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Welcome to this spring senior schools edition of *Independent School Parent*!

In this issue we look at the incredible and often overlooked work that independent schools do with those in the maintained sector: ranging from school sponsorship and community outreach to resource sharing; many independent schools even have dedicated members

of staff to run their partnership programmes. On page 22, Damian McBeath, Principal of The John Wallis Church of England Academy, describes the many tiers of the partnership work his school does with local independent school Benenden in Kent.

Did you know that English A-level – traditionally one of the most popular subjects to study – is in decline? Emily Weatherby, Head of English at Bryanston in Dorset, looks at the reasons for this on page 14.

There's a fantastic competition to enter on page 65, where you can win a five-night luxury holiday in Barbados: find out more at independentschoolparent.com/win

And I'm delighted to announce that nominations are open for our awards campaign, Independent Schools of the Year 2023, now in its sixth year. You can read all about the awards, this year's categories and what the judges are looking for in potential winners on page 24, or at independentschoolsoftheyear.co.uk/about

Good luck!

Claudia

CLAUDIA DUDMAN, EDITOR



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Visit our schools directory where you can find details of hundreds of pre-prep, prep and senior schools across the UK
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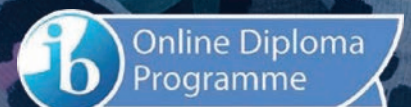
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Independent School Parent also publishes *The Guide to Independent Schools* biannually to help you choose the right school.

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Meet the experts sharing their years of educational experience

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SIR ANTHONY SELDON

is a contemporary historian and political author. He's the Emeritus Professor of the University of Buckingham and was the 13th Master of Wellington College in Berkshire from 2006 to 2015. He is currently the 15th Head at Epsom College, Surrey.

MARK STRETTON

joined the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) as Communications Manager in 2017, bringing with him more than 15 years' experience in education sector communications.

BEN VESSEY

joined Canford in 2013 as

Headmaster from Christ's Hospital, where he was Senior Deputy Head. He's currently Vice-Chair of the HMC's Professional Development sub-committee.

SUE WOODROFFE

has been a Head for 12 years, first at The British School of Brussels, and now at The Grammar School at Leeds. She has a particular interest in the three-to-18-years educational journey, as well as the benefits of multicultural and international learning environments for children.

DR HELEN WRIGHT

is a former President of the Girls' Schools Association and Vice-Chair of ISC, with three major headships under her belt. Since 2014, she has worked in international education and advises, recruits and coaches senior leaders in schools all over the world.

PETER YOUNG

is an independent school governor, as well as Chairman of the Business Marketing Awards.



COVER: ST PETER'S SCHOOL, YORK



Cranleigh School explains its pupil-centred wellbeing policy on p28



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IN BRIEF

STUDENT SUCCESSES • EXTRACURRICULAR EXCELLENCE • INSPIRING INITIATIVES • NEW HEADTEACHERS

WORDS: LAURA SUTHERLAND



Francis Holland School, Regent's Park, London

Award-winning portrait photographer and FHS alumna Rhiannon Adam has opened Linhope House, the school's new Sixth Form Centre, which has increased FHS's dedicated sixth form space by 300 per cent (663sqm) and offers the perfect environment for the transition from school to university.

Rhiannon, who graduated from FHS in 2003 before attending both Cambridge University and Central St Martins, has been chosen as the only woman to partake in a civilian trip to the moon as part of the dearMoon Crew, in recognition of her pioneering creative work which champions female empowerment. She's a huge inspiration to current students, and a reflection of FHS's transformational education.

The school's sixth form experience combines a strong scholarly ethos (73 per cent of A-level results were A*-A in 2022) with an inclusive, supportive family environment. Sixth formers enjoy future-centred learning with abundant opportunities to develop responsibility, initiative and leadership skills, and are regularly offered places at Oxbridge and other top UK,

US and European universities. Headmistress Katharine Woodcock has developed a 'schooling for life' approach to the curriculum which champions creativity, collaboration and communication, enabling pupils to develop lateral thinking, leadership and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to apply empathy and dexterity in all that they do, today and tomorrow.

Linhope House, which has undergone a £5m investment, has enhanced every aspect of an already exceptional sixth-form offering. The building combines an elegant Georgian exterior and traditional features, such as the Reading Room, with cutting-edge interiors, including a Think Lab and collaborative learning and study spaces. Natural materials, cool colours and abundant natural light have resulted in a serene Scandi-chic decor. The Common Room features a bio-farm plant wall, which is known to increase wellbeing, productivity and attention spans.



Come together

Exeter School, Devon

The school welcomed educators from across the region to connect with colleagues at its first education festival, EdFest23. This year’s theme was Educating for Character, and delegates had the opportunity to engage in vital conversations around the development of pupils’ character. The day featured a range of distinguished speakers, including former British Paralympian Claire Harvey MBE, anti-racism strategist Maia Thomas, and Director of Schools, Engagement and Partnership at The Association of Character Education, Andrew Pettit, while the keynote address was made by former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, Sir Anthony Seldon.



On the ball

Ashville College, North Yorkshire
Former England and Tottenham Hotspur footballer, Michael Dawson, told sixth formers hard work and determination are key to a successful career. The Sky Sports pundit and Northallerton native was guest speaker at the school’s Future Ready programme, which has featured talks by journalists, digital marketing specialists and investment managers.



Treading the boards

Royal Hospital School, Suffolk
Pupils put on a triumphant production of *Me and My Girl*, showcasing the dramatic and musical talent at the school. The performance had a four-night sell-out run, preceded by a fundraising dinner, with the proceeds going towards the Centennial Bursary campaign – a fundraising initiative to support 100 students with bursaries, by the time of the school’s centenary in 2033.



Medieval to metaverse

Winchester College, Hampshire
Founded in 2021, CATALYST is an educational programme which supplements the traditional school curriculum. Open to ambitious students aged 13 to 18 worldwide, it draws on STEM, history, natural and social sciences and philosophy, to present complex accounts of the world’s challenges. The first intake in 2022 welcomed students from 14 countries.

BEST OF THE REST

• WELL VERSED

Sancton Wood School, Cambridgeshire
Finalists took to the stage to compete in the Poetry Together 2022 poetry writing competition, facing an illustrious judging panel made up of Gyles Brandreth, Waterstones Children’s Laureate Joseph Coelho and award-winning author Lucy Cuthew. The senior school winners were Isabella Davison and Kherlen Ho.

• WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Manchester High School for Girls, Manchester
This term saw the return of Balance Week, a period which allowed pupils and staff to take advantage of opportunities and activities designed to enhance wellbeing, resilience and mental health. The itinerary included archery, circus skills, chocolate-making and absolutely no homework.

• WRAPAROUND CARE

Fettes College, Edinburgh
Despite recently celebrating its 22nd annual Volunteering Week this year, the school makes a point of practising community outreach all-year round: a case in point being helping at the nearby Queens Manor Care Home, where pupils build friendships with residents, do gardening and assist with general maintenance.

• THE FIRST TAKE

Maida Vale School, London
Talented singers and musicians across all year groups performed in the school’s inaugural Live Lounge in front of their peers and parents. As well as showcasing their talent through an eclectic range of genres, pupils raised money for the Sparkle Foundation, a charity providing services to those in need in Malawi.

CHANGING PLACES

Headteachers on the move



Kimbolton School, Cambridgeshire has appointed **Will Chuter** as its new Head, starting in the autumn term.



Natalie Argile has been announced as the new Head at **Blackheath High, GDST**.



In April, **Lisa Pritchard** takes up the Headship at **Rougemont School** in Newport.



Sir Anthony Seldon has started as Head at **Epsom College** in Surrey.



The Oratory School, South Oxfordshire has appointed **Dr Julian Murphy** as Head, starting in September.



Patrick Horne has taken over as Principal at **d'Overbroeck's** in Oxfordshire



Nice try

RGS Worcester, West Midlands

Sixth former Haineala Lutui has been selected for the England U18 Women's Rugby Squad ahead of the forthcoming internationals. She has trained with the squad since August 2022 and was named in the final team following a training camp which was held ahead of the Women's U18 Six Nations in April. Haineala plays for the school's U18 girls' rugby team, is in the senior netball 1st team and is also a part of RGS Worcester's athlete development programme.



Call of the wild

Eastbourne College, East Sussex

The school, known for its green initiatives, has announced plans to teach natural history at GCSE from 2025, as part of its commitment to provide a holistic education and support environmental awareness. It's the first in Sussex - and one of the first in the country - to set out plans for teaching natural history, following the Department for Education's announcement about the course.



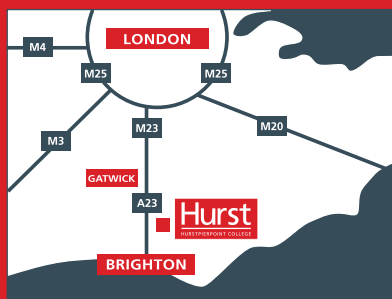
A double first

Taunton School, Somerset

Two sixth form scholarship students have received offers to study at the University of Oxford. Amelie, 17, hopes to study History at Queen's College, while Evie, 18 would like to read Classics with Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at St Hugh's College. Students at Taunton benefit from expert guidance from the school's careers department and specialist tutoring from Head of History, Mark Chatterton.

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BEST OF THE REST

• QUEEN'S GAMBIT

Brentwood School, Essex

Chess captain Nina Pert has earned the title of Women's Candidate Master, an official lifetime achievement awarded by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) exclusively to women chess players. The year 10 student is the seventh highest ranking female player in the world for her age.

• EASY RIDER

St Swithun's School, Hampshire

Holding the reins of her beloved Mountain Moorland pony Hugo, 11-year-old pupil Izzy Williams took on the adults at Birmingham's Horse of the Year Show and incredibly came within one mark of the winner in the Working Hunter Pony competition.

• ASSESS ACCESS

Wetherby School, London

From the autumn, all senior candidates will undertake the school's new adaptive entrance assessment, run in partnership with industry leaders, ATOM Learning. This online test will include English, maths, and reasoning, as well as innovative content designed to assess a candidate's ability to form connections, synthesise unfamiliar information, and think creatively.

• IN THE BAG

Downsend School, Surrey

A huge donation of more than 120 school bags, along with uniforms and sports kit, has arrived in a fishing village on the outskirts of Accra, Ghana. The generous donation was organised when the school updated its uniform, and was gratefully received by community charity, Kokrobite Chiltern Centre.



Who runs the world? Girls!

Hanford School, Dorset

Two lower sixth students, Sachini and Emily, returned from Mini Model United Nations (MUN) with Best Delegation award medals for their resolution argument, during a discussion on sustainable energy as part of the Environment Committee. Three teams of delegates from Hanford – six girls in total – were sent to the MUN event at Bryanston School.



International relations

Abbey College, Manchester

The student council's diversity sub-committee arranged for the college to host its inaugural Culture Day. Offering an authentic experience, the campus was adorned with decorations to represent the heritage of as many staff and students as possible. The attendees shared stories and insights into their cultures and traditions over a feast of Iranian khoresh badamjan, Turkish tea, Danish salted liquorice and Welsh cakes.



Sing along

Dauntsey's School, Wiltshire

This year saw the introduction of the Festival of Voices: a week spent exploring, studying and celebrating the human voice. Sessions focused on free group sound improvisation, voice release, singing in a foreign language, vocal health and microphone use. Vocal professionals from the West End and opera companies ran workshops and helped pupils understand some of the skills required to make the most of their voices.



Highs and lows

Felsted School, Essex

Eighty sixth form students took part in an investment banking simulation competition run by the Economics and Business Society in the school's new Marshall Centre for Learning. The event was made possible through a collaboration with AmplifyME, a specialised investment banking simulator. The session trained students in the workings of investment banking, introducing them to skills used in the finance world.



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CHALLENGING TIMES

How do you help your son or daughter build resilience to antisocial influences and influencers? **Fraser Halliwell** has some suggestions

The spectre of hate speech and online social manipulation is never far from the news. The most obvious recent example is that of the influencer Andrew Tate, who is currently in police custody in Romania on charges of organised crime, human trafficking and rape.

I am struck by the risk a man like this poses to decent society. He denies the charges but is an unashamed misogynist. We all have a responsibility to challenge attitudes and behaviours that conflict with our values – we are doing it in schools through assemblies, tutor group discussions, prosocial programmes and smaller group support. I would urge you to do the same at home.

No one likes being lectured or told they have been fooled by a con artist, so we should tread carefully if we are to be effective in challenging misinformation and manipulation. Here are five steps you could take to protect your children from these influences:

1. Educate yourself – understand how algorithms feed personalised content to your children and

specific example may well be emotive, but all cases have features in common, namely a desire to grab your attention and influence your behaviour to generate an advantage for the influencer – status, followers, and (ultimately) money.

4. Promote critical thinking – a healthy dose of scepticism is the best protection against misinformation of all kinds. Rather than assert your views, coach your children to see the issue from a more critical perspective. What are the vested interests of these people that may cause us to question their claims? What expertise do they have? Is there any corroboration for the claims being made? No one likes to be fooled and your children will spot the falsehoods as quickly as anyone else.

