

FIVE YEARS OF

KING'S COLLEGE

DISCOVERY

TAUNTON

HAPPINESS &

PROSPECTUS

FULFILMENT



*“I never knew you could have so much fun
and work so hard
at the same time.”*

LUCY—3RD FORM

*“It’s amazing. The teachers are brilliant,
they are so friendly and enthusiastic.
I just want to learn there. I love it.
And I’ve made loads of new friends.
I can’t believe the first four weeks have already gone.”*

LEO—3RD FORM

*“I can’t believe a school can be so different.
In Germany we had maybe two or three good teachers.
Here they are all fantastic, even the ones who don’t teach me—
the atmosphere is just wonderful for learning.”*

HENDRIK—6TH FORM





Five Years of Discovery, Happiness & Fulfilment

A HEADMASTER'S PERSPECTIVE

I asked a mother why she had sent her son to our school. She said she and her husband had been thinking about several schools, but then on holiday they met a group of Sixth Formers from King's, whose good manners, good cheer, energy, undisguised love of life and obvious confidence, absolutely convinced them. Quite frankly, there isn't much more that I, as a parent, would want for my children. *So how do we achieve this?*



Firstly, we provide teaching which goes beyond mere exam success; an education that engenders a real sense of wonder and excitement and an enthusiasm for learning. Our teachers love their subjects and believe that the most important thing they do is to pass on that love to their pupils. We expose pupils to new and challenging experiences and ideas and encourage them to explore beyond the safety of their comfort zones. These five years at King's College are about finding out who they are, what they can do, what they believe, what they enjoy, what excites them and what possibilities lie in wait for them.

Secondly, we provide a pastoral framework within which our pupils feel safe, happy, loved and valued as individuals. We encourage pupils to contribute fully to the life of the school community. We insist on civilized behaviour, consideration and tolerance of others, neatness of appearance and good manners.

Thirdly, we encourage our pupils to develop an understanding of and a sense of responsibility towards the complex, fragile, difficult, fascinating world they will live in when they leave King's. Recently a group of pupils from King's went to India to build a house for a homeless woman in Kerala as part of our community action project. This experience was truly life-changing, and a typical example of our determination to engage with the world and not to hide away from it.

Fourthly, so that they might face that world with confidence, we encourage pupils to develop a moral framework, a rock solid sense of what is right and wrong and a keen appreciation of themselves and others as spiritual beings. The Chapel and the Chaplain are at the heart of what we do. We have two services each week for all pupils, although we accept and value pupils of all faiths and views.

Finally, we will never lose sight of the fact that five years is a large part of anybody's life and that, while preparation for future success is important, these years should, in themselves, be happy and memorable ones.



Independent schools need to fight tooth and claw to protect our very independence against the great forces of deadening mediocrity. It is this independence which makes us special and allows us to educate children in the way we believe will give them the best possible start in life.

King's College uses this independence wisely, deciding what of the old we should keep and what of the new we should adopt. We are a school rooted in a fine tradition—a Christian foundation which espouses rather old-fashioned but nonetheless powerful values of scholarship, tolerance, hard work, honesty, integrity and good manners. But we are also forward thinking and will continue to adopt new ideas and methods when we believe they are appropriate and enhance the education we provide at King's. 🌸

Richard Biggs MA BSc
HEADMASTER



Love to Learn

Isidore Rabi, winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1944, was asked what had helped him to become a scientist. He said that his mother made him into a scientist. 'Every other child would come back from school and be asked, "What did you learn today?" But my mother used to say, "Izzy, did you ask a good question today?" That made the difference. Asking good questions made me into a scientist.'

At King's we encourage pupils to ask good questions.

All pupils deserve to be challenged and stretched and excited by their studies. Nationally, there is a tragic excess of examination, too much emphasis on targets and league tables and assessment and too little concern for the real wonder and excitement of learning. We need to keep our focus on real education. Children love to learn and we have to keep that fire burning.



We have designed our Third Form curriculum to make sure it is exciting and challenging, that it sets a good pace from the outset, that it makes the best use of our excellent teaching facilities and that it fosters skills of independent learning and a will to explore. The Third Form is the only year left to us which does not end in public exams of some kind or another and as such is a precious opportunity.

We do well in exams at King's and our pupils go on to good universities. More importantly, we provide teaching which is inspiring and goes beyond the prescribed syllabus. Our teachers are given the freedom and encouragement to make their own love for their subjects infectiously obvious in every lesson they teach.

We follow a traditional curriculum, strong on rigour and the difficult subjects.

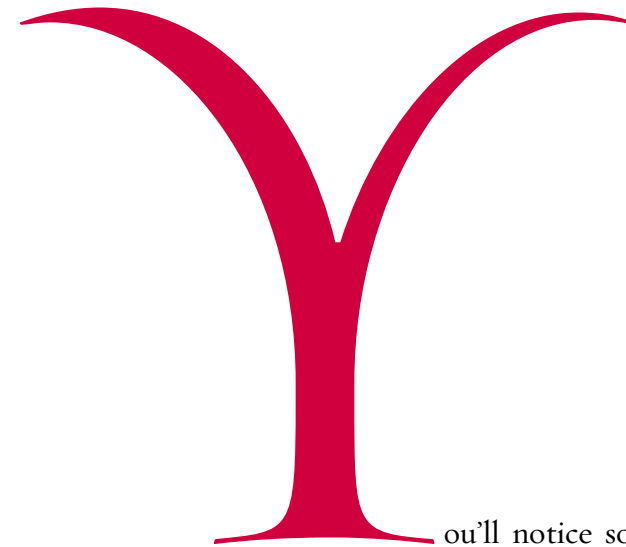
At GCSE pupils take a core of Maths, English, Religious Studies and three sciences to which they add a further three or four subjects of their own choice, usually including at least one modern foreign language. The depth, rigour and flexibility of A levels suits our Sixth Formers well. We can tailor courses to match abilities and interests: the more ambitious Sixth Formers take up to five

A levels, but most do three or four. Sixth Formers are able to enter for the AQA BAC qualification which formally recognises their breadth of achievement. We offer breadth as well as depth—the Sixth Form experience is a rich and varied one.

We encourage children to think for themselves, to work independently, to express themselves clearly and effectively and to develop habits of scholarship which will serve them well in future. Above all we encourage pupils to enjoy their studies, to read, to ask those awkward questions and to explore. There is nothing I enjoy more as a teacher than being put on the spot. After a long explanation of the relative densities of different gases I was once asked by a young boy in my class, 'Sir, why doesn't a hydrogen bomb float?' Why, indeed? 🌸



Home from Home



ou'll notice something as soon as you arrive at King's: people smile. They look happy and are pleased to see you. Our pupils are fiercely loyal and love being here. There is an air of busy industry, but also a palpable sense of happiness. Our strong boarding ethos plays a part in this. We are a community; this is a home away from home.

Good pastoral care has long been a hallmark of King's. There is a clear and wide-ranging net of support which starts with the housemaster or housemistress