

## *Beaconsfield High School – Discovering and developing Individual Potential*

### *From the Headteacher*

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your interest in Beaconsfield High School. I hope this prospectus will give you an insight into life at our school; it is, of course, no substitute for a visit and we look forward to seeing you in person – our girls are our best advertisement and you will be sure to find a warm welcome from us all.

The ethos of the school is one of high academic achievement within a supportive and caring learning environment. Learning is one of the most exciting things we do in life and we want to develop a thirst for it in our students so that firm foundations are laid which will serve them throughout their lives.

We believe strongly that academic qualifications must be supported by the development of the whole person and we place emphasis on the value of taking responsibility, both individual and within the community.

Our aim is that each student should be able to discover her own unique talents and contribution while at the school and that she develops the self confidence to use them for her own benefit and for that of the community in which she lives.

Choosing the right school for your child is a difficult task. Beaconsfield High has a distinctive ethos which we hope you will find is the right one for your daughter. If that is the case, we shall look forward to working with you in providing the kind of education we believe will lay the foundations for a successful and fulfilling life.

With all good wishes

Penny Castagnoli



***“The girls are avid learners” Ofsted 1997***

***“I felt at home straight away; everyone made me feel really welcome. And the House system is great for getting to know girls from other years” Sarah (Year 7)***

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### *Caring for the Individual*



A school is made up of individuals and each girl is important to us; we give special attention to finding out about and caring for her needs. We have excellent links with local primary schools and girls receive visits and letters before they even arrive. Our Special Needs staff will find out about any particular learning need. Special gifts and talents are also identified at this stage so that we can make sure that these girls receive the appropriate amount of challenge.

Girls become a member of a tutor group and a house. The Form Tutor is a key person; s/he monitors academic and social progress and the general well-being and happiness of each student. Close contact is maintained with parents so that we can all work together to deal with any difficulties which arise. Year groups are under the care of a Head of Learning who has an overall view of the academic and social progress of the year group as a whole.

The five houses are like small schools of 200 girls. The vertical integration ensures a sense of belonging to a family and girls are able to mix with and feel comfortable with girls of all ages, thus encouraging their social skills. Drama and Technology Festivals and Sports Day encourage healthy competition.

There is a well established Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Programme which supports learning throughout the School. Careers education and guidance is an important part of this; advice is always available and this ensures that girls make the right choice at the right time, whether it be about subjects at GCSE or A-level or about the best University for her chosen career.

*“The provision for social development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self esteem and mutual respect; they are polite, helpful, friendly and courteous” Ofsted*

### *Learning to Learn*

Our aim is that our students become independent learners; it’s a skill for life. It should be fun and should stimulate you to want to know more! We analyse the way our students learn and actively teach them how to make the best progress. Homework and independent study are an essential part of the process. Following regular subject checks, students meet with their form tutors to review progress and to set targets for further improvement. As parents, you will receive regular feedback on your daughter’s progress.



Nothing motivates like success! Student success in all walks of life is celebrated regularly in assemblies and formal prize-giving ceremonies and through merits and achievement postcards to you at home.

Our excellent academic record is underpinned by our belief that everyone should strive to achieve their personal best. Targets are regularly set and reviewed. At Key Stage 3, students are taught Science using “CASE” – an accelerated learning programme designed to encourage logical thought. A major benefit of our technology college status is that teaching and learning can be supported by the most up to date equipment and the school is exceptionally well resourced.

### **Key Stage 3: Laying Firm Foundations**



Each child has her own unique mixture of qualities and talents; our job is to discover this potential. We have high expectations; during the first three years of secondary school life we aim to do the following:

Ensure that each child is happy and is forming purposeful relationships;

Give her many varied opportunities to get involved in school life;

Establish a good partnership with you, her parents, so that we make sure we work together for your daughters benefit;

Establish good working habits, a love of learning and a commitment to excellence;

Lay down a solid foundation in terms of a broad and balanced curriculum in which learning is dynamic, active and exciting.