5. Reflect on values – ask if these views are consistent with your family or community values and, if not, why should we tolerate them in our virtual lives? It is easy to shrug and accept behaviour and attitudes we know to be bad when they are presented online. We are constantly bombarded with information



Fraser Halliwell is
Head of Radnor
House, Sevenoaks

A HEALTHY DOSE OF SCEPTICISM *is the best protection against misinformation of all kinds.* COACH YOUR CHILDREN TO SEE THE ISSUE FROM A MORE CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

know what they are looking at online. For many teenagers, standing out and being different is a high-risk strategy. It is safer to follow the crowd and accept peer influences. Consequently, our children can be easy targets for those who seek to promote themselves, their ideas, or their products via social media.

2. Listen and understand – allow your child to speak openly about their influences and the reasons they feel the way they do; listen and ask questions. It's really tempting to dismiss young people's opinions and their attraction to online content. We are also primed to jump in with advice all too quickly. Neither of these approaches are helpful. We must take the time to understand what is appealing to our children without judgment.

3. Generalise the problem – don't focus on the specific issue, such as Andrew Tate (there are and will be others), but discuss the motives behind influencers' words and deeds. The

and choosing to ignore it is a reasonable defence mechanism. However, sometimes we should confront the claims, look past the slick presentation and reject the misinformation.

Many young people struggle to find meaning in their lives (especially given the mental health challenges exposed by the pandemic) and we all lack tolerance for the normal levels of suffering associated with living. These facts contribute to a worrying existential vacuum for young people.

Like the Jewish-Austrian psychotherapist Victor Frankl in *Man's Search for Meaning*, I believe the meaning of life is derived from taking responsibility for ourselves and others. Our purpose comes from the deeds we do, our love for others and the courage we show in adversity. These are the areas we must nurture in our children to reduce their vulnerabilities and to forge a sense of purpose. Only then will we feel confident that our children are equipped to resist antisocial influences. ☺

CHANGING THE SUBJECT

Emily Weatherby looks at why the take up of English A-level, one of the most popular subjects to study, is in decline

Alarm bells are now ringing loud and clear in the ears of parents and teachers with the news that English has fallen out of the top ten most popular subjects at A-level for the first time. It is particularly concerning that there was nearly a 10 per cent reduction in the number of pupils studying English A-level in 2021/2 – representing the biggest ever year-on-year drop for a single subject. This is not a trend that I recognise in my own school, where the popularity of English continues to grow, but it still makes uncomfortable reading for any English teacher and should be a cause for concern across the wider teaching profession too.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that government reforms to GCSE English Literature were to blame for the national fall, as students are put off the subject ‘because of the grind of memorising large amounts of traditional texts.’ Then, of course, there’s the inevitable competition from computer screens.

The ‘instant gratification’, connectivity and

words and to build a reasoned and considered argument are core skills. And those are skills that everyone will need in life – whatever other A-level subjects they choose, whatever their interests and whatever their chosen career.

The power of words, influence of books and sense of fulfilment that come from understanding complex and disparate feelings and being able to articulate thoughts, are immeasurable. Perhaps more than any other subject, English has to be a dynamic and expansive learning experience so such qualities can flourish and affect every area of a child’s personal development. It mustn’t be perceived as a memory test or a predictable repeat of what has gone before.

The growing popularity of the International Baccalaureate (IB) adds weight to this argument. Many European and US universities recognise the importance of English and study of literature beyond the age of 16 as consistent with the value of independent learning, reflection and inquiry. There is mounting evidence that English A-level is increasingly chosen by students taking a fourth humanities subject alongside STEM choices,



Emily Weatherby is Head of English at Bryanston School in Dorset

WE REALLY MUSTN'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT *reading and writing are essential tools that can* PROVIDE DEEP JOY THROUGHOUT LIFE, PROMOTING MINDFULNESS AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

dependency associated with the internet and social media not only compromise personal discovery, but also stifle the scope for imagination, creativity and empathy. Aside from the imbalance and mental health consequences of this digital saturation, creative thinking risks being strangled at source and ‘traditional’ reading becomes more associated with work than pleasure.

We really mustn’t lose sight of the fact that reading and writing are essential tools that can also provide deep joy throughout life. Reading promotes mindfulness and brain development, develops language and emotions, and strengthens relationships. It is also the best way for any child to cultivate their own personal interests and to build sympathy and understanding between people with different experiences.

Personal interpretation is also a key quality in English. An examiner wants to know what a student thinks, so the ability to put feelings into

with English and English-related degrees (such as journalism, law, film and theatre and media studies) still popular choices at higher education.

It is really a question of finding the right balance, thinking beyond the page and classroom and showing contemporary relevance for those students about to enter the sixth form. Workshops with respected poets, authors and playwrights, reading material from other cultures, creative writing and poetry competitions, recitals, book clubs, literary societies and attendance at relevant stage and film performances or digital theatre experiences, will all help to enthuse and encourage young minds. Such active engagement also demonstrates that English can be a truly inspiring, enriching and immensely fulfilling voyage of discovery. The onus is on the teaching profession to show how the next generation can benefit from the diverse and deep value of a subject that must no longer be taken for granted. ☺



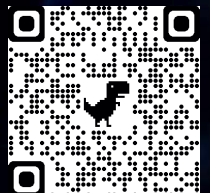
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NET VALUES

Marina Gardiner Legge explores the highs and lows of navigating social discourse with her students

‘Nothing’s beautiful from every point of view.’ Horace’s words are as true as ever today, especially when it’s an information tsunami out there, whether on television, online or in the metaverse. In 2020, every person generated 1.7 megabytes of data in just one second and nowadays internet users generate about 2.5 quintillion bytes of data each day. The average user spends around seven hours a day online, and roughly 92 per cent do so through mobile devices.

The worrying thing is that many of these are our children. How can we ensure they have the strategies and the evaluative skills to discern the true from the untrue? To protect themselves from being manipulated but, just as importantly, to thrive in the richest jungle of information that the world has ever seen?

It was in an effort to give our students the tools to negotiate the alleyways of the internet that our Social Discourse unit was born. I teach every tutor group in year seven to get to know them and, this year, my two lessons a week are dedicated to developing a critical mind and the skills to

questions that I get the students to think about whether the photograph is real. That change of perspective and the realisation that we have to question not just the nature of the image but also its validity, is a pivotal moment in the course. This leads into the nature of fake news and how to distinguish between real and fake news.

Sometimes I do wonder how old children should be when we share these messages; after all where does evaluation end and cynicism begin? Should I be sharing messages with students at the age of 11 or is that too young? Should I instead keep them in their naivety and innocence? It’s a fine line and I try to err on the side of positive evaluation and critical thinking.

The last part of the course moves on to listening to ourselves and those around us. I explicitly teach the skills of active listening: mirroring speech, eye contact and body language, to demonstrate that you are focussing on the person speaking. In their feedback students who have spoken tell me how they feel valued and really listened to. Afterwards, I ask them to practise the task for homework and their comments have been illuminating:

‘I asked my mum how her day was at the



Marina Gardiner Legge is Head of Oxford High School GDST

HOW CAN WE ESTABLISH WHETHER *what we are hearing and seeing is truthful*, AS WELL AS THE GREATER QUESTION OF HOW CAN WE DISTINGUISH WHEN BOTH SIDES SEE THEIRS AS THE TRUTH?

connect with others positively.

Our first lessons are dedicated to questioning what truth is. How can we establish whether what we are hearing and seeing is truthful, as well as the greater question of how can we distinguish when both sides of an argument see their side as ‘the’ truth? Understanding motivation helps. So, I encourage groups in the classroom to discuss, for example, whether fishing should be banned, assuming the positions of a fisher(wo)man, a chef or a wildlife activist. I always really enjoy that realisation that the truth is not necessarily a constant – it’s a major step.

After that, we move into questioning our sources. I show a photograph of an animal trapped in plastic and generate questions from the class. These range from factual, closed questions such as ‘where was this taken?’ to ‘what’s the name of the turtle?’ It is at the end of this barrage of

hospital (she’s a nurse). She ended up explaining and asked me how my day was...’

‘I asked my dad about his day. He was very happy but also suspicious that I listened to him because I don’t normally ask him about his day...’

Our final lessons focus on learning how to put our views across clearly and cogently orally, and we have a debate where we practise the skills which demonstrate how to disagree well, and also how to appreciate different points of view, either in person or online.

It has been really interesting to see how the students have responded to the lessons; I’ve always believed that learning changes lives but I have been surprised not just by their learning but by the way that they themselves have grown as people and enriched their own lives, as well as those around them. What greater purpose is there for education? 🍷

A sense of community and working towards common goals, is at the heart of everything achieved by the pupils at Whitgift School



COME TOGETHER

Elizabeth Ivens shines a light on the power of school partnerships

While the debate about the charitable status of independent schools ebbs and flows on the party political tide, communities nationwide are quietly benefitting from some outstanding partnerships. From school sponsorships to sharing resources and community outreach, a variety of innovative collaborations are flourishing. Many independent schools now have dedicated staff to develop, implement and run partnership programmes.

At Alleyn's School, in south London, Director of Partnerships, Ben Jones, explains that the Alleyn's Academy programme helps the school to impact the lives of thousands of pupils a year from local state schools. Beginning with a Sport Academy in 2021 "to break down barriers to access and enable social mobility through sport", it has also recently launched a Music Academy and a Digital Academy.

"Everybody wins," says Mr Jones. "The children participate with great joy and grow in confidence over the weeks, while our helpers grow in their own way, motivated by the impact they can see they are making."

The value of volunteering

Oxford-based Magdalen College School, a historic boys' day school with a mixed sixth form, has a proud history of outreach. Its Community Service Organisation, where lower sixth formers volunteer locally for one afternoon a week, is in its 48th year.

"The placements in which the pupils take part are varied, offering each individual an opportunity to unearth that which captures their imagination," explains Deputy Head

(Education Development) Dr Scott Crawford. "Activities range from mentoring primary school pupils with maths and English, and running clubs in creative writing, languages and sport, to producing artwork for the walls of local hospitals and performing concerts in schools and care homes."

Pupils, parents and staff also enable the school's Community Larder, which it set up in 2019 to support a deprived area of the city.

An eye-opening experience

Meanwhile, Croydon boys' school, Whitgift, runs one of the UK's largest school partnerships. Over the last 22 years, an estimated 27,000 children have taken part in its Primary Project, overseen for the last two years by Andy Marlow, the Director of Partnerships and Community.

The project sees a different year five primary class every week of the school year embedded at Whitgift for a full week of learning, benefitting around 1,000 local primary pupils annually. There is also a Community Summer School run for 200 pupils, along with an academic masterclasses programme.

"I haven't seen anything like our Primary Project in a school of our type," explains Mr Marlow. "We employ a teacher to run it, it has a room in the school and it happens every school day of the school year – it's part of the fabric of what we do."

Sixth formers at Whitgift assist with the lessons and mentor the primary children as part of their curriculum, and also go out into the community to help at schools.

As well as helping Whitgift pupils to develop their soft skills, Andy Marlow says the experience is eye-opening for them. "There is a significant amount of deprivation in the local area," he explains. "So, it helps them to understand the needs of those across the spectrum of society locally."

In common with other schools, Whitgift is insistent that community work never has been and never will be a box-ticking exercise. "We are doing it because we believe it is the right thing to do, we can offer something to the local community and they can offer something to us," stresses Mr Marlow. "The schools we work with hugely value the relationship we have with them and really appreciate the fact that it is a two-way relationship."

Mutual benefits

At Alleyn's, Ben Jones agrees that partnerships must be 'mutually beneficial' to succeed. "It's certainly a two-way street, and we feel that is the road to success," he says. "Through the excellent Southwark Schools' Learning Partnership (SSLP) and other networks, for example, we collaborate with over 30 state and independent schools in which we all provide educational opportunities for pupils and staff, ►

WE DO COMMUNITY WORK BECAUSE WE BELIEVE *it is the right thing to do*. WE CAN OFFER SOMETHING TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THEY CAN OFFER SOMETHING TO US

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such as shared student activities and talks, teacher training, cross-school student voice projects and university prep. The mutual benefits are vast, enriching and constantly expanding.”

At co-ed day and boarding Pocklington School, in Yorkshire, more than 51 projects and 14 local primary state school partnerships are ongoing, which include a three-year partnership project supporting 12 disadvantaged schools in Hull.

Headmaster, Toby Seth, explains that the project – which aims to boost literacy levels – showed an impressive and successful collaboration between state and independent education and the third and private sectors.

“The project’s initial conception was as a way of supporting our own teaching and learning,”

he says “But rapidly developed into a significant and powerful outreach opportunity.”

Links through music

In rural Devon, co-ed Blundell’s School is firmly at the heart of its local community after working hard to build dedicated links with organisations, including the Town Council, Civic Society and Rotary Club, through its Community Partnerships Programme.

The school also has an active Schools Partnerships Programme, with half termly Primary School Activity Days as well as growing links with its state counterpart, Tiverton High School.

“Working in partnership with others is an incredibly rewarding and positive experience,” says Community Partnerships Director,

Charlie Olive. “And this is especially true when young people are involved.”

