

## DURHAM PRISON VISIT

OUR YEAR 12 STUDENTS ARE GIVEN A TOUR OF HMP DURHAM AS PART OF THEIR CRIMINOLOGY COURSE

A group of Year 12 Criminology students was recently offered the unique opportunity of a tour around Her Majesty's Prison Durham, based in Elvet in the centre of Durham City. This is a Category B local prison for remand adult/young male prisoners, serving the courts of County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Teesside.

HMP Durham is divided into seven wings, plus a segregation section and healthcare section. The students were taken to see the prison cells, medical rooms, visiting room, video court link rooms, CCTV room, gardens and church.

As part of the tour, our students were able to speak to prison officers and the prison governor himself for a question and answer session. Students were keen to find out more about the type of prisoners held in the prison and heard that they were mostly behind bars for drug offences and violent offences, rather than Category A offences such as murder and manslaughter. They were also interested to find out more about life as a prison officer, particularly their rights and how budget cuts and staff shortages have affected the role.

Students found the whole experience fascinating and enlightening. A number of students in the group commented that the visit had encouraged them to consider working in a prison in the future as a career, since they were not fazed by the harsh realities of working with prisoners, despite prior concerns.

This is the second year that we have been able to offer this visit to students and we hope this will become a regular event, thanks to the assistance of Stephen Grady, for which we are very grateful.

