

GDST schools. Where girls can.



Choosing your daughter's school is one of the biggest decisions you, as parents will make.

At the GDST we put girls first, ensuring that everything in their school lives is calibrated and designed to meet their educational and pastoral needs.

The GDST has always been a pioneer of girls' education in the UK. Our network of 26 schools and academies provides unmatched opportunities, connections and resources for girls between the ages of three and 18.

GDST schools in London

Blackheath High School
Bromley High School
Croydon High School
Kensington Prep School
Northwood College for Girls
Notting Hill & Ealing High School

Putney High School
South Hampstead High School
Streatham & Clapham High School
Sutton High School
Sydenham High School
Wimbledon High School

GDST schools and academies outside London

The Belvedere Academy, Liverpool
Birkenhead High School Academy
Brighton & Hove High School
Howell's School, Llandaff
Ipswich High School for Girls
Newcastle High School for Girls
Northampton High School

Norwich High School for Girls
Nottingham Girls' High School
Oxford High School
Portsmouth High School
The Royal High School, Bath
Sheffield High School
Shrewsbury High School



Schools & parents

As parents become increasingly involved with their children's education, Vanessa Berridge looks at how schools are adapting

When I was at school, my parents turned up perhaps twice a year for a parent-teacher meeting and a concert or school play, but that was about the extent of it. For boarders, the relationship was even more remote, with parents handing them over for three months at a time. But in recent decades, there has been a sea-change, with parents far more involved with schools, policing every happening of their children's days (my son complained that a couple of mothers haunted the noticeboard in the music school to ensure that no cello lesson was ever missed). Moreover, many parents now construct their social lives around the PTA activities.

For the most part, this greater involvement has been encouraged by schools. 'There's an idea of corporate parenthood now,' says Nick Emsley, housemaster at King Edward's, Witley. 'As schools, we have a super-parental responsibility which we share with parents.'

'When I was at school, there was effectively a sign outside, saying "Parents not welcome here",' says Alice Phillips, headmistress of all-girls' St Catherine's, Bramley. She believes parents need to know from the outset what they are signing up for. 'I speak honestly at initial meetings about what we offer, so parents trust us and accept our expertise both in teaching and on pastoral matters. I would always encourage parents to approach us at the first concern - not at the end of the summer. That makes me very sad when that happens.'

Georgina Masefield, head at North Bridge House in London, holds an induction evening in June for parents of children starting in the autumn term. 'I address parents' anxieties about the transition of their children to senior school and set the tone of our relationship. We



'Schools need to make it clear to parents that pupils must be allowed to make their own way through'

prepare them for what is needed from them over the summer before the children join. We don't want parents to feel they are being left at the gate.'

Jo Duncan, head of the Royal High School, Bath, also wants to build a partnership with the parents of her pupils, but is aware that it must be one which gives the girls the freedom to grow. 'We live in a

consumer society and parents are buying in a forceful way. They have become more involved because of the pressures on children to succeed, but schools need to make it clear that girls must be allowed to find their own way through - and be prepared to fail occasionally. This helps give them resilience for life.'

Communication between ▷



schools and parents is at the heart of a successful partnership. At North Bridge House, there are half-term newsletters, reporting both on the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, two or three parents' evenings each year, and two written reports: one at Christmas, setting targets, and a fuller report in the summer. Electronic media also helps. 'We use both email and texts,' says Masefield, 'and we're finding that busy parents now prefer the more immediate contact of a group text.'

At Lancing College, there is a parental portal on the school's website. 'A clear record is provided

than reacting immediately.' St Catherine's Phillips echoes this concern: 'Parents can assume that a child's take on an issue is full and mature - which it won't be.'

While schools welcome the participation of parents, all are aware of the pitfalls. 'The difficulties come when parents want to dictate to the school,' says Richard Murray, headmaster of Christ Church Cathedral School, Oxford. 'The point of education is not to be taught by non-objective parents. Uncompromising parents lead to schools having to react in ways that are not good for the children.' That said, the parental engagement is

'Uncompromising parents lead to schools having to react in ways that are not good for the children'

electronically of what is going on, which is particularly reassuring for boarding parents,' says Hilary Dugdale, senior deputy head. St Catherine's, Bramley, also has an online parents' handbook, with hyperlinks to particular sources.

But there is also a downside to electronic media, with children too readily calling their parents on their mobile phones. 'We see messages going straight home after a playground tiff,' says Duncan, of the Royal High School, Bath. 'Parents have to be encouraged to give these problems space, rather

strong at the boys' (mainly day) prep school. Educating choristers for both Worcester College and Christ Church Cathedral means that the school is, says Murray, 'effectively an enormous family and parents are part of that community'.

North Bridge House parents, says Masefield, 'are interested and concerned to be involved in the school's strategic vision', while Lancing runs a programme of Saturday morning events for parents across the year, with prestigious speakers on subjects such as mental health, digital

awareness and resilience. 'Parents want to learn about things which weren't part of their education,' says Dugdale, 'and we hope to stimulate a real dialogue between parents and their children at home.'

Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) are now an active and integral part of school life. The parents' association at Christ Church Cathedral School, for instance, is, according to Murray, 'a properly powerful organisation', which fund-raises, runs stalls and entertainments at sports days, and even organises and supervises overseas choir tours.

At King Edward's, Witley, a representative of the PTA is attached to each house, arranging social events for parents, such as trips to the local pub, to coincide with house events. Other events throughout the year include quiz nights, burger evenings and Christmas gatherings.