The school’s music department has also set up a Music in the Community group which, as well as visiting and playing at local residential homes and community venues, works with local schools. The culmination was a spring concert which saw more than 150 visiting children from eight local schools singing and playing alongside Blundell’s musicians.

Pupils are now so invested in the school’s partnership work that they support all partnership events with their own Community Action Teams.

In Dorset, day and boarding Canford School’s Community Action Programme sees more than 8,000 hours given by Canford pupils and more than 1,000 hours by staff annually in

JOINED-UP THINKING

Many children have benefitted from the range of initiatives run by Whitgift’s Together Project, and their parents and local primary school teachers acknowledge the value of the community work carried out by the school

Last year, Whitgift School was winner of the Independent School of the Year Award for Community Outreach (this magazine’s awards campaign).

Its total immersion in and dedication to its Whitgift Together project – which was launched nearly 23 years ago – has been praised by the parents of those attending and by state school heads whose children have taken part.

Zoe Foulsham, Headteacher at Aerodrome Primary Academy, explains how her pupils have benefitted. “Over the last few years, we have developed an excellent partnership with Whitgift School, thanks to the commitment and desire they have for supporting and developing others within the local community,” she says. “As a local primary school, we have seen huge benefits for our children through a range of initiatives run by Whitgift; the Summer School, specific curriculum events and the sixth form volunteers who support the younger children with their learning.”

The Community Summer School has also won plaudits from parents:

“My daughter loved it. She was nervous at first but the staff and students made her feel welcome. She had an amazing week, in particular she really enjoyed the drama lessons and fencing. She came out every day with a smile on her face.”

“Our son was impressed from day one by the level of education and service you provide and now feels very motivated to study well and keep improving his skills. Thank you so much. What you do is great and really makes a difference.”

“Overall, our daughter had a great week. We believe it has helped build her confidence which she will apply going into future situations in life. She has tried new things and, although a little nervous about certain aspects, she has been proud of her efforts and achievements.”

“My daughter is very grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a life-changing programme and so am I as a parent.”



Pupils at the Magdalen College Community Larder



Blundell’s students hold activity days with pupils at Tidcombe Primary

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS IS AN *incredibly rewarding experience*, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED



The Allyn's Sport Academy breaks down barriers with local state school pupils



Canford pupils take part in community engagement projects



community engagement projects.

It is also one of a handful of independent schools in the UK to fully sponsor an Academy and has supported The Bourne Academy in East Howe for more than ten years. "The Bourne Academy is in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the UK," says Canford's Headmaster, Ben Vessey. "Since opening in 2010, it has flourished, with collaboration between pupils and staff at both schools enriching the lives of all."

Community work will continue

Schools are also adamant that they will continue their community work despite the threat of punitive action against the independent sector.

In Oxford, Dr Crawford sums up the feelings of many of his fellow teaching peers. "We see community partnership projects as a key part of the MCS experience and culture," he says. "We will continue our work in this area regardless of any possible changes in the external circumstances." ☺ ▶

CASE STUDY

WHAT THE HEAD SAYS...

Damian McBeath is Principal of The John Wallis Academy in Ashford, Kent. He is also a member of the Governing Council of Benenden, a local independent school. Here he talks about the partnership work between them...

There are multiple tiers to our partnership work with Benenden School:

On a leadership level, I collaborate with Benenden's Headteacher, Samantha Price. And our work can vary from governance to strategy. For example, at the onset of the pandemic we worked together on the different approaches to hybrid learning. Our communication can range from an early morning call on the way to school, to one that is scheduled and goes into detail on strategic planning.

The second tier is that of teachers. Again, during the pandemic, our teachers collaborated on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) which were used instead of GCSE and A-level assessments as pupils were not sitting public examinations at the time. We also work together on the curriculum, and plan for the forthcoming year ahead; for example, we might look at what it means to be a history teacher.

For our teachers who are in their first year of teaching, there is a two-week placement at Benenden. This puts them in a very different setting than they would normally be used to, where they can see a different approach and the different teaching pedagogy on offer and also where they can utilise different parts of the profession. One of our teachers who has just



John Wallis pupils performing at Benenden School

completed a placement there said that, from the extracurricular activities to the scholars' club, she was left "wholly inspired".

The third tier is student level support. This is one of our most successful partnerships where Benenden students in year 12 visit John Wallis to mentor our year 10 GCSE students and help them to prepare for their forthcoming exams. Mentorship can include anything from the best ways to revise, to notetaking and preparation for maths and English. To demonstrate how important the partnership work is between us both, I appointed a Head of Partnerships at our school.

The fourth tier is access to the extracurricular opportunities at Benenden, for example Combined Cadet Force or CCF. At the annual CCF black tie dinner held at Benenden, speeches

THE WORK THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR DOES *is often overlooked and it has a significant impact* ON STUDENTS FROM THE MAINTAINED SECTOR

are given by the Head of CCF, by myself and by Sam Price. There are also awards and it gives my students a wonderful experience of how to behave in a formal setting; how to dress and to apply themselves, while at the same time not feeling out of their comfort zones and feeling supported and safe. This rich and vibrant opportunity helps them to raise expectations and aspirations for themselves.

I hope independent schools don't lose their charitable status as it will add pressure on the independent sector. The work the sector does is often overlooked

and it has a significant impact on students from the maintained sector, where this partnership work is carried out. And the partnership work doesn't just work one way: that independent school students also benefit is often missed in the narrative of debate.

The bursary provision that independent schools offer benefits a particular student but the opportunities that arise through their extracurricular provision give many students a very rich

and vibrant experience. The belief that they can stand shoulder to shoulder with students who come from very different backgrounds is invaluable.

When Benenden opened its new Centenary Hall, last year, a dance troupe made up of students from my school took part in the opening ceremony. For most of them, this was the first time they had performed in such impressive surroundings. It gave them confidence, self-belief and experience: things that can't necessarily be measured or quantified. It's life experience. It lifted their hearts!

Independent Day & Boarding School Ages 9-19



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Celebrating excellence



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR 2023 *awards*

Our awards campaign is back and now in its sixth year. Read on to find out how you and your school can enter the Independent Schools of the Year 2023 awards

The Independent Schools of the Year awards, brought to you by the team at *Independent School Parent* magazine, are now well established as the independent-school education's leading awards programme, securing category winners the national and international recognition which goes hand in hand with a surge of new enquiries.

The focus of the 2023 awards will be to celebrate the demonstrable benefits of an independent-school education and to showcase the life-affirming, future-enhancing student experience which pupils in our schools receive.

At a time when the role, purpose and value of the sector is under debate in certain quarters, we believe that the 2023 awards provide a perfect platform for schools to celebrate and promote everything

they're achieving in the many and varied areas of school life.

We believe that independent schools should also receive recognition for the enormous and often-overlooked contribution they make to wider society through such initiatives as partnership working with the maintained sector and the ever-expanding needs-blind bursary programmes which have kickstarted so many successful careers. Several of the 22 award categories for 2023 have been tailored to capture and highlight stories of the great work being undertaken in these areas, and a new award has been introduced to acknowledge the enhanced emphasis on safeguarding issues.

So, in 2023, let's not be backward in coming forward and sharing good-news stories about independent-school education, and trumpeting

James Dobson, Managing Director of The Chelsea Magazine Company, with judging panel chair, Dr Helen Wright at 2022's ceremony



the vital contribution that our schools make to national life.

The awards are free to enter for all independent schools belonging to any association which is a member of the Independent Schools Council. They will be judged by a distinguished group of educationalists. The judging panel will once again be chaired by Dr Helen Wright, international education advisor and past Vice-Chair of the ISC. 🏆



in independent-school education



2023 *awards*

This year, the categories are

- Independent Pre-Prep School of the Year
- **Independent Prep School of the Year**
- Co-educational Independent School of the Year
- **Independent Girls' School of the Year**
- Independent Boys' School of the Year
- **Independent Boarding School of the Year**
- The British International School of the Year
- **Small Independent School of the Year**
- Independent School of the Year for Student Careers
- **Independent School of the Year for Outstanding Educational Partnerships**
- Independent School of the Year for Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)
- **Independent School of the Year for Sporting Achievement**
- Independent School of the Year for Performing Arts
- **Independent School of the Year for Environmental Achievement**
- Independent School of the Year for Student Wellbeing
- **Independent School of the Year for International Student Experience**
- Independent School of the Year for Contribution to Social Mobility
- **The Innovation Award for an Outstanding New Initiative**
- The Marketing Award for Brand Communication
- **Development Award for an Outstanding Fundraising Achievement**
- Rising Star of the Year Award
- **Unsung Hero of the Year Award**



To find out more about the awards and to download your entry form, log on at
independentschoolsoftheyear.co.uk/about

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN AND CLOSE ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023

TENDER LOVING CARE

Remco Weeda, Head of Marketing and a Houseparent at Scarborough College – who were finalists in the boarding category in last year’s awards campaign – describes day-to-day living in a boarding house

As the dust begins to settle on another busy year in boarding, even the house dog isn’t quite sure what to do with himself. He can cope with the noise of three dozen teenage girls: the rumble when they all come home late in the afternoon; the shrieks following the discovery of a spider; the laughter of 20 of them playing *Just Dance* on the Nintendo on a Friday night; the many times the girls break out into song at random. It’s the silence when they’re not there, that he finds difficult to handle. So, he takes his place by the

window, eagerly anticipating their return, in the patient way only dogs seem to do.

This is the same spot where he sat earlier that day, watching the girls file on to the various minibuses and transfer coaches. He saw them all leave. The loud one who doesn’t seem able to distinguish between early morning and late night. The stroppy one who everyone, rather secretly, has grown quite fond of. The messy one whose bedroom display of crockery suggests she doesn’t know the difference between her room and the kitchen. The infectious cheerful one who is learning to play the ukulele – you know,

just to brighten up your day a bit. The quiet one who, when no one’s looking, lavishes the dog with cuddles and smiles.

He’s not the only one who seems unsettled. The boarding staff are suspended between their joy of having the place to themselves and the dawning realisation that this house is a bit too quiet without everyone in it. Whereas the hugs upon departure in October half term were measured and perhaps slightly awkward, the goodbye hugs in early July are genuine and sincere, with no box of Kleenex spared.

When people make assumptions about what

BOARDING STAFF ARE WILLING TO EMBARK ON AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY *sharing the highs and lows* OF A LARGE GROUP OF TEENAGERS



Pupils fill the boarding house with sounds of life, laughter and fun

Willersley House is one of the boarding houses at Scarborough College



A comfortable and friendly environment



Kind, caring, empathetic teachers offer support



Schools share the highs and lows of teenagers

makes boarding difficult, they don't often think about the emotional investment. They think of the fatigue and a job that, in all honesty, never really ends. While that isn't untrue, the often long working hours are arguably not what makes the job difficult. The real difficulty of working in boarding is the emotional journey boarding staff are willing to embark on: sharing the highs and lows of a large group of teenagers who, as we all know, circumnavigate a minefield of high highs and low lows on a daily basis.

Parents who try to guide their adolescent children on a path through that minefield can confirm that they accept many different outcomes and varying levels of either success or failure. Boarding staff either bravely or stubbornly take on the idea of guiding 30, 50 or even 100 teenagers at a time. The journey becomes a rollercoaster and the rollercoaster soon becomes the kind of trip which Red Bull might fancy sponsoring. Trying to remain emotionally detached in this situation would be like trying to stay dry-eyed watching the last few minutes of *Marley and Me*.

When I wrote about our motivation to have Scarborough College nominated for Boarding School of the Year, I added a paragraph about how, every year, I can think of at least 50 boarding schools that could easily win that award. Looking back on that statement, I'm afraid it wasn't totally accurate. What I ought to have written is that I know of at least a few hundred people who work in boarding who should win that award.

Not that schools don't matter at all. Good boarding schools provide the structure within which the people connected to boarding can perform to the best of their abilities. There is no secret formula or trick to becoming a good boarding school. It only needs to have a mission to become one and then invest in that mission. Invest in the kind of surroundings in which we would want our teenager children to live and invest in people who can do the job of looking after those children.

That means investing in people who are resilient, kind, caring, hard working, communicative, thoughtful, to the point and

empathetic. You could also consider adding a wonderful sense of humour to that never-ending list or just shorten the entire list down to one phrase: gold dust. That's it. What we look for is gold dust and any school that actively looks for and then actively supports and fosters the people we consider gold dust is – or should be – boarding school of the year. Every year.

As a marketer, I would love to bottle the emotions on that final Friday in July. There is no greater advertisement for British boarding schools, no better way to market my school and no fitter description of the benefits, personal development and sheer joy that boarding might deliver. But, as a houseparent, I know better than to try. I know that a good boarding environment is far more than a quick fix, a slick sales pitch or a catchy phrase on the back of a bus. As even the dog can testify, there is only one way to support boarding pupils wholeheartedly, honestly, without reservation and compassionately.