#### **Curriculum Y7, 8 and 9**

Art, Biology (Y9), Chemistry (Y9), Design Technology, Drama, English, Geography, History, Latin (optional), Maths, Music, Information Technology, 2 languages from French, German, Latin and Spanish, Physics (Y9), PSHE (Lifeskills), Science, PE, Religious Education

#### **Clubs and Societies in Key Stage 3**

Athletic, Aerobics, Chess, Dance, Debating, Drama, Canoeing, Christian Union, Football, Hockey, Gymnastics, Mathematics and Netball are currently available.



*"There's so much opportunity to get involved in activities it's sometimes hard to decide what to do first" (Katy, Year 8)*

## GCSEs: Great Expectations



The GCSE years mark a time of increasing responsibility. Girls take up to 10 GCSEs and are encouraged to balance their time between their studies and the wider aspects of school life and to explore their own contribution to the community. The core curriculum continues to be broad and balanced but there is an exciting choice of optional subjects. Girls are encouraged to think for themselves, to analyse situations, consider problems, find solutions and to take

responsibility for themselves. We aim to make lessons both enjoyable and rigorous, providing challenging learning situations.

*"The School has productive links with the wider community which enrich the curriculum and make a significant contribution towards pupils' learning and development" Ofsted*

### **Compulsory Curriculum**

GCSE: English Language and Literature, Design Technology (Food, Graphics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Maths, Language (French, German, Latin or Spanish), Science (double award or three separate sciences). In addition PSHCE, PE and RE are taught.

**GCSE Options:** Art, Business & Economics, Drama, Geography, History, ICT, Latin, Music, Religious Studies, Sports Studies.



*"I feel valued and respected for who I am" (Amy, Year 10)*

*"Teachers and girls get on so well it makes learning much easier" (Emma, Year 11)*

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### **The 6<sup>th</sup> Form: Fulfilling your Dream**

Over 98% of 6th Formers go on to University or Higher Education. We have a well tried and tested system of support and advice. Excellent contacts with admissions tutors mean that students are well prepared to gain places at the major universities. Universities recognise the high quality UCAS statements and Oxford University recently wrote praising the performance of our girls at interview.

The opportunities to get involved in activities both inside and outside the classroom are outstanding. Educational visits, conferences, fieldwork, language exchanges, European work experience, Model United Nations – these are just some of the many activities on offer. 6<sup>th</sup> Formers have their own separate centre where they can relax and also take advantage of the private study facilities including a well resourced computer area and Careers Library.

6<sup>th</sup> Form Curriculum: A/S and A2: Art & Design, Biology, Chemistry, Design and Technology, Economics and Business, English Language and Literature, Drama, Food, French, German, Geography, Government & Politics, History, Information Technology, Latin, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish, Sports Studies, Textiles.

*“I was very well prepared for University, not spoon-fed. Unlike many other students I know how to use books, to do research, make presentations and argue my point” (Mary – ex student)*



### **Leadership and Responsibility**

School Council meets formally twice a term; it's an impressive gathering of democratically elected girls which gives all students the opportunity to have a voice. It is led entirely by Prefects. Every girl has the opportunity to represent her peers at Council during her time at the school. Council develops confident and articulate girls. It's an opportunity to work as part of a team and to be a leader. It develops a sense of responsibility and the ability to get things done. It fosters an understanding of managerial and political processes.



Much of the work of Council is done through its various sub-committees. You might want to get involved with charity work or you could be interested in improving the environment. Whatever the area of interest, there should be something for every girl.

For those who want to pursue leadership in a different field there are other opportunities: Sports Leader's Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Young Enterprise and World Challenge are just some of the opportunities available in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form.

*The School Council and the prefect system provide many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take a lead. Their response to this is outstanding.” Ofsted 2003*

## **Excellence by Design**



There is no doubt that our development as a Technology and Language College has meant that the School is superbly equipped for the challenge and opportunity of educating girls in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Additional government funding helps support an impressive computer network of over 250 machines and up to date software with internet access for every student and member of staff - ICT facilities which would be the envy of most schools in the country. This exciting resource which boasts a number of networked suites enables students to develop high level ICT skills starting from the moment they enter the school in Year 7. Science, Maths and Design Technology have all been able to develop a level of expertise and resource which has benefited not only the girls but the local community as well. You will see extensive use of CAD/CAM and DTP in Design Technology and a wide-ranging use of

software in Science and Mathematics. A recent visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors found that the high quality of students' ICT skills had a significant impact upon standards.