Jo Duncan, who lives on site at the Royal High School, Bath, holds drinks parties for parents at her home. 'It's a key part of what I do, because I want parents to know staff and also other parents, so they understand what is happening.'

However, Phillips at St Catherine's, Bramley, is aware of the complexities of parental interaction. 'The danger is that you get group feedback. Everyone's experience is different, but it's all too easy for parents to get embroiled in something which is not their experience.' She says St Catherine's PTA 'is and should be apolitical - supportive but not lobbying'.

So, when looking at a school for your child, explore the level of parental involvement that is encouraged, and the nature and activities of the school's PTA. You may, after all, be connected with the school for a decade or more, and it's important that you feel that the school reflects the kind of parenting you want.

And indeed, the connection may be even longer than that: The Lancing Association is formed of past parents who revisit in groups for 20, even 30, years after their children have left Lancing College. 'It's an acknowledgement of the friendships they made when they were co-parenting,' says Dugdale. 'And they enjoy continuing that association with the school.' ■

Inspiring creativity for generations

Open Morning
Saturday 1 October 2016

Visit our website to register



Lancing College

Senior School & Sixth Form



AN EXCEPTIONAL INDEPENDENT EDUCATION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 13 TO 18

www.lancingcollege.co.uk

Tel 01273 465805 | West Sussex BN15 0RW

Registered Charity Number 1076483



Farringtons
SCHOOL

Open Morning

Saturday 24th September 2016, 09.00 – 12.00
Tuesday 8th November 2016, 09.15 – 11.00

A leading independent co-educational day and boarding school offering high academic standards, excellent pastoral care and a wide extra-curricular programme within a supportive Christian environment.

Co-education

Juniors 3 – 11, Seniors 11 – 16, Sixth Form 16 - 18

Perry Street, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6LR T: 020 8467 0256

www.farringtons.org.uk



More than just a school

An environment that ignites the imagination

A co-educational country prep school in a stunning setting, combining outstanding academic and extra-curricular success, with a culture of kindness founded on Catholic principles.

T: 01584 876 061 | head@moorpark.org.uk

www.moorpark.org.uk

Moor Park, Richard's Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 4DZ



ASHWICKE HALL SCHOOL
Bath, UK



- Co-educational
- Day and boarding
- 11 to 18 year olds
- Outstanding location near Bath
- Non-selective admissions policy
- GCSEs, A Levels and U.S. Advanced Placement® exams offered
- Scholarships and Forces Bursary available

OPEN DAYS

Saturday, October 1 10:30 to 12:30
Saturday, October 8 14:00 to 16:00

Register online at
ashwickehall.sabis.net

Ashwicke Hall School, Marshfield, Wiltshire, SN14 8AG, UK



Member of the
SABIS
Network

For more information:

Call: 01225 891841

E-mail: admissions@ashwicke.sabis.net

Visit: ashwickehall.sabis.net



Bake Sale



Community SERVICE

Vanessa Berridge looks at the role charity can play in a school's curriculum

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) Annual Review 2015 laid emphasis on 'Embedding social responsibility' and recognising 'our responsibilities to our staff, to the environment and to the local communities our schools serve'. This sense of social commitment was embodied in the first public schools, set up centuries ago for the education of poor children, and it is gratifying to see what an important part it still plays in the 21st century.

'We encourage our pupils to look outwards,' says Martin Reader, headmaster of Cranleigh in Surrey, 'and to resist the constant temptation to see themselves as the sole source and measure of their success and identity'. Pupils are expected to take part in the many community service activities offered by the school for all ages. Cranleigh, for example, has its own project, Beyond Cranleigh, under the aegis of the charity Beyond Ourselves, which brings education, nutrition and basic medical care to orphans

and vulnerable children in Zambia. Younger Cranleigh pupils are involved in fund-raising activities, while older pupils have visited their partner school in Zambia, to see at first-hand what their efforts mean.

Social awareness needs to start early, believes Catherine Thomlinson, headmistress of St James Junior School in west London. 'The whole ethos of the school is about service,' she says. 'The children are expected to think of others before themselves, beginning with the four-year-olds handing round apples in morning

pupils throughout the school are very community-minded, and support charities which they themselves nominate, such as Jeans For Genes and carol singing for Great Ormond Street Hospital. Last year, a year 6 boy talked to the school about the plight of children in Iraq. He raised £2,000 by baking and selling cakes with his class, and by doing jobs at home and in the community. This year, another boy put on a talent show for Macmillan Cancer Support, motivated by his grandmother's

'We encourage the children to express their natural wish to serve from an early age, in ways that they can help'

break. The children serve each other at lunchtime, while older pupils act as classroom helps or run messages. There is also a buddy system, with senior pupils playing with and reading stories to new ones. So we encourage them to express their natural wish to serve from an early age, in ways that they can help.'

As a result, says Thomlinson, the

death. The school is also introducing the St James Strive Challenge which will raise money for disadvantaged children in the UK. 'Each child is encouraged to think of a personal challenge to raise money,' explains Thomlinson.

Community service is an integral part of the educational programme at Nottingham Girls' >

High School, reflecting the values of the GDST to which it belongs. 'We believe passionately that girls need to give back to their local community,' says Julie Keller, the school's head. Fund-raising is done in school by junior pupils, who have organised events such as a cake sale and 'splat-the-teacher' over the past year. Outside volunteering projects start from year 7 onwards, with five girls from each year sitting on a council which takes a strategic view and plans and facilitates fund-raising and other activities. According to Lindsay Wharton-Howett, assistant head, co-curricular, 14,500 hours of volunteering were contributed over the 2015/16 school year. Sixty-nine per cent of senior girls took part in activities, which included an intergenerational fashion show for Age UK and a summer fête for The Eve Appeal to raise awareness of ovarian cancer.