Congratulations to all the schools which were nominated and particularly to those who won and good luck to all the schools entering this year. 🐾



A group of fourth form pupils at Cranleigh School taking part in a PSHE team building session



Lessons in *life*

Dr Andrea Saxel, Deputy Head Pastoral at Cranleigh School in Surrey, looks at wellbeing and the importance schools place on it

Wellbeing as a concept has been raised more than ever since the pandemic. During the enormous social changes brought about by successive lockdowns and the subsequent unstable political environment, we have all taken stock of the importance of reducing stress. But what does wellbeing mean, and should it be treated as something separate from the rest of our lives?

At Cranleigh, we have always believed that achieving balance in a busy life is key to creating an educational environment where children can flourish. Pupil and staff wellbeing has long been at the centre of every decision we make, and is embedded in the structure of our timetable and the co-curricular and pastoral environment we provide.

Children need to live and work in safe and supportive surroundings, building healthy relationships and learning to discover their passions in life. Our boarding house structure, with four girls' and four boys' affiliated boarding houses, provides the opportunity for everything on campus to take place in a co-educational setting, so children learn to respect one another and prepare for the world beyond the school gates. The houses are supported by a robust safeguarding and pastoral system with house staff, tutors, pastoral leads, societies, medical team, counsellors and vertical tutor groups, so there is always someone on hand to help with navigating the inevitable complexities of teenage life.

WELLBEING AND ELITE SPORT

On Fridays, a group of sixth formers playing high performance sport get together for a lunch seminar to discuss key areas for wellbeing in the field. Talks are on subjects such as nutrition, fear of failure, how to cope with being dropped, how to be a leader, dealing with injuries and how to control anxiety. There is always a focus on positive self-talk – a vital part of wellbeing in sport.

WE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT ACHIEVING BALANCE IN A BUSY LIFE IS *key to creating an educational environment* WHERE CHILDREN CAN FLOURISH

For pupils in the sixth form, team building doesn't just take place inside the classroom



PSHE AND WELLBEING

PSHE lessons are designed to help young people to be safe, healthy and prepared for life's opportunities. We don't shy away from tackling the big issues in society and are always quick to amend the programme to incorporate debates that appear in the news over issues such as sexual violence, gender issues, racism, eating disorders, body image or conflict – delivered by external speakers as well as our team. Navigating the teenage years can be daunting and hearing from those who have just been through it can really help, so some of our sessions are delivered by older pupils and recent leavers. A number of the sessions will also be offered to parents at separate events, so that families can talk about issues using the same informed language.



Positive self-talk promotes wellbeing in sport, which is vital for high performers



PSHE lessons and lectures incorporate debates about events that are featured in the news



It's important children work together and support each other

When it comes to strategies helping to relieve the pressure of exams and academic attainment, we focus on teaching the critical thinking skills that inspire children to take control of their own learning and organisation. We work hard to balance this with a co-curricular programme that provides sport, drama,

music and a range of activities and opportunities, so every child can follow their own journey and find their talent – buoyed by the support of their friends. We hope that, by the time pupils leave us, they are resilient, balanced and independent young people, ready to go out and make a difference in the world. 🌍

CRANLEIGH BEING

This consists of the Pupil Wellbeing Group (PWG) and the Diversity Alliance (DA), both of which are pupil-led groups with a pupil chair and deputy in charge. The PWG focuses on pupil-driven initiatives and current issues, while the DA exists as a safe space for pupils to discuss anything affecting individuals with protected characteristics. Cranleigh Being looks to promote pupil leadership and is responsible for organising and running the Sixth Form Peer Mentor scheme which consists of six training sessions on Safeguarding, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Disagreement and Conflict Resolution, Neurodiversity and Learning Support Mental Health Awareness, and Bereavement. Pupils completing the training qualify as peer mentors and take up responsibilities supporting younger pupils – either in the senior school or at Cranleigh Prep – in areas such as learning support and in maintaining and strengthening peer-group friendships.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Susan Beck, Director of Development and Communications at RGS Newcastle explains the success of the school's innovative approach to computer science

There are compelling reasons for tech-weary, post-lockdown parents to reassess computer science and everything this innovative subject has to offer, and independent schools like ours are leading the way in this popular subject.

It's not surprising that a quotation attributed to Marvel's *Spiderman* forms the bedrock of departmental philosophy: 'With great power comes great responsibility...'

The school's fastest-growing subject is an adventure: it deals with quests for solutions, active exploration through unfamiliar terrain, all within a stringent moral framework. Projects are chosen to take into consideration ethics and technological approaches to preserve and enhance the environment. Even the furniture in the department was designed and built in-house using a local timber yard,

lowering the carbon footprint of the rooms significantly. It's a vibrant, playful, practical class space and 'learning through play' is the mantra used by our dedicated computer science teachers.

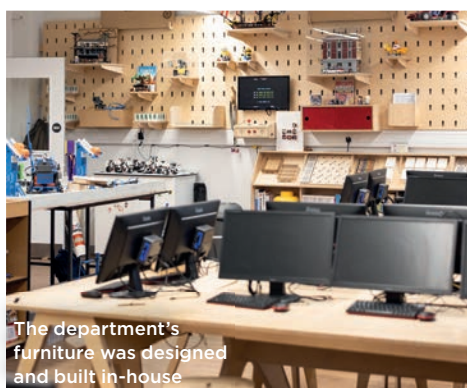
Personalised learning

Computer science is a curriculum subject at the RGS Newcastle. Starting in the junior school, teachers plan collaboratively and year six are taught by staff from the senior school to smooth their transition to the older years at year seven. Studies evolve through years seven, eight and nine, with each lesson beginning with problem-solving – from Japanese logic puzzles to programming conundrums. Departmental pedagogy is based on multiple years' experience and takes an approach which is proving to be incredibly popular, prizing as it does personalised learning. Dynamic,

project-based work allows students to acquire knowledge using real-world subjects, working on a module for six weeks and creating an artefact in response to the project's challenge. Examples of these include:

- Can you make a pinball machine out of LEGO?
- Do you have the skills to secure a place at Bletchley Park?
- Can you create an interactive adventure game for the internet?
- How do you code art?

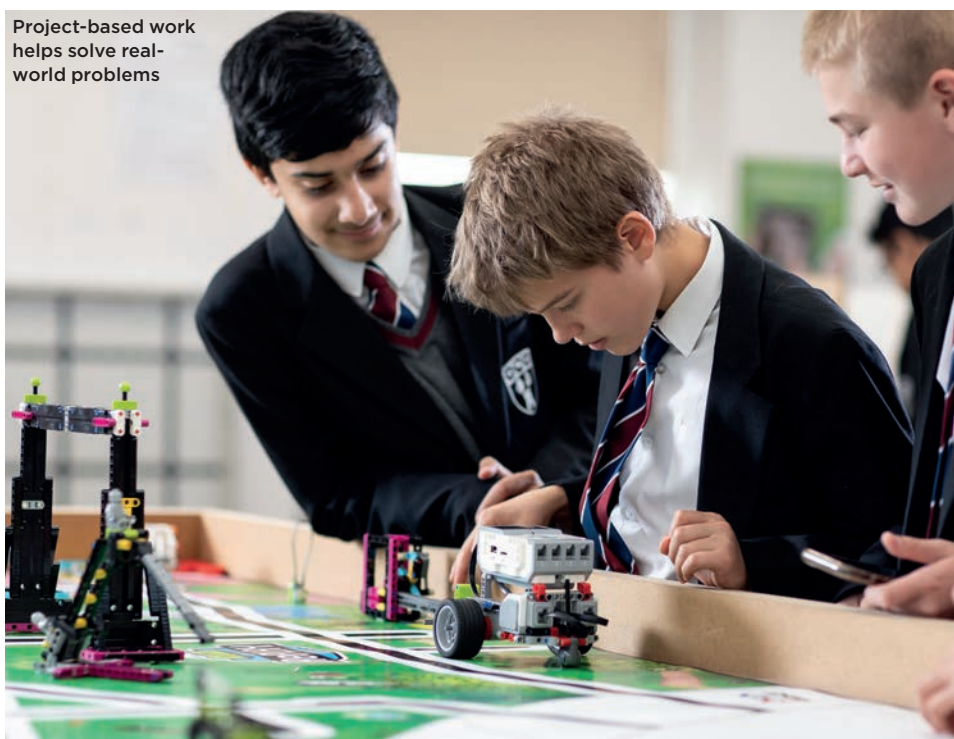
Learning through discovery has students pose searching questions, using what they know alongside coaching from the teacher, rather than being spoonfed step-by-step instructions to find solutions. The investigation becomes a personal journey and students are encouraged to represent their own interests in the final



The department's furniture was designed and built in-house



The school's new library offers ample research resources for STEM subjects



Project-based work helps solve real-world problems

THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY'S PREVIOUS
*gender imbalance is being kicked into touch
by girls' appetite* FOR THE SUBJECT. OUR
FUTURE WORKFORCE LOOKS EXCITING



RGS is committed to
redressing the STEM
gender imbalance



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*2019 DfE Performance Data



RGS Newcastle's Jesmond site – which accommodates more than 1,300 pupils – lies in the heart of Newcastle upon Tyne

artefact. The whole experience is enhanced through collaboration in pairs or teams: making mistakes and building resilience are part of a joint journey to refinement.

The importance of maths

The next step for those wishing to extend their studies would be taking computer science as an option at GCSE and even A-level. Using mathematical skills to solve problems does mean that sixth form students tend to take other STEM subjects and have strong maths to support their investigations. Career opportunities are diverse and seemingly unlimited, with graduate careers up for grabs in creative game design (the tech industry is now bigger than the whole of the music and media industries combined), working with large data sets and computer programming to name but a few. The RGS is proud to have Jim Ryan (pictured right), Chief Executive and President of Sony Interactive Entertainment, as an alumnus. The sky really is the limit!

Student success

What about outside the classroom? Learning through play is a vital component of the subject – serious fun, in fact. For example, using LEGO to inspire interest and encourage creative problem-solving. Teams competing in the First LEGO League build a robot to take on an assault course and also have to present their work to a panel. They collaborate, iterate, learn and solve problems. This year RGS students won a Breakthrough Award at the First LEGO League finals, but we've participated in many other competitions too. A year eight team won the Energy Award at the VEX Robotics Championship, one student won the Game Concept award at BAFTA's Young Game Designer competition and we had teams competing in the CyberCenturion finals. At RGS we don't run a code club; rather, we open the classrooms outside formal teaching



for students to experiment with technology. Teachers are on hand to help and encourage students.

Beyond the school gates, RGS partnerships work grows apace. Digital Schoolhouse sessions have been running weekly, beamed into local primary school classrooms around the region, then welcoming students into school for

in-person workshops. Ten schools have taken part to develop coding skills, and the RGS supported four secondary schools in entering the CyberFirst Girls' competition. The computer industry's previous gender imbalance is being kicked into touch by the girls' appetite for the subject; our future workforce looks to be an exciting, diverse world of opportunities. The next generation of coders, software gurus and design engineers are well aware of their responsibilities in shaping this world; they're also relishing their cyber super-powers along the way. 🎮

In 5 pictures...
**CHANNING
SCHOOL**

This North London all-through girls' school prides itself on nurturing girls as they learn independence and self-confidence



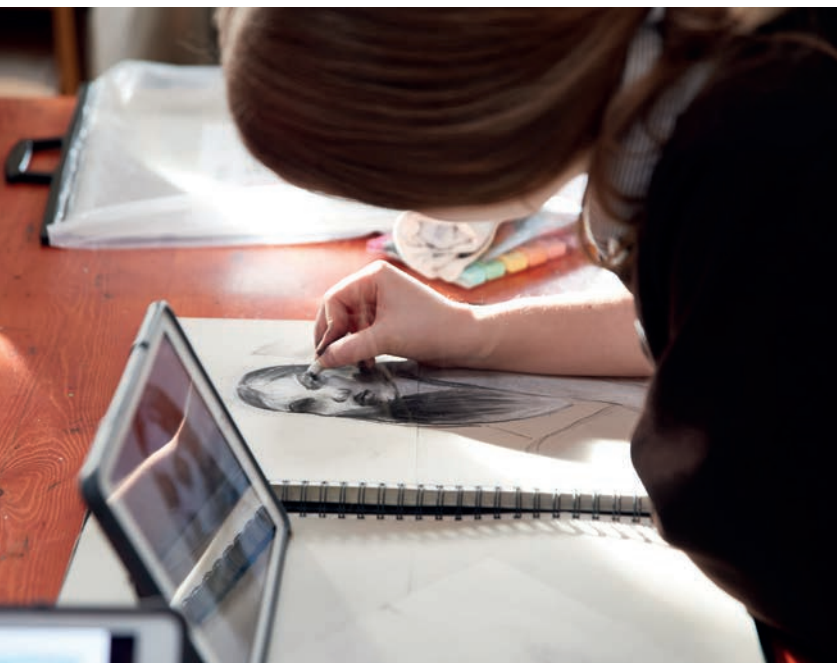
Channing is a school for girls aged four to 18 where pupils enjoy outstanding personal success, both at school and beyond, as a result of the holistic, balanced education they receive. Through a unique combination of academic excellence, unsurpassed pastoral care and a wide breadth of extra- and co-curricular activities, Channing aims to develop scholarship, integrity, altruism and independence in its pupils.



