests with the Principal as to the appropriateness of particular items of religious wear in the school context. No pupil is forced to wear religious clothing.

FOOD AND CATERING

We apply healthy eating principles in all our schools. As well as the obvious health benefits, there is lots of evidence that good food helps pupils do better at school. At the breakfast clubs in our primary schools, as well as eating tasty, nutritious meals, pupils are encouraged to help with preparation and clearing up – learning practical skills and healthy eating habits that will last them a lifetime.

Our school meals take pupils' dietary needs into account. Kosher, vegetarian and other options can be made available. Parents are encouraged to discuss any specific dietary requirements as part of induction.

IN AND AROUND THE SCHOOL

We have Muslim and non-Muslim governors in all our faith schools. We also try to make sure that the teaching and support staff teams at all our faith schools have a mix of Muslim and non-Muslim staff. We take particular care with the recruitment of our Principals, who must share our vision for a school with a Muslim designation that appeals to all sections of the community.

We organise programmes and events to mark key events in the calendars of the main world faiths and important British secular celebrations such as Mothers' Day. These are important to building shared understanding amongst our pupils, their families and the local community.

At the same time, we make sure that no pupils feel under any pressure to take part in any optional faith-related activity. This includes fasting, which we see very much as a matter of personal choice.

We have a strong commitment to charitable giving, community service and volunteering. We encourage staff and pupils to get involved with local voluntary and community groups. We also support national and international

charities such as Crisis, BookAid International, FareShare (*food poverty charity*) and Save the Children.

As an example, we have worked with Crisis so that some of our secondary boys have been able to take part in "sleep outs" to raise awareness and funds to tackle homelessness amongst young people in the UK.

CONCLUSION

We hope this short guide has given you a feel for what you could expect if you were to choose a Star education for your child. For more information, contact the Principal of your local Star school or email info@staracademies.org.