There are four main strands to the school's voluntary work, explains Wharton-Howett. The first is financial, with the girls raising £100,000 in recent years for over 30 Nottinghamshire charities. Practical help is also offered: sixth-formers have helped set up a library at the Nottingham Women's Centre. On the emotional side, girls run summer schools for children, helped by Caudwell Children, while others have been trained to handle calls to Childline. And lastly, senior girls give help to the Nottingham branch of IntoUniversity, supporting the



in London since September 2015, the first non-teaching member of staff to have held the role and a measure of the importance with which Forest regards community service. 'Sixth formers have been volunteering for the last 30 years,' explains Dyke, 'but we have stepped up a gear, embedding community service in the school day.'

Pupils from year 7 are expected to do two hours a week of volunteering during school hours. This may include helping with projects in the prep school, so that they learn that service can take place in school as well as outside. In years 9 and 10, the pupils begin going out, tackling such tasks as graveyard gardening and outreach workshops in local

heart-monitoring charity. Sixth-formers are encouraged to visit old people's homes, while a group of students have spent time this summer in Makoshino, a deprived village in northern Ukraine, living in tents and washing in the river. There, they have helped local people with decorating, and have given sport, English and craft lessons to 100 children. Rather charmingly, the children in return have learned circus skills from a Russian gymnast.

The International Baccalaureate (IB), with its strong element of community service, has helped to underline that pupils at privileged schools should consider others less fortunate than themselves. 'CAS [creativity, action, service] is an integral component of the IB diploma and underpins the core values of our community,' says Kent College programme leader Simon James, head of economics and business studies. 'Many of our students have been proactive in supporting local charities, but the CAS philosophy is not just reserved for the IB diploma students. Our younger pupils are given a tailored electronic platform to record their extra-curricular activities, often involving community engagement and support.'

'Community involvement is an essential part of school life,' concludes Nancekievill of Farringtons, 'because at its best, it becomes a partnership that helps everyone involved, whatever contribution they make (or take), to grow in wisdom.' ■

'We want students to develop a sense that community service is for life, not just something done at school'

education and aspirations of disadvantaged girls.

It's an impressive programme. 'We give a lot to the community,' says Wharton-Howett, 'and the girls get even more back. They meet others from whom they can learn, and gain a sense of self-worth and resilience.' Keller agrees: 'We're preparing them for the adult world. The girls are very grounded when they leave.'

At Saint Felix, Southwold, pupils are actively encouraged to take decisions themselves on the school's charitable outreach, with one of the key leadership roles for students being head of charities.

Harriet Dyke has been community service co-ordinator at Forest School

primary schools. Community service also features in the Forest Diploma, completed by sixth-formers, who do this work out of school and are, says Dyke, 'very passionate about it. We want students to develop the sense that community service is a lifelong commitment, not just something done at school.'

Community service is entrenched in both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities at Farringtons, a Methodist school in Kent, with a strong commitment to global outreach activities. Pupils start early, says headmistress Dorothy Nancekievill, with four-year-olds being involved in running for a



**Kent College
Canterbury**

KENTCOLLEGE.COM



**An outstanding
school for boys and
girls aged 3-18**

**Where excellence
is a habit!**

Set in an idyllic campus, Kent College provides an individual approach to education accompanied by excellent pastoral care.

Come and see for yourself

Senior School Open Morning:

1st October 9.00am – 12.30pm

Sixth Form Open Evening

4th October 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Find out more at
KENTCOLLEGE.COM

**RATED ★★★★★
SCHOOL GUIDE**

Call us on
01227 763231



The Lady RECRUITS

RECRUITING SINCE 1885

The Lady has been placing staff for more than 125 years so we are pleased to be known as the leading name in domestic recruitment.

If you need staff, look no further than
The Lady Recruits.



For more information please call
020-7379 4717 and ask for The Lady Recruits
or email theladyrecruits@lady.co.uk



Speak the Truth • Be Generous and Kind • Be Your Best

School Tours with the Head

Available during the Autumn Term.

For details contact the school.

020 7348 1793

www.stjamesjuniors.co.uk

Earsby Street
London W14 8SH
Registered Charity No. 270156



ST JAMES
Junior School
for girls and boys



Why study CLASSICS?

Far from being obsolete, they can be a vital aid to schooling and beyond, discovers Vanessa Berridge

Boris Johnson's love for classical tags is usually seen as typical one-upmanship on his part. But his delight in the languages and literature of the past raises an important question. Do Latin and Greek continue to have relevance for today's children whose needs are probably better served by advanced IT knowledge?

The answer from the teachers to whom I spoke is a resounding yes. Take, for instance, Dr Millan Sachania, headmaster of Streatham & Clapham High School in south London, and a widely published

music scholar. At his school, all girls study Latin from the age of eight to 14. At GCSE, 25 of the year cohort of 90 will be taking Latin. 'Classics,' he says with passion, 'enables pupils to form an impression of the continuity of human thought over centuries, and put their own concerns into context. You can't understand art and architecture, nor allusions in films, books and politics without a knowledge of the classics. You can't understand democracy, which has its roots in Greece.'