A unique focus on being 10 per cent braver ensures “the school successfully meets its ambition to empower pupils to become independent thinkers and fearless learners”, as found by the 2022 ISI Inspection.



Channing’s excellent music facilities are available for all pupils to use and helps them build high levels of self-understanding and self-confidence within an environment that fosters kindness and respect.



A broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to pursue their interests, building confidence and communications skills. Outstanding facilities, including a state-of-the art theatre, support performing arts and creativity.



The Channing experience offers a range of extra- and co-curricular activities and clubs, music and sport, including netball, gymnastics, football, badminton, cheerleading, rounders, athletics and trampolining.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly a third of Channing students went on to study STEM-related subjects at university this year. Maths is our most popular A-level subject and, as well as Robotics and Coding Clubs, there is even a Dissection Club open to pupils in years seven and eight!





Bursary provision is fundamental to the independent school system and the best schools have a policy that is supportive, inclusive and accessible

FOR SOME FAMILIES, INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLING IS *written off as inaccessible*.
BURSARIES ARE A WAY OF
OVERCOMING THIS BARRIER

Opportunity for *Everyone*

Claire Bath, Director of External Relations at Strathallan in Perthshire, explains the value of bursaries for pupils and parents alike

Education is a right, not a privilege. When Strathallan's founder Harry Riley set out on his own at the age of just 25, he was determined to create a school where every pupil could find their place to excel through an education that was individual, enjoyable and inclusive. Nowhere is that spirit more impactful than for those who attend school with support from a bursary. The right education has the power to change a child's future, and we believe no child should be prevented from accessing the right school for them due to their background or financial situation. Bursary support means that schools can truly create opportunities for every child to nurture their passions and discover their full potential.

Even though bursary provision is a fundamental element in making independent education accessible to everyone, many families don't know or understand how they work, what they are, or even that such provision exists at all. Most independent schools have a long history of engaging with and supporting the local community, often through funding places for a large proportion of local children. At Strathallan, we're proud to be consistently able to award bursaries annually to support families with many different circumstances, thanks in part to our dedicated bursary fund. We are seeing bursary applications increasing across the independent school sector as a whole, and there is little to indicate this will begin to level off any time soon. As demand for bursaries increases every year, we are fortunate to receive support from former pupils, parents and friends of the school, who fund life-changing bursaries and help us to keep access to the school open to everyone.

Our recent fundraising campaign focused specifically on bursaries with the message Dear Younger Me – a reflection through the eyes of former bursary recipients, looking back on the experiences they now recognise as having laid the foundations for a remarkable future. In conducting the research for this project, we spoke to alumni and previous bursary recipients who consistently talked about how it felt to have the chance to attend a school where they were truly welcomed, accepted and valued for the unique contributions they brought to the school community and culture. Making space for pupils from different backgrounds is part of what makes our school such a vibrant and

diverse place to be. This is what we mean when we talk about the power bursaries have to create opportunity for everyone.

Choosing a school for your child should be about finding the right fit for their educational and social needs, as well as their aspirations for the future. But for some families, school fees represent such a barrier that independent schooling is written off from the outset as inaccessible. Bursaries are a way of overcoming this barrier and can cover a portion – or in some cases all – of the fees required for your child to attend. These are almost always means-tested, meaning that each application considers the individual financial circumstances of the applicant and is not tied to the admissions process or any other scholarship or award. It is important to understand the difference between scholarships and bursaries here: while the former depend on academic, sporting or artistic ability to access reduced fees and additional support in the area of scholarship, means-tested bursaries are assessed and awarded separately, and in many cases in addition to a scholarship.

Strathallan is a proudly non-selective school, meaning anyone can ►



Strathallan is proud to award bursaries to support families with different circumstances

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Bursary support means Strathallan can create opportunities for every child to nurture their passions and discover their full potential

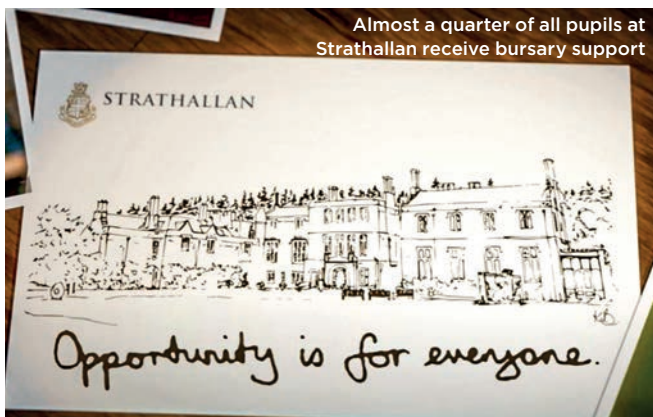


CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD *should be about finding the right fit for their educational and social needs* AS WELL AS THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Attending an independent school really can make a difference



Almost a quarter of all pupils at Strathallan receive bursary support



PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK G POWER

apply for a bursary provided they have been offered a place at the school and are resident in the UK (for the purposes of due diligence in reviewing financial documentation). Means-tested bursaries will look at the applicants' financial circumstances and affordability to assess the amount of bursary to be offered, so you will need to provide evidence of income and assets, all of which will be handled in the strictest confidence. Bursary applications are processed completely separately to admissions, meaning that all information pertaining to the award remains solely within the Bursar's office. Because the bursary fund is a finite 'pot', there is an annual deadline for applications, in order that funds can be allocated to help as many pupils as possible each year. There are also additional fee remissions available for siblings, children of former pupils and those in the Armed Forces, and these remissions are not means-tested, so it is always worth asking what is available at the school you are looking at. Almost a quarter of all pupils at Strathallan receive bursary support covering up to 100 per cent of school fees.

Perhaps you have been impressed by the reputation of an independent school but felt that the exceptional experience on offer is beyond your financial capacity? Or maybe you have concerns that attending the school on a bursary will single out your child as 'different'? It's worth remembering that bursary provision is fundamental to the independent school system and that the best schools will have a policy that is supportive, inclusive and accessible. Every child should be treated as an individual and, for many children, attending an independent school really does make a transformative difference. So, if independent education seems like it could be the right fit for your child but not something you've considered due to the financial implications, you might want to further investigate bursaries and how they could help your family. It could be the first step of a life-changing journey. ➡

CASE STUDY

HOW I DID IT

Adam Hall, 18, explains how he applied for a bursary to Bolton School Boys' Division, Greater Manchester

When did you apply for your sixth form bursary?

I applied for my bursary in my final year of GCSEs, at the beginning of year 11. The bursary was a part of my application for the school's sixth form, where I had decided I wanted to sit my A-levels.

Can you give me a timeline of the application stage?

It was a small part of the application process. After I had been shown around and was confident



interesting thing was that a high percentage of my peers were also helped in some way by the bursary scheme, so having that assistance was never something that was frowned upon.

Was that your decision or school policy?

For the reasons that I've stated, it was entirely my decision who knew I had a bursary and who didn't. But the question was never asked and no pressure was put on me to tell others about my financial background. If I chose to, it was something I could open up about to others with whom I felt comfortable, including staff.

I BELIEVE THE MAIN QUALITY YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER WHEN APPLYING FOR A BURSARY *is having a desire to learn and to get wholeheartedly involved* WITH SCHOOL LIFE

I still wanted to apply, the application forms were submitted. Once interviews had been completed and I was made an offer, financial information was given to the school in a filled-in application form and accompanied with supporting evidence.

How much did you know about the bursaries on offer at Bolton School?

I was quite familiar with the bursary because I knew, as Bolton School was a private school, it would be the only way I could attend. The application for this was a small part, after I had proved to the school that I was worthy of a place by means of a test and a series of

interviews. My application for the bursary was made after my place was confirmed so there was some worry that, due to my financial background, even though I had a place, I might not be able to attend if the full bursary funding I required couldn't be offered to me.

Thankfully, this wasn't the case and, once financial documentation was submitted, the school was more than happy to fund me on a full bursary for my two years of sixth form.

Did you have the bursary provision for the entirety of your sixth form years?

Yes. Between the two years there was a need to submit financial documentation,

just to prove that my circumstances had remained the same.

Did you apply for a bursary to more than one school?

I applied for a bursary only at Bolton School because all my other sixth form and college choices were state schools.

Which members of staff knew that you had a bursary and did your peers know you had one?

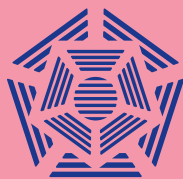
Some members of staff, for example my heads of year and senior members, were aware of my bursary. Most teachers and pupils were unaware of this unless it was made clear by myself that I was on a bursary. The

What qualities do you have to have to consider applying for a bursary?

I believe the main quality is having a desire to learn and to get wholeheartedly involved with school life. I feel like this needs to be considered when applying because most bursaries are offered on the basis of academic achievement. If you have a desire to achieve and are committed to working hard, it will inevitably happen and this is the best way to ensure you can fulfil your time here, and to say thank you for being given the opportunity.

What financial checks does the school make?

They need details of annual income and bank statements.



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Group chats and meets are seen as an effective learning tool at Cranleigh School



ASK THE EXPERTS

With exam season approaching, how can students make the most of the Easter holidays?

We ask five educationalists for their advice...



Royal Hospital School pupils are encouraged to spend time outside

BE KIND TO YOURSELF, TAKE BREAKS, *get outside in nature if you can*, AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU REMEMBER THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN THESE EXAMS

OUR EXPERTS

Simon Lockyer
ROYAL HOSPITAL
SCHOOL, SUFFOLK

Martin Reader
CRANLEIGH SCHOOL,
SURREY

Jonathan Huddleston
MILL HILL, LONDON

Alastair Armstrong
FETTES COLLEGE,
EDINBURGH

Rick Clarke
FRENHAM HEIGHTS,
SURREY

Martin Reader, Head of Cranleigh School, Surrey

Begin with the end in mind. You will want to look back on your results with a sense of personal pride, knowing you've achieved your personal best results that give you options for your future. Active revision is best. Don't just memorise. Test your learning by practising as many past questions as you can – find any gaps then ask your teachers for help. Revision can be lonely. Set up some group chats or meets where you test each other, discuss or do some problems together. Set a routine that balances work and relaxation and stick to it. You can't sustain cramming for 12 hours a day and physical or mental fatigue are guaranteed to lead to underperformance when you're under examination conditions. Don't lie in too long. If you revise for two hours before lunch you'll feel good about what you've achieved and have more time to relax and enjoy the longer evenings. You will then sleep better, which is essential. Sport, physical exercise and listening to music

are excellent ways to relax. Finally, just commit to doing your best and don't make up excuses about why you didn't do as well as you could.

Simon Lockyer, Head of Royal Hospital School, Suffolk

I am a strong advocate for short but intensive bursts, particularly for those facing GCSEs. Divide the day into blocks of 20 to 30 minutes with clear outcomes or topics in mind. It is easy to be distracted so create the right environment by removing distractions such as mobile phones, but find a space that is most conducive to learning. Set a timer for the period you think you can focus intensively and use the breaks to refresh and, if you need to, check your phone. I also feel it is important to plan your time off so it is meaningful, restful and enjoyable! During the Easter holidays it is also vital to have some days where you feel able to put aside your work so you return in the summer term feeling you have had something of a break.

Rick Clarke, Head of Frensham Heights School, Surrey

So, you've been through your mock exams, you've now completed your syllabus in all your subjects, you've got your exam timetable up on your wall in your room and you have just started your Easter holidays. So, what's the best way to use your last holiday before exams begin? Here are a few ideas. Firstly, consolidate all your notes and check that you have all you need in all subjects. Next, go through the subject specifications for each subject to ensure you know exactly what each exam will entail. I would recommend sticking to your school timetable as a way of timetabling your revision, and this also means ensuring you have time for your own wellbeing. Be kind to yourself, take breaks, get out in nature if you can and make sure that you remember there is more to life than these exams!

Frensham Heights advises revising within the school timetable



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ACTIVE REVISION IS BEST. DON'T JUST MEMORISE. *Test your learning by practising as many past questions as you can* - FIND ANY GAPS

Alongside revision, Mill Hill pupils are encouraged to make time for breaks and hobbies

Jonathan Huddleston, Deputy Head (Academic), Mill Hill School, London

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail – never is this a more appropriate statement than in the last few weeks of revision. Below are my top tips for pupils wishing to fully utilise their Easter holidays!

1. **Plan your timetable** – shorter bursts with plenty of breaks will leave you fresh and thriving. Keep to your school routine to easily maintain a minimum of five to six hours a day.
2. **Remove distractions** – multitasking is a myth! Work in silence to manage cognitive load and keep your phone switched off when revising and at night.
3. **Be strategic** – dividing revision into smaller, manageable sections and spending more time on what you don't know will benefit you in the long term.
4. **Variety is the spice of life** – use flashcards, note-taking, speaking out loud and practice questions. Learning in multiple ways aids knowledge retention and retrieval.
5. **Reward yourself** – breaks, activities and hobbies should not be forgotten.
6. **Have no regrets** – enjoy the summer knowing that, whatever the outcome, you did the time!