In terms of access to the knowledge economy, we benefit from being part of a wider network of Technology Colleges and businesses in the field of technology. Our contacts are extensive and we make good use of them, particularly in terms of sharing good practice, work experience and job opportunities. As a specialist school, we are a lead player in a team of local schools and share our knowledge and expertise in the field of ICT and languages.



*"I particularly like e-mailing my homework to my address at school – that way I don't have to write so much out – and I save paper!" (Sophie Year 10)*

## **A wealth of talent, a wealth of opportunity**

Developing the potential of each individual means recognising and celebrating the talents they bring to the school and also providing the opportunities for them to develop new ones.

*“In addition to what happens in lessons, the school provides a particularly wide range of opportunities for pupils to pursue interests and to develop personally. This is a strength of the school’s provision Ofsted 2003*



Music plays an important part in the life of the School. A large flourishing orchestra with a national reputation provides challenge and opportunity for girls to nurture their interest and enthusiasm. There is also a 2<sup>nd</sup> orchestra, string quartets, chamber and instrumental ensembles including a swing band. Some girls are members of both County and National Youth Orchestras. Girls regularly choose to make music their life and go on to become professional musicians. Instrumental lessons are available from our team of well qualified peripatetic staff, working towards Guildhall School of Music and Associated Board Examinations: bassoon, cello, clarinet, double bass, flute, guitar, harp, horn, oboe, percussion, piano, recorder, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, viola, violin, voice.

*“There is an impressive range of musical activities, which provides very good opportunities for pupils to perform at high levels.” Ofsted 2003*

As a Sportsmark school we place great importance on the value of participating in sports at all levels. Facilities are excellent. There is an all weather pitch; the new Sports Hall offers first class facilities for girls and the local community to develop and enjoy their sport.



Sport in the curriculum is strong with GCSE and A-Level courses available to students as well as the opportunity to develop leadership skills through the Sports Leadership qualification in the 6th Form. Fitness for life is becoming increasingly important; all our girls are actively encouraged to take part in sport to improve their fitness and to encourage healthy competition. This is clearly seen in the large numbers of school teams many of which enjoy success at national level across a number of sports.



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Superb opportunities are available in other performance areas such as Drama and Dance. Both are a strong and established part of the curriculum and also form part of the extra curricular life of the School. There are opportunities for girls of all ages to perform in the many and varied productions and festivals as well as pursue their interest on specialist courses and tours. School Productions have a history of being extravagant and extraordinary, often with what can feel like a cast of thousands!

In Art and Design, girls are encouraged to explore practical solutions to problems as well as to explore the more creative sides to their nature. Fully equipped workshops and Art studios make it possible for students to translate their ideas into high quality products.

*"Pupils respond well to the many opportunities which the school provides ... they readily become involved in additional activities which broaden their understanding of their own and other people's lives and cultures, such as musical and dramatic productions and work experience" Ofsted 2003*

### **Parents - Partners in Learning**

When a child joins the school her parent or carer becomes part of a supportive network which is absolutely vital to our sense of community. A close relationship with parents is fundamental to our approach and we strive to involve parents so that they too feel part of the school. Communication is all important. Parents are encouraged to share concerns and can talk to the School at any time through their daughter's Form Tutor. Parents can and do become involved with the School in a variety of ways. The Friends of Beaconsfield High School is an incredibly active and valuable body of committed people who not only raise money but also support the school in many ways - they run a second hand uniform shop, they tend the garden, they paint classrooms! Parents can also become helpers in the Learning Resource Centre; they can become a member of the Friends of Music, and get involved in planning and implementing orchestral tours or they can become a Friend of PE and help give support at the many events in which girls participate. Each form has at least one Form Parent who arranges social events, usually on a termly basis, for the girls in the form. Parents also have a valuable part to play serving on the Governing Body.



The School values its connection with the wider community and the local education authority. Through the work of School Council, we support charities and local organisations and communities and they in turn give us much help and support. We enjoy excellent links with local businesses and the local Training and Enterprise Council. Members of local churches participate in special services.