He deplores what he sees as the utilitarian outlook of the Department for Education, which has devalued the classics and the arts in general. 'Studying the mechanics and structure of an ancient language adds to pupils' command and clarity, helping them make

music scholar. At his school, all girls study Latin from the age of eight to 14. At GCSE, 25 of the year cohort of 90 will be taking Latin. 'Classics,' he says with passion, 'enables pupils to form an impression of the continuity of human thought over centuries, and put their own concerns into context. You can't understand art and architecture, nor allusions in films, books and politics without a knowledge of the classics. You can't understand democracy, which has its roots in Greece.'

faster progress in reading English and with modern languages. And the classics foster an increased aptitude for thinking flexibly. Pupils have to consider the function of every word in a sentence and this logical thinking helps with other studies such as computing.'

Sophia Ridley, previously head of classics at St Catherine's, Bramley, has joined Streatham & Clapham High School this term as head of sixth form. She believes in the promotion of learning for the sake of learning, but nevertheless emphasises that skills acquired through learning classical languages

'are transferable to a huge numbers of careers. Logic and analysis can be applied to an array of problems and issues.' Ridley studied classics at Durham. 'The breadth of classics appealed to me, enabling me to pursue my interests in philosophy, history and language,' she says. Five girls applied for classics to university this year from St Catherine's.

Raymond Mew has just completed his third year as head of classics at Lancing College, where his role has been to revive the department. Greek is now on the timetable from the third to the sixth form, and 40 per cent of pupils study Greek, while all take Latin. Mew stresses that 'education is about illumination; it is not just training. Children need the opportunity to study a range of

subjects. They need to study music, art, history and humanities - and Greek and Latin fit into that.'

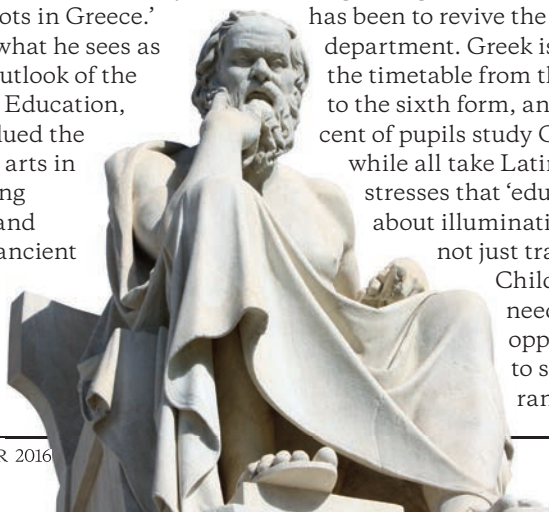
He also points out that Latin and Greek provide a very different learning experience. 'Pupils have to transport their minds to an entirely different culture,' he explains. 'It's quite a leap, but they begin to see similarities and differences between the cultures. It also gives them a historical perspective which informs their view of the current world.'

The classics, believes Mew, are a preparation for life, not for a particular job. Nevertheless, he points out that employers appreciate the classics - which is why many top UK lawyers and diplomats are Oxbridge-educated classicists.

At North Bridge House in London, pupils see Latin as an exciting exercise in code-breaking, according to head teacher, Georgina Masefield. She believes the study gives her pupils a better grasp of the construction of modern languages. 'It extends their vocabulary and comprehension, and helps them understand the roots of words.'

Margaret Baird agrees. She is head of classics at Malvern St James, where Latin is compulsory from years 7 to 9. 'The girls have to know what a noun, verb and adjective is before they can begin to translate,' she says. 'This knowledge becomes implanted and as they begin to look at the derivatives of words, it brings English to life.'

Classics can lead to a deeper appreciation of so much else, too. Shakespeare, for example, is full of classical allusions, while Thucydides affects our approach to the study of history. And, of course, opera, in which classical themes play so full a part. 'It's about enriching pupils' understanding,' says Dr Sachania. ■





EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

A welcoming and high-achieving family of pupils aged 7 to 18 with a strong continuity of education and co-curricular activity across both schools.

Admissions at 7+, 11+, 13+ and 16+.



CRANLEIGH
EX CULTU ROBUR

For more information,
or to arrange a visit,
email admissions@cranleigh.org
or fmjb@cranprep.org



CRANLEIGH
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Day, full & weekly boarding 900 girls 4-18 years Founded 1885



Bramley St Catherine's

OPEN MORNINGS

Senior School

Friday 16th September

Wednesday 5th October

Tuesday 8th November

Prep School

Wednesday 14th September

Thursday 6th October

Friday 4th November

Guildford GU5 0DF
01483 899609

admissions@stcatherines.info

91.6% A*/A
GCSE
92% A-B
A Level

www.stcatherines.info



Sidcot
Live adventurously

NOT JUST AN EXAM FACTORY

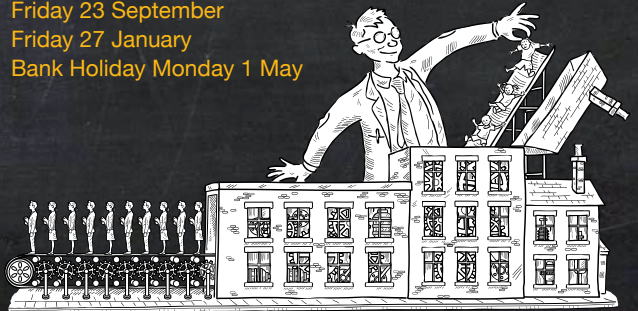
We educate students rather than simply train them to pass tests.
Find out how we can prepare your child for a life of adventure.