At Fettes, teachers play an important part in modelling good revision techniques

Alastair Armstrong, Director of Teaching and Learning, Fettes College, Edinburgh

The question we ask our students is 'how do you know that you know?' The answer is through self-testing. On one level that might be quizzing to retrieve basic information, but over the Easter holidays it must also involve tackling past paper questions against the clock to hone exam skills.

At Fettes, teachers play an important part in modelling good revision techniques before

term ends, to give students a clear idea of what is expected of them and how they can consolidate and test their knowledge. Further, encouraging students to engage with relevant mark schemes and model answers empowers them to self-assess work effectively.

So, the key message for students over Easter is plan your time carefully and make sure every session on your revision timetable involves not only learning the core material but also some testing and meaningful past paper practice. ☺

Sandroyd

Rushmore, Tollard Royal, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 5QD



Head Teacher: Mr Alastair Speers BSc(Hons). Med. PGCE. FRSA

Admissions: Mrs Dinah Rawlinson

admissions@sandroyd.com 01725 530 124

office@sandroyd.com 01725 516 264

GENDER/AGES: Boys and girls, 2-13 years.

TOTAL PUPILS: Boys 50%, girls 50%

TYPE: Day and Boarding.

FEES: Nursery: daily from £38 including lunch. Pre-Prep: per term £3,390.

Prep: Day (per term) Year 3: £6,6050; Years 4-6: £8,130;

Boarding (per term) Year 3: £7,790; Year 4-6: £9,830, Year 7-8: £9,830

MAIN EXIT SCHOOLS: Bryanston, Marlborough College, Eton College, Sherborne Girls, Radley College, St Mary's Calne, Monkton Combe, Winchester College, Harrow.

FAITH: Christian. **MOTTO:** Niti Est Nitere (To Shine is to Strive)

ENTRANCE PROCEDURE: Contact our Registrar, Mrs Dinah Rawlinson, to arrange a day to visit that suits your family. Register your child, and then come for a Taster Day.

School Philosophy: Academic results are a crucial part of a Sandroyd Education, but alongside this, we place equal importance towards the essential character education of our children.

We believe that the formative years of childhood are at Prep School and during this time we encourage all of our pupils to develop vital life skills - not just for their time at school, but also for the rest of their lives.

Pastoral care is absolutely central to everything that we do at Sandroyd. Our friendly and nurturing boarding environment equips children with the confidence and skills to really challenge themselves, to be happy, and to succeed.

We are unequivocally proud of the size of our school, creating a wonderfully unique family atmosphere which allows us to properly focus on the individual needs of each child at every stage of their education.

Academic Record: We are delighted with our academic success at both Scholarship and Common Entrance level. The Honours Boards tell a consistent tale of excellence in examinations to all leading Public Schools.

Extra-curricular: Academic results are vital to all that we do at Sandroyd, however this is balanced with the crucial character education of our children. There are hobbies/activities throughout the week ranging from Archery to Survival, as well as many extra-curricular activities on offer such as Music and Dance, Drama, Sports, Horse Riding and our award winning STRIVE programme.

Open Days: Please contact us to organise a personal visit to the school

www.sandroyd.org



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Movers and MAKERS

From sustainability and horse racing to award-winning composing, these independent school alumni are proving their worth in the world



CIEREN FALLON,

CIEREN FALLON, 23

Champion Jockey

St David's College, Llandudno

I won my first apprentice jockey title in 2019 and again in 2020. In 2021, I won my first race at Royal Ascot riding Oxted in the King's Stand Stakes. I am currently riding as Qatar Racing's First Jockey. However, I had no intention of being a jockey until I was 17 years old. St David's College helped me develop the confidence to pursue my career. Before I went there, I couldn't read and write, but during my time I wrote a poem and read it out to the whole school. I had zero confidence when I arrived at St David's, but when I left I thought that if I jumped I could touch the sky and believed I could achieve anything I wanted. It's all to do with the confidence the teachers instil in you. They believe in you and that means everything, and they are all very approachable and want you to thrive.



CHARLOTTE WEAVER

CHARLOTTE WEAVER, 25

Junior Designer, H&M

Penntorpe Prep School, West Sussex

Throughout my fashion design degree at Bath Spa University, I interned at a handful of high-end brands including Sharon Wauchob and Fyodor Golan. After graduating in 2018 with a first-class honours, I got a design assistant role at a London-based fashion supplier, where I worked with Topshop, Miss Selfridge and River Island just to name a few. A year passed and I then moved on to work as a junior designer at another supplier where I took care of the New Look account. In the summer of 2021, I moved out to Stockholm to start my new life and career at H&M working as a junior designer. Penntorpe played a fundamental role in nurturing my creativity, whether that be in music or art. The art teacher during my time at Penntorpe really had a profound effect on my life, he encouraged me to become the best artist I can be!

ANNA DACAM



ANNA DACAM, 23

Assist Programme Manager Environment, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

Godolphin and Latymer School, West London

I graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2021 with a degree in social anthropology with development and I now work for the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, a charity working with the global hospitality industry to support hotels to be more environmentally and socially sustainable. I was recently honoured to speak at a panel event hosted by Marriott International, discussing the importance of measuring environmental impacts to drive collective action. At school I had no idea what I wanted to do for a career, but Godolphin taught me to keep an open mind, to consider big world problems and opportunities and follow my passions. It's early days, and I know I have a lot to learn. But I feel lucky to be in sustainability, working to address some of the biggest challenges we face, in a career which I didn't know existed a few years ago!

JORDAN SCHWARZENBERGER



JORDAN SCHWARZENBERGER, 24

Co-founder of Arcade Media and Chair of the Youth Council at Outernet Global

The King Alfred School, North London

I loved every minute of my time at The King Alfred School, where I was treated as an individual, encouraged to try new things and wasn't boxed in or expected to fit a certain mould. I left school with the confidence and self-belief to follow the path that was right for me, which led to me dropping out of King's College, London after my first semester to join VICE as a full-time creative. I went on to work at the LADBible Group, the biggest social media property in the world for online video, where I led the creative content for a number of brands including Amazon and Sony. After spells at other leading agencies, I co-founded Arcade Media in 2021 to manage Europe's biggest creators, The Sidemen (100m+ followers). In addition to launching three successful businesses, I'm proud to chair the Youth Council at Outernet Global, an immersive entertainment district in the heart of central London.

JENNA STEWART



JENNA STEWART, 19

Singer-Songwriter and Composer

St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen

In 2021 I won the BBC Young Composer of The Year Award. After this I composed *Unchanging Purpose* for the BBC Concert Orchestra to play at the Young Composer Prom in Battersea, and began studying BA (Hons) Music at Edinburgh Napier University. Since my piece was performed, I have been more inspired than ever to be proactive about my musical career and have looked for opportunities. I was a keen violinist and pianist when I joined St Margaret's School for Girls at the age of eight, and the school encouraged me to experiment and create music in class time. Later on in my school career, I was given the opportunity to join a composition club and work on music technology, which established my love for composition and music production. With the culture of ambition that St Margaret's provided, I feel more equipped to step out and focus on pursuing a career in an area about which I'm passionate.



Girls enjoying success

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AGED 4-18



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GOING DUTCH

Tracey Davies and her daughter **Lola** spent a weekend in Amsterdam, taking in the historical and cultural sights...

Atmospheric canals, wonky gabled houses and reams of Old Masters: Amsterdam is easily my favourite city in Europe. Although a frequent visitor in my youth, this is the first time I've seen it through a child's eyes. Ever since she learned about World War II at school, my 12-year-old daughter, Lola, has been fascinated by the story of Anne Frank, the 13-year-old Jewish girl who wrote a diary about life in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam. With the promise of stroopwafels and secret annexes, we've hopped on the Eurostar and in under four hours are exploring the Dutch capital.

For this reason, we're staying in the DoubleTree by Hilton, which is mere steps from Centraal Station. After checking in and grabbing our complimentary warm cookie, an already charmed Lola and I head straight for the nearest canal for a boat tour. As the flat, glass-roofed barge glides around the Canal Ring, passing the narrow gabled houses for which Amsterdam is famous, my girl keeps her eyes peeled for one in particular, Anne Frank Huis on Prinsengracht.

Anne Frank Huis is one of Amsterdam's most popular attractions and tickets sell out weeks in advance. My top tip is to book the introductory programme for a couple of euros more – tickets are released two weeks in advance – but often available last minute. Lola listens intently to the curator explain Anne's story and after a Q&A we're allowed to skip the lengthy queues and venture behind the famous bookcase.

On 12th June 1942, Anne Frank was given a diary for her 13th birthday and

just three weeks later the family went into hiding. Anne and her family, the van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer hid in a secret annex, a 75-square-metre section of her father's office building concealed behind a bookcase. During this time Anne documented their life in her red-checked diary, from listening to the hourly chimes of the Westerkerk bell to crushing on Peter van Pels.

We stand quietly in Anne's room, taking in its bleak, windowless features and the remains of photos and magazine



WE HIRE A COUPLE OF DUTCH BIKES FROM THE HOTEL *and navigate our way around the city* LIKE NATIVES, TRUNDLING OVER TO MUSEUMPLEIN



Lola loved exploring the city by bike

PHOTOGRAPHY: ERNST WAGENSVELD

clippings on the walls. "It's like a proper teenage girl's room, Mum," whispers Lola, solemnly taking it all in. After more than two years in hiding, they were arrested and deported to Auschwitz on the 4th August 1944. Soon after, Anne died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Her father, Otto Frank, was the only one to survive the war and after he returned to Amsterdam and found Anne's diary, he followed her wishes for it to be published.

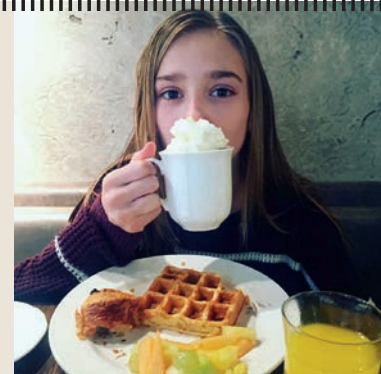
After buying her own version of the famous red-checked diary, Lola and I leave the museum just as the Westerkerk clock strikes 7pm. We wander through the cobbled streets of Jordaan talking about Anne and the museum before stopping for supper at La Perla, a hip little pizzeria on Tuinstraat.

After breakfast the next day, we hire a couple of Dutch bikes from the hotel and navigate our way around the city like natives. We trundle over to Museumplein – where the major museums are – and after climbing on the giant I Amsterdam sign for a quick selfie, we venture into the Rijksmuseum to gaze at Rembrandt's The Nightwatch and Vermeer's Milkmaid.

Spring is my favourite time to visit Amsterdam, not least because it's tulip season, when half a million rainbow-hued blooms are potted around the city. After wandering around The Van Gogh Museum – Lola is mesmerised by his Sunflowers – it's back on the bikes and off to De Pijp market for lunch. Thankfully, Dutch cuisine is a hit with my girl and we spend much of the weekend indulging in cones of piping hot, mayo-drenched fries, freshly cooked stroopwafels and pancakes the size of dustbin lids.

Before we leave to catch our train home, we take the lift up to the SkyLounge, a vast rooftop bar on the top floor of the DoubleTree. As we watch the pale sun set over medieval spires, zinc-green domes and the oily slivers of the city's waterways, we can just about hear the soft bells of Westerkerk chime once more. Lola grins: it's a fitting farewell to Anne's Amsterdam. 🍷

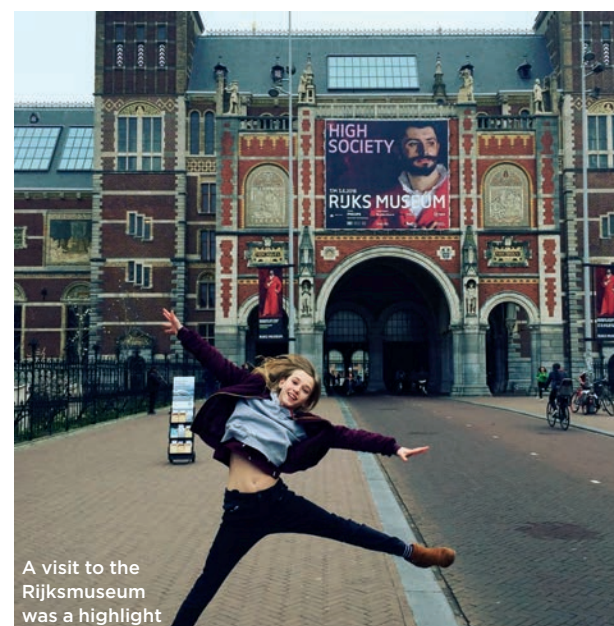
Getting there: Eurostar offers returns to Amsterdam from £88, [eurostar.com](https://www.eurostar.com), stay at the DoubleTree by Hilton Amsterdam Centraal from £190 per room, per night, [hilton.com](https://www.hilton.com)



DON'T MISS THESE ESSENTIALS

- Eat fresh stroopwafels from the Original Stroopwafel stand in De Pijp.
- Hire Dutch bikes and cycle around Vondelpark.
- Try out scientific experiments in the NEMO Science Museum.
- Buy vintage clogs or wheels of gouda in Albert Cuyp Market.
- Time travel back to World War II in the Junior Resistance Museum.
- Take a tour of the Johan Crujff ArenA, the home of Ajax.
- Learn about microbes in the Micropia museum.
- Taste your way around Tony's Chocolonely Super Store.
- Brave Europe's highest swing on the top of A'Dam Lookout.
- Learn about the capital's creepy history in the Amsterdam Dungeon.