Open Mornings – 9am start

Friday 23 September

Friday 27 January

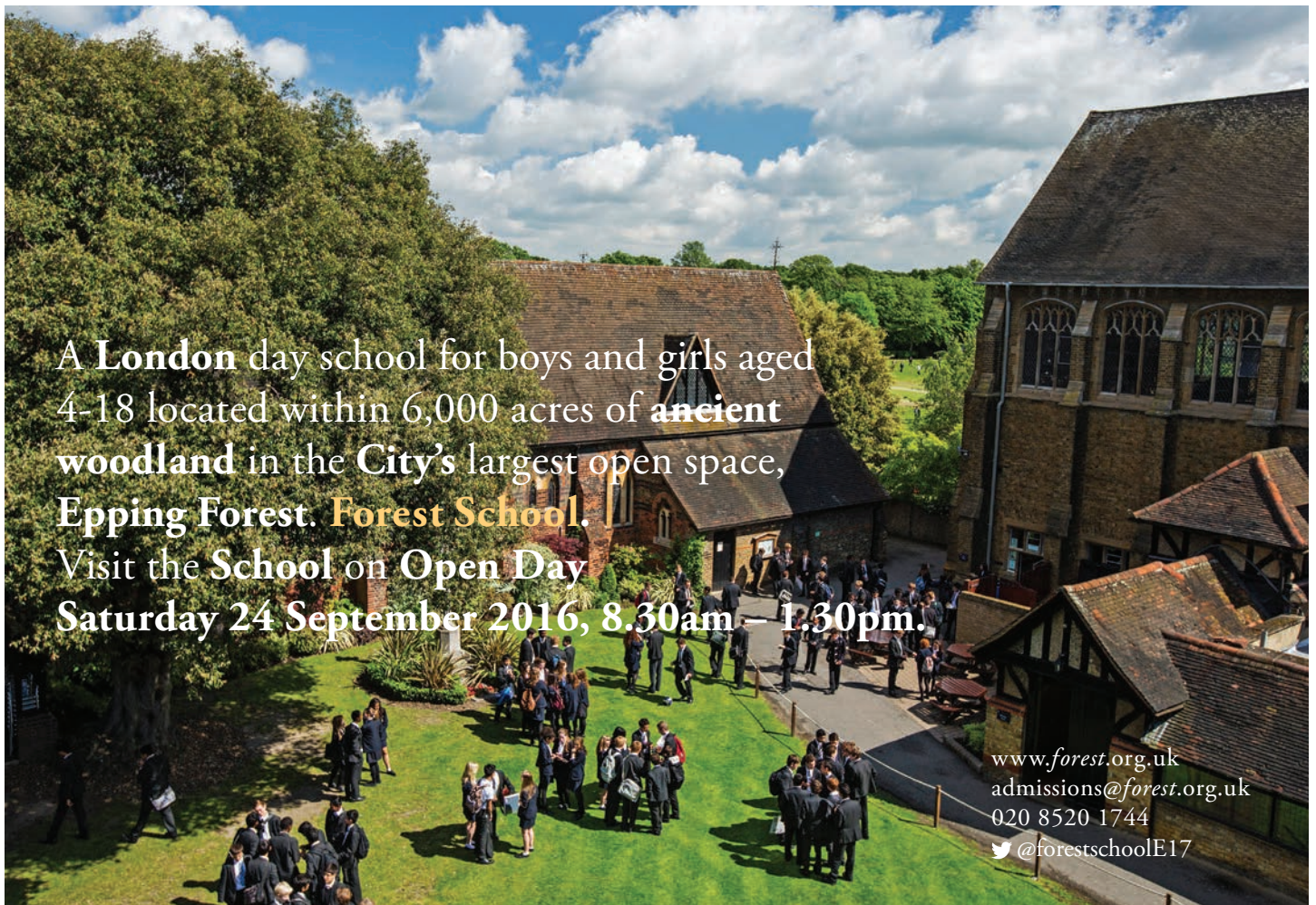
Bank Holiday Monday 1 May



Scholarships | Bursaries
Flexi-boarding | Daily school buses



Independent day and boarding school set in glorious Somerset
countryside, for boys and girls aged 3 to 18. Located 15 miles
south of Bristol, 8 miles from Bristol International Airport.



A **London** day school for boys and girls aged
4-18 located within 6,000 acres of **ancient
woodland** in the **City's** largest open space,
Epping Forest. Forest School.
Visit the **School on Open Day**
Saturday 24 September 2016, 8.30am – 1.30pm.

www.forest.org.uk
admissions@forest.org.uk
020 8520 1744
@forestschoolE17



Helping children to find THEIR ROLE

Schools place a huge emphasis on extra-curricular activities – and what's right for each individual, reports Vanessa Berridge

Most parents select independent education partly for the wealth of extra-curricular activities such schools offer. If you're bewildered by the sheer amount of choice, advice can be sought from educational consultants such as Gabbittas to help you find a school which provides the right basis for your child. Even so, the plethora of opportunities can be disorienting for children arriving at a new school, particularly a younger child or one with no obvious sporting or artistic bent. So how do schools realise the latent talents of children who aren't headed for the 1st XV or first violin in the orchestra?