[holland.com](https://www.holland.com)



A visit to the Rijksmuseum was a highlight

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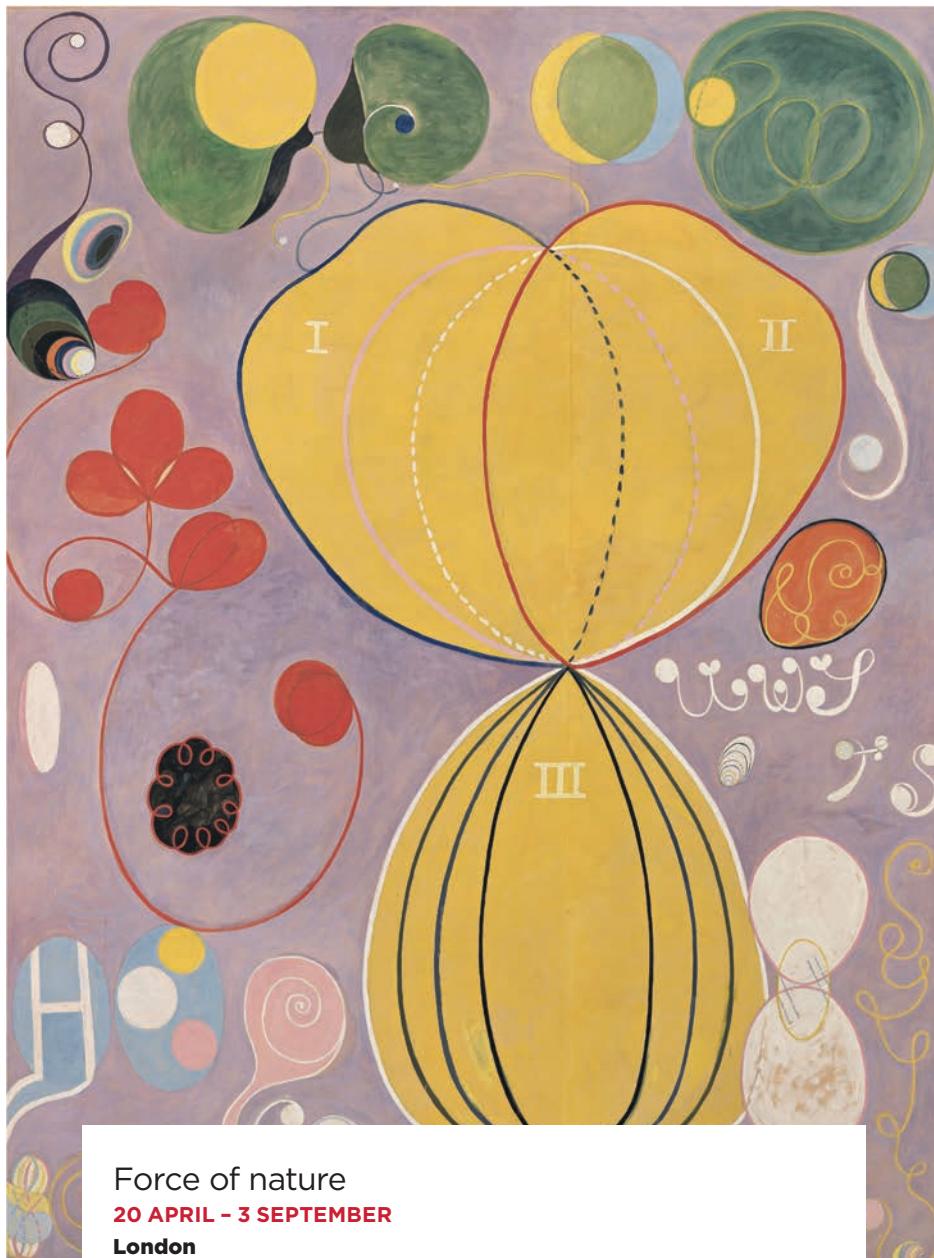
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CALENDAR

Our roundup of fun events, exhibitions and activities to check out this spring

WORDS: LAURA SUTHERLAND



Force of nature

20 APRIL - 3 SEPTEMBER

London

Take in Tate Modern's latest grandstand exhibition, Hilma af Klint and Piet Mondrian: Forms of Life, to understand the Swedish and Dutch artists – who shared a desire to understand the invisible workings behind life on earth – from a fresh perspective. The similarities and differences between the two painters' vibrant, abstract styles and how topics of spirituality, scientific discovery and philosophy dominated their work are explored. The subjects covered and imagery, particularly Mondrian's iconic squares, will appeal to A-level art boffins.

tate.org.uk



Blooming lovely

28 & 30 MARCH, 4 APRIL

Surrey

Who said wreaths were just for Christmas? Get your creative hat on with an Easter wreath-making session at National Trust favourite, Polesden Lacey. In the dedicated stable-block workshop, looking out on the 1,400 acres of Surrey Hills parkland, you can craft your botanical work of art while nibbling on shortbread. Make the most of the day by exploring the grounds beyond the garden boundary, taking in all the joys of spring.

nationaltrust.org.uk





Another planet

30 APRIL – 31 JULY

London

Budding conservationists and zoologists could do worse this spring than head down to the Daikin Centre in Earl's Court to immerse themselves in the BBC Earth Experience. Visitors' journey across the world's seven continents will be narrated by Sir David Attenborough's soothing tones. Inspired by the award-winning TV series, *Seven Worlds, One Planet*, this audio-visual voyage through the natural world welcomes you to experience a colourful carpet of starfish, a forest full of fireflies and penguin parades on ice. bbcearthexperience.com

Plaid you came

1 APRIL – 14 JANUARY 2024

Dundee

Celebrating the iconic textile and its global impact, exhibition *Tartan* at the V&A explores how the checked fabric has connected and divided communities worldwide: it has embraced tradition, expressed revolt and inspired great works of art, as well as playful, provocative designs. Bringing together a dazzling selection of more than 300 objects, the material's enduring appeal is explored through fashion, architecture, graphic and product design, photography, furniture, glass and ceramics, film, performance and art. vam.ac.uk/dundee



Truly ribbit-ing

31 MARCH – ONWARDS

London

Do you have a budding Attenborough on your hands? Then a trip to London Zoo this spring should go in the diary, because its all-new, purpose-built space, *The Secret Life of Reptiles and Amphibians*, will be launching. Your little one can delve into the secretive habits of these remarkable creatures – including the world's largest amphibian and largest aquatic frog – as they blend expertly into their environments, hidden in leafy branches or just below the water's surface. Youngsters will have the opportunity to view this world through the eyes of a zoologist, from viewing X-rays in a lab to swabbing frogs to check for diseases – all while learning about the surprising ways these animals survive and reproduce in the wild.

londonzoo.org



Reality bytes

1-16 APRIL

Manchester

Take gaming to another level at Manchester's Science and Industry Museum this school holiday, with free activities and creative challenges geared towards all ages. Inspired by SIM's interactive installation, *Power UP*, the ultimate gaming experience, the museum will be transformed into a playground of super-sized fun, where children and teens can play with actual-reality arcade games with real-life versions of old-time favourites. Future programmers can also take deep dives into binary, coding challenges, pixel art and the history of computing.

scienceandindustrymuseum.org.uk



Cocoa loco

5-9 APRIL

York

Perfectly timed for Easter, York's 2023 Chocolate Festival is a welcome spin-off from the city's annual Food & Drink Festival programme, with introductory workshops and classes to design your own bars of the good stuff (we'll take a sprinkling of hazelnuts, please!). Adults and youngsters alike won't be able to resist sampling freshly-made confections, no matter how many eggs the Easter Bunny has brought! yorkfoodfestival.com



Get Ziggy with it

22 APRIL

Birmingham

The acclaimed nationwide Bowie Experience tour lands at the Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham tonight, so this is a perfect opportunity to introduce a new audience to the Thin White Duke's unparalleled back catalogue through an unforgettable journey of sound and vision. Featuring all the hits, from *Life on Mars* to *Let's Dance*, the production has been impressing audiences across the globe with its astounding attention to detail. An inspiring tribute to a musical giant.

atgtickets.com



Mirror, mirror

13 - 16 APRIL

London

The London Children's Ballet's new production of *Snow White* is an original interpretation, performed at Sadler's Wells by a cast whose ages range from nine to 16. Told in two 40-minute acts, it is the perfect way to introduce a contemporary audience to classical music and ballet this Easter break.

sadlerswells.com

Pure imagination

29 MARCH - 15 APRIL

Edinburgh

West End and Broadway production Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the Musical* tour arrives at the Edinburgh Playhouse just in time for the school holidays. Bringing sugar rushes and feasts for the eyes, audiences will be enchanted by Charlie and Grandpa Joe's journey through Willy Wonka's confectionery-laced corridors. Fans of the classic 1970s film can expect a show choc-ful of their favourite numbers, from *The Candy Man* to *I've Got a Golden Ticket*.

atgtickets.com

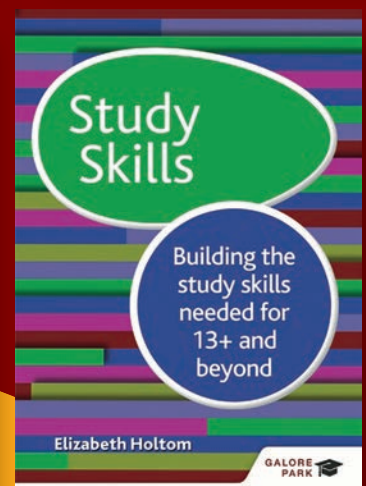
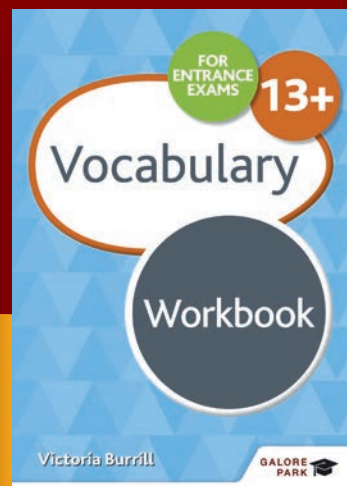
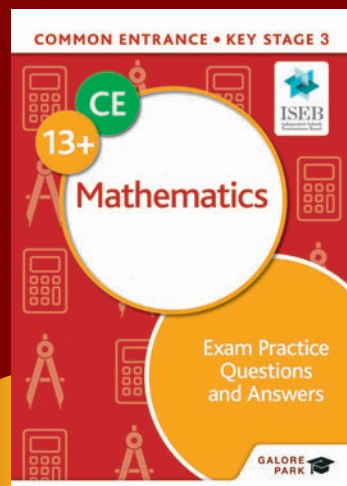
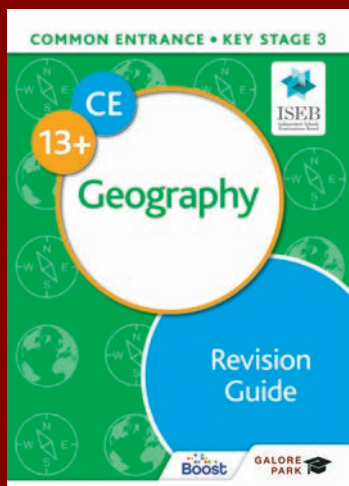
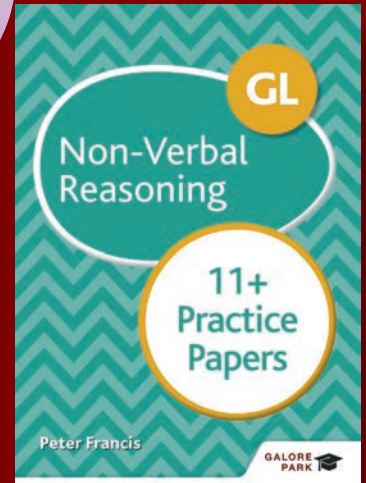
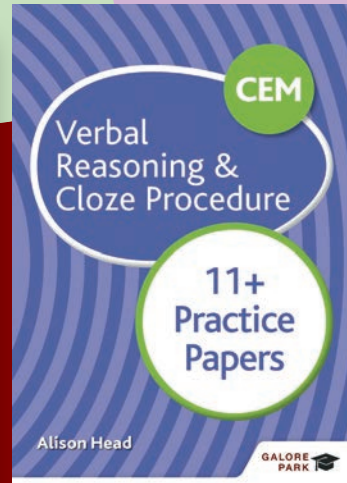
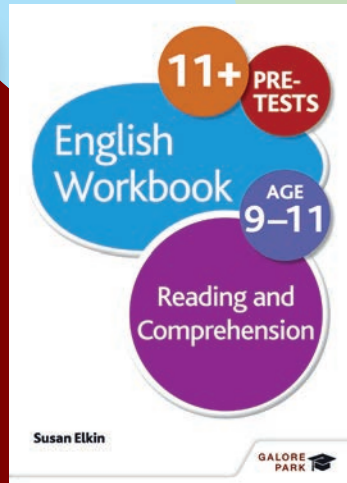
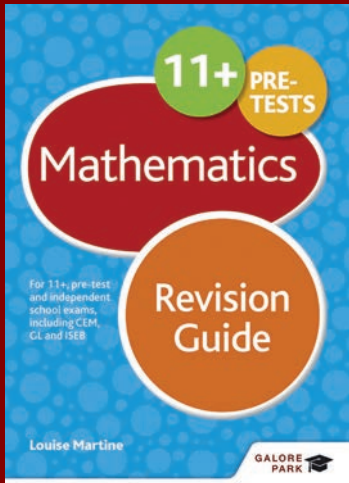


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Universal sound

20 APRIL

London

Musical quartet DakhaBrakha (give/take in the old language) is from Kyiv, Ukraine, and tonight it will be making a world of unexpected new music at the Southbank Centre in central London. With its uncompromising vocal range and self-proclaimed 'ethno-chaos', the band strives to open up the potential of Ukrainian melodies for the younger generation, accompanied with Indian, African and Arabic instrumentation. Bringing together their nation's folklore and theatre traditions, these artists promise an intimate yet riotous performance.

southbankcentre.co.uk

Cut and paste

30 MARCH

London

For creative students decompressing ahead of exams, Kew Garden's vintage botanical collage workshop is the ideal way to kick off the holidays. Led by Laura Goossens in the Nash Conservatory, you'll learn how to create your own mounted masterpiece, constructed from layered book and magazine clippings. Creating a cohesive artwork in such serene, dreamy surroundings is the ultimate self-care pursuit after weeks of sustained study.

kew.org



Wool and the gang

1-16 APRIL

Knutsford, Cheshire

Get a lungful of country air with a day trip to Cheshire's Tatton Park for the farm's Easter Sheepdog Trail. Youngsters can get to grips with the border collies in training, and learn more about this special dog job with demonstrations from the cute recruits. Extra perks include chocolate treats over the Easter weekend and the chance to meet lambing week's new arrivals!

tattonpark.org.uk

Joke's on you

NOW - 18 APRIL

Watford

Returning for a second year, film-making trickery, magical pranks and wizarding mishaps will be revealed as part of the World of Harry Potter WB Studio Tour's Magical Mischief feature. During your visit, learn how your favourite mischievous moments from the films were brought to the screen in this exciting feature. You'll even be able to get hands-on and make your own origami howler, just like the one Mrs Weasley delivered to her son in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

wbstudiotour.co.uk



An eggs-cellent adventure

1-16 APRIL

Surrey

Chessington World of Adventures makes for a great family staycation all year round, but especially during spring break, when the resort is dedicated to Easter fun. Young eggplorers are welcomed to have a cracking time with the Easter animal trail, the Easter Bunny meet and greet, family shows and, of course, all the fun of the theme park, with rides such as the wet-and-wild Shipwreck Coast and legendary rollercoaster Vampire open to enjoy time and time again, along with the Surrey park's famous zoo.

chessington.com



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OPEN EVENTS

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Friday 23rd June 2023

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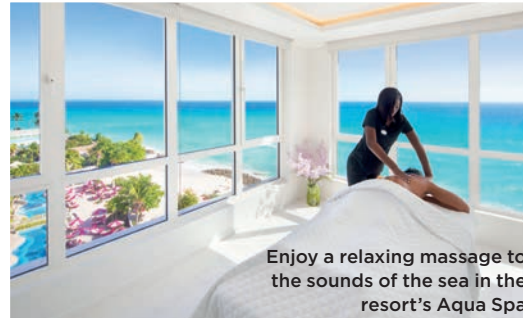
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There are two beautiful swimming pools with exceptional facilities



Enjoy a relaxing massage to the sounds of the sea in the resort's Aqua Spa

WIN a holiday in Barbados

Win a five-night holiday for a family of four in a luxury suite at the five-star all-inclusive O2 Beach Club & Spa on the Caribbean island of Barbados

Escape to the O2 Beach Club & Spa on the south coast of Barbados for the family holiday of a lifetime. A chic tropical paradise set along 1,000 feet of powder white beach and glistening turquoise waters, the newest luxury boutique retreat on Barbados provides the perfect backdrop to spend quality family time in the Caribbean sunshine.

Take a dip in the two stunning pools, keep fit with aqua aerobics, splash about in the clear blue Caribbean Sea, ride the waves in a kayak, hit the sand for a family game of beach football, volleyball or cricket, or take a stunning morning walk along the shore. You can keep the teens entertained with the resort's range of 'how to' experiences where they learn something local, from making Bajan fishcakes

to blowing a conch shell. While they're busy, visit the resort's Acqua Spa and nourish body and soul with the island's only Bajan Hammam Experience.

Relax with a sundowner on the balcony of your expansive two-bedroom Concierge Collection Suite, which gives you the perfect large open space to holiday with your family. Indulge at four gourmet restaurants – try some tapas on the roof deck, a la carte cuisine overlooking the ocean, fine dining with breath-taking 260-degree views of the south coast and casual dining on the sand. Afterwards, enjoy the evening musical entertainment from a variety of the island's best bands and musicians.

From the moment you arrive, you and your family will feel like the newest VIP members of the coolest beach club in Barbados. o2beachclubbarbados.com

HOW TO ENTER

Please answer the following question and enter at the website address below:

What is the name of the resort's spa?

- a) Fire b) Acqua c) Sand

independentschoolparent.com/win

CLOSING DATE: 24TH APRIL 2023

PRIZE

- Five-night stay for two adults and two children*
- Gourmet dining and entertainment
- Access to the Acqua Spa facilities

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

* Prize includes five nights for a family of up to four (two adults and two children under 16 years old) in a two-bedroom Concierge Collection Suite at the O2 Beach Club & Spa on Barbados on an all-inclusive basis. Flights and transfers are not included. Prize is subject to availability, is non-transferable and non-refundable. * Prize winners must be over 18 and must be UK residents. * The prize must be taken between 1 May and 31 October 2023 or 01 May and 31 October 2024.

SAVE 55% on all-inclusive accommodation, saving up to £8,750 per family, plus USD 125 spa credit per adult per stay. This exclusive reader offer is available for all bookings made between now and 31 March 2023 for travel completed by 31 October 2023. A seven-night stay at the O2 Beach Club & Spa costs from £11,399 for a family of four. This price is based on two adults and two teenagers sharing a Two Bedroom Bayview Suite on an all-inclusive basis, including return flights from London Heathrow and private transfers departing on 12 July 2023. To book visit inspiringtravel.co.uk/caribbean/barbados/hotels/o2-beach-club-spa or call 01244 729 375. Must quote READER OFFER when booking.

Reader offer!

SCHOOL MEMORIES

LUKE HEMSLEY

The founder of alcohol-free wine brand, Wednesday's Domaine, made great friends and loved his time at Hampton School in south west London

Describe your school in three words?

Enormous. Unpredictable. Inspiring.

Who was your best mate?

A chap called Richard. We had been at school together previously and were lucky enough to join Hampton together, going on to play rugby alongside one another and build a brilliant friendship group. He was best man at my wedding back in 2019 and I was his, last September. His family has essentially become an extension of my own over the years.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I would love to say something inspiring like an astronaut, or exciting like a stunt car driver, but in reality I used to say banker or lawyer when asked as a teenager.

What was your most embarrassing moment at school?

Asking a very unwilling and grumpy groundsman to retrieve a ball that had gone over a fence, only to attempt to volley it and inadvertently smash it straight back at him. Safe to say he wasn't best pleased and rightly so.

Where was your favourite place at school to hang out with friends?

We spent an enormous amount of time out on the fields playing rugby and



gone on to become Head of several schools). He was a fantastic teacher and a great character, using language to brilliant and occasionally devastating effect. We used to give him stick for spending his weekends watching cricket and drinking beer with his friends, only to realise latterly that he was living the life!

What advice would you offer your school-age self?

To make the most of the opportunities presented to you, whether that be trips, facilities or experiences – at that age, you don't realise how much is afforded to you

I WAS AN OUTSIDE FIELD LINGERER. WHAT I *lacked in talent and coordination*, I ATTEMPTED TO MAKE UP FOR IN ENERGY AND APPLICATION

football, come rain or shine. It was all very innocent, unlike the smell in the classrooms during lessons afterwards. I feel for any adults attempting to teach a room full of teenagers who have just come in from running around outside for an hour...

Play any pranks?

Nothing I would look back on now and laugh too hard about.

Out for yourself or a team player?

Definitely the latter. Running my own business now and having had to give up most

team sports due to injury, I miss being part of a team and the highs and lows that go with it.

All-star sports captain or outside field lingerer?

Outside field lingerer masquerading as all-star sports captain. What I lacked in talent and coordination, I attempted to make up for in energy and application.

Who was your favourite teacher?

Ed Wesson, who was our history teacher and a cricket and rugby coach (and has

and how much time you have. Obviously no one reading this is going to change their mind as a result – that's not how we think as teenagers – but that's certainly my reflection now.

Were you a teacher's pet or always in detention?

A healthy balance between the two, but I was hardly cruising around like James Dean causing trouble.

How would your teachers describe you?

The eternal trier. No shortage of effort, a mixed bag when it came to execution. 🤔

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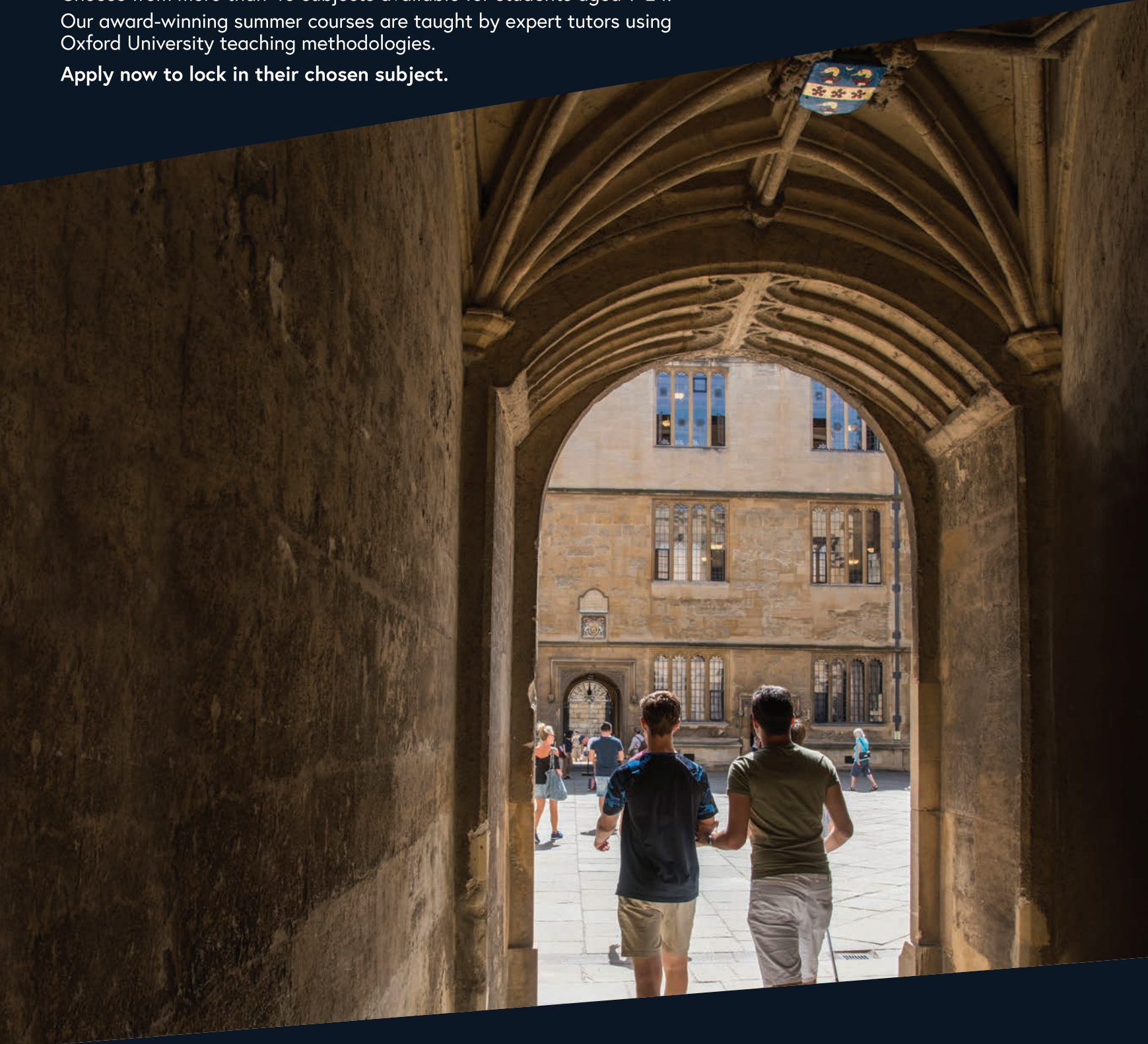
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