'There are two issues,' says David Sansom, assistant head of the senior school at Sutton Valence in Kent. 'One is recognising the pupils' talents, and the other is helping shy children find their way.' Preparation begins even before children start: the head of juniors visits the primary and prep schools of pupils joining at year 7, while Sansom does the same for pupils starting after Common Entrance. 'Once pupils have been selected, they come here to meet teachers, and we have lunch and chat with them, so that tutors and housemasters can point them in the right direction. Sometimes we will opt reluctant children into an activity.'

At Sutton Valence there are teams A-E for under-13 hockey, giving weaker-performing pupils a chance to represent the school at sport. Plus, as 40 per cent of pupils are boarders, Saturday school means there's space in the timetable to

build in some 80 activities. These range from archery, Lego League (for the engineering and scientifically minded) to knitting, debating, shooting and meditation. There are drama, sports and music workshops, while, for a week at the end of the summer term, pupils go

'There are two issues – one is recognising the pupils' talents, the other is helping shy children find their way'

off timetable for experience with the air force, army and navy. 'We want to build self-esteem in everything we do,' says Sansom.

An individual approach is crucial, says Charlie Minogue, who has been headmaster at co-educational prep school Moor Park, in Shropshire, since last

September. 'This school is about offering other opportunities, not just academic results.' The tutor system gives pupils continuity over their time at the school, with tutors matched carefully with children. 'One child may need nurturing, while a firmer approach might be

better for another.' Given the school's countryside location, there are many outdoor activities, including Forest School and gardening, as well as sports (even taekwondo) and debating. 'At the last leavers' assembly, I picked out children for their achievements in gardening. This breeds the right ▷



Science clubs are a great way to learn while having fun with friends



North Bridge House

Senior and Sixth Form Canonbury
6-9 Canonbury Place, N1 2NQ

‘Outstanding’ North Bridge House Canonbury.
Nurturing pupils to exceed expectation from
Year 7 to Sixth Form.

Find out more, book an open day or private
tour at northbridgehouse.com/open

Smaller classes. More support. Exceptional teaching.

culture so that children know they are valued for who they are.'

Georgina Masefield takes a similar approach at North Bridge House in north London. 'Celebrating the individual is at the heart of everything we do. We're a relatively small school and we know the children even before they arrive.' Children are invited in small groups for taster days and special events, and will then receive communications over the summer from 'big' brothers and sisters in years 10 and 11. When they arrive, teas, treasure hunts and hot-choc chats are held, so the younger pupils are not intimidated by the older ones.

An enrichment programme every Tuesday afternoon provides a range of self-selected compulsory activities to develop logical, geographical, aesthetic, physical, creative and life skills. Children work in small groups of mixed ability and different ages, so, says Masefield, 'reticent pupils are able to explore beyond the curriculum in intimate settings. They build relationships with teachers in a slightly different environment, as they may, for instance, be taught self-defence by a maths teacher - and it's fascinating for the staff to see their pupils in a different context.'

By the time pupils leave, they will have up to 14 different activities to show on sixth-form applications and, beyond that, for universities. 'We want to ignite pupils' passions, make them feel valued and also build their self-worth,' confirms Masefield.

Croydon High School takes a gradual approach, starting with story sessions led by sixth formers for the nursery and reception girls. Ballet and a foreign language course are offered at four, taught through games, song and movement. 'The provision grows each year,' explains Sophie Bradshaw, the junior school head. 'The advantage of having pupils from three to 18 is that it allows girls to progress through the school and expand their opportunities. It can be bewildering for a child who suddenly changes to a bigger school at eight or 11.'

The girls themselves help shape the



A shy individual can blossom when they're in a group

provision of the extra-curricular programme: a cookery club was started last year, for instance, on the pupils' initiative. 'By giving them a voice, we can provide what they need,' says Bradshaw. 'They already have a compulsory timetable - this is about what they want to do.'

For the junior school head, it is important that the girls see the extra-curricular activities as not about competition, but about

traditional sport, music and drama,' adds Bradshaw.

Finding time to tease out children's individual abilities in a crowded timetable is a challenge, says Alice Phillips, headmistress of the highly academic girls' school, St Catherine's, Bramley. 'It's most important to give the girls enough space to explore the co-curriculum.' This is done by gradually phasing in full homework during the course of year 7, when girls start, so they

'These activities are as important as the children's academic work and mustn't be pushed to one side'

exploring their particular passions. 'We try to balance competitive sport with sport for all - 90 girls a day, aged seven to 11, are taking part in some kind of sports club,' she says. The special interests include Noah Club for year 4 in which they learn about endangered species, while 'In The News' gives the girls the chance to research and write stories about current events. 'We offer so much beyond

have a chance to find out what is on offer. As the freshers' fair is run by older girls, new pupils can put human faces to activities, rather than just seeing them listed on a noticeboard. There are netball teams from A-J, although Phillips admits that the lower teams play only occasionally. But it's all about providing choice and helping girls find their appropriate level.

As at Moor Park, the tutor's steering role is key. 'Discussions are held with form tutors a few weeks into the first term,' says Phillips. 'A careful log is kept of each girl's extra-curricular choices and regularly reviewed, to ensure no girl is overloaded. But we always stress that these activities are as important as their academic work and mustn't be pushed to one side.'

Above all, it's a case of encouraging girls to do something they want to do, rather than what their friends do. 'If they can be persuaded to do that, they are more likely to find their soulmates,' concludes Phillips. ■



Ballet can be offered to pupils as young as four



SAINT FELIX SCHOOL
SOUTHWOLD

BRITISH BOARDING BY THE SEA

Open Morning

Saturday 8th October 2016

Join us at 10.00am - 12.30pm



01502 727048 stfelix.co.uk registrar@stfelix.co.uk @stfelixsch

One School,
many journeys



Open Mornings

Preparatory School (Nursery to age 11)

Friday 30th September 2016

T: 01622 842117 | E: leckiea@svs.org.uk

Senior School (HMC 11–18 day and boarding)

Saturday 1st October 2016

Saturday 8th October 2016 (Sixth Form Only)

Saturday 12th November 2016

T: 01622 845206 | E: websterk@svs.org.uk



www.svs.org.uk





Co-ed Single-sex

Single-sex schools get results, but is it better for boys and girls to be educated together? James Crawford-Smith looks at the pros and cons

Girls and boys have been proven to respond in different ways to different kinds of learning environments. Is it then more beneficial to both sexes to separate to educate, or is integration from a young age key to growing up in 21st-century society?

On paper, the benefits of single-sex education are clear: the results are unquestionably better. The GCSE and A-Level league tables are dominated by some of the world's best-known single-sex independent schools, and rivalling them, single-sex grammar schools.

Many argue that the presence of the opposite sex is an instant distraction to school-aged children, and by removing this distraction they can be focused 100 per cent on their studies. This point has an element of truth to it - but only an element. Removing the boyfriend/girlfriend factor from the classroom does not automatically focus young minds on scholarship, and many feel that it creates an unrealistic and dysfunctional environment.

However, single-sex schools can be more inclusive and supportive. Not having any particular subject, sport or activity denied to a student because of their gender, the scope for exploration and development has no gender boundaries. Students are not told that there are girls' sports and boys' sports; art is no longer considered a subject for girls or drama effeminate, because the issue of gender is eliminated. This continues to be a problem in the co-ed sector.

Diversity can be an issue with single-sex schools, and for some pupils it's a shock when they enter a co-educational university or workplace. This can



'Removing the boyfriend/girlfriend factor does not automatically focus young minds on scholarship'

be eliminated, however, if a single-sex school is partnered with one of the opposite gender, as many public and grammar schools now are.

There is a comradeship in single-sex schools, and bonds of friendship that often continue into later life. At co-educational schools, on the other hand, boys and girls interact from an early age in a supportive environment. The idea that sexism is born out of single-sex schools is outdated, for pastoral care is now seen as a vital element of education.

The number of single-sex schools has halved in the past 20 years. As of 2014 there were only 250 fee-paying single-sex schools in the country. Age-old

institutions are changing their views, and if they haven't integrated their sixth forms and nurseries, they are now starting to do so, or integrating all years.

Pupils from both strains of education can point out the pros and cons of their environments. Many prefer co-education because being with the opposite sex can expose them to a wider range of interests.

If you ask those with a little more distance between themselves and their schooldays, they may have a different view. In hindsight, many reminisce about the fun in class with the girls, the camping trips with the boys, and so on. Many parents send their children to same-sex schools simply because they themselves went to one and want the same experience for their little ones.

Whatever side of the debate you stand on, it is clear that there are advantages to each system. Not every child is the same, and the key questions to consider are what benefits a school could have for your child, which environment they would most thrive in and whether they have issues that would be helped or hindered by a same-sex or co-educational environment. ■





MALVERN ST JAMES
GIRLS' SCHOOL

No 1 independent girls' school in the Midlands at A Level (ISC data 2016)

Who do you want to be?



Your story starts here...

Join us at our Open Morning on Saturday 1 October 2016

or contact us to arrange your personal visit or boarding taster

www.malvernstjames.co.uk admissions@malvernstjames.co.uk 01684 584624

The Boarding and Day School for Girls aged 4 - 18



Dyslexia
SCHOOL SEARCH

Experts in placing children with
Educational Learning Difficulties.

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Autism
- Asperger's Syndrome
- and other complex learning difficulties

Your journey starts here

Let us help you find your way and
the best school for your child.



Telephone: +44 (0) 1728 687 964
Mobile: +44 (0) 7754 756726
info@dyslexiaschoolsearch.com

www.dyslexiaschoolsearch.com

Co-educational Mainstream Education

MOON HALL
Specialist Dyslexia Schools



**Focusing on the needs of
the individual**

Our goal is to encourage our students to
achieve academic and personal excellence.

Ambition • Aspiration • Courage • Resilience
underpin our learning journey.

Come and see for yourself the difference
we make.

Moon Hall Junior & Senior School, Reigate, 6-16 yrs
☎ 01306 611372 www.moonhallcollege.co.uk

Moon Hall Junior School, Dorking, 7-11 yrs
☎ 01306 731464 www.moonhallschool.co.uk



Specialist schools

Dyslexic children, and those with exceptional talents, thrive in schools attuned to their needs, says James Crawford-Smith

Around the country there are specialist schools offering a concentrated focus on aspects of educational life such as sport, drama and IT, but there are also specialist educational institutions with a vital role in helping students with particular learning disabilities.

One in 10 people are estimated to have dyslexia in the UK; that's more than 6.3 million people. Dyslexia sufferers have difficulty learning to read and interpreting words, but this does not have an effect on their general intelligence. Schools test students when they join to identify those who may be dyslexic, because traditional teaching styles and classroom sizes are not beneficial to their education.

One in five children leave primary school with below the national expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics, and one in six adults have a reading age of 11 years old. Specialist teaching for dyslexic students is one way to improve those figures. There are schools that deal specifically with the needs of dyslexic children and can guide them through the educational process. These schools help dyslexic students by having a teacher and teaching assistant in a class size of around eight students, a staff-to-pupil ratio of one to four.

Often a concern for dyslexic students is that they take longer to process information and thus can find themselves being left behind in a traditional classroom



setting - nine out of 10 parents of children with dyslexia have said that teachers lack the proper training needed to support their child.

Ultimately what a specialist school for dyslexic students allows is for them to learn at their own pace, which is incredibly important for those who have problems with reading and absorbing information. You may want to look into whether

Schools that specialise in sports are extremely popular, and there has in recent years been a surge in sports academies. Sports schools often have more advanced facilities and the bonus of being able to offer students the chance to pursue and excel in more unusual activities.

There are many factors to consider when selecting the right school for your child, especially if

'Specialist schools have the ability to encourage and facilitate the development of your child's talent'

or not a school is DfE and CReSTeD approved; these bodies ensure that schools adhere to the best possible standards of teaching.

While there are schools whose main emphasis is helping students achieve their academic potential, there are also those with a particular focus on activities such as music, drama and sport.

In specialist drama schools, actors, directors and other professionals are brought in to teach sessions that are built into every student's curriculum. The same is true of specialist music schools, which ensure a proportion of time is allotted for each student to pursue their chosen instrument.

you are thinking about a specialist school. The best interest of the student is paramount for both parents and schools, so the key thing is to think carefully about your child's strengths and weaknesses and the best way to nurture and support the child as an individual.

Specialist schools have the ability, even more so than general institutions, to encourage and facilitate the development of your child's talent. They also have systems in place if your child has to be out of classes for a period of time to take part in competitions or concerts or to attend medical appointments. The admissions departments of specialist schools are there to help you make an informed choice, so don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have. ■

ISTOCK





Christ Church Cathedral School

Pre-Prep & Preparatory School for Boys with Co-Ed Nursery



OPEN MORNING

Saturday 1st October 9.30 am - 12 noon

01865 24256 | registrar@cccs.org.uk www.cccs.org.uk

Nurturing confidence and academic success from nursery to sixth form.



North Bridge House
Nursery, Pre-Preparatory, Preparatory,
Senior and Sixth Form Schools.



Visit us and start your North Bridge House journey

Nursery & Pre-Prep

Tues 4 Oct 9:30am
Tues 18 Oct 9:30am
Tues 8 Nov 9:30am
33 Fitzjohn's Ave. NW3

Preparatory

Thur 6 Oct 9:00am
Fri 21 Oct 9:00am
Thur 10 Nov 9:00am
1 Gloucester Ave. NW1

Senior

Tues 27 Sep 6:00pm
Wed 5 Oct 9:00am
Tues 1 Nov 9:00am
65 Roslyn Hill NW3

Senior & Sixth Form

Tues 27 Sep 9:00am
Thur 29 Sep 6:00pm (yr 12)
Sat 15 Oct 10:00am
6-9 Canonbury Place N1



Book at: northbridgehouse.com/open or call: 020 7267 6266



Independent schools guide CONTACTS



Find out more and get in touch with independent schools and educational organisations



Ashwicke Hall School
◆ 01225-891841,
www.ashwickehallschool.sabis.net
Christ Church Cathedral School, Oxford
◆ 01865-242561, www.cccs.org.uk
Cranleigh School, Surrey
◆ 01483-273666, www.cranleigh.org
Cranleigh Prep School, Surrey
◆ 01483-542051, www.cranprep.org
Croydon High School, Croydon
◆ 020-8260 7508,
www.croydonhigh.gdst.net
Dyslexia School Search
◆ 01728-687964,
www.dyslexiaschoolsearch.com
Farringtons School, Chislehurst, Kent
◆ 020-8467 0256, www.farringtons.org.uk
Forest School, London E17
◆ 020-8520 1744, www.forest.org.uk
Kent College, Canterbury
◆ 01227-763231, www.kentcollege.com
King Edward's, Witley, Surrey
◆ 01428-686700, www.kesw.org
Lancing College, West Sussex
◆ 01273-465805, www.lancingcollege.co.uk
Malvern St James, Great Malvern, Worcestershire
◆ 01684-892288, www.malvernstjames.co.uk
Moon Hall School For Dyslexic Children
◆ 01306-611372/01306-731464,
www.moonhall.surrey.sch.uk
Moor Park School, Ludlow, Shropshire
◆ 01584-876061, www.moorpark.org.uk

North Bridge House, London NW1
◆ 020-7267 6266,
www.northbridgehouse.com
North Bridge House Senior School & Sixth Form, Canonbury
020-7267 6266,
www.northbridgehouse.com
Nottingham Girls' High School
◆ 0115-941 7663,
www.nottinghamgirlshigh.gdst.net
Royal High School, Bath
◆ 01225-313877,
www.royalhighbath.gdst.net
St Catherine's School, Bramley, Surrey
◆ 01483-893363, www.stcatherines.info
Saint Felix School, Southwold, Suffolk
◆ 01502-727026, www.stfelix.co.uk
St James Junior School, London W14
◆ 020-7348 1793,
www.stjamesjuniors.co.uk
Sidcott School
◆ 01943-843102, www.sidcot.org.uk
Streatham & Clapham High School, London SW16
◆ 020-8677 8400, www.schs.gdst.net
Sutton Valence School, Kent
◆ 01622-842117, www.svs.org.uk
Girls' Day School Trust (GDST)
◆ 020-7393 6666, www.gdst.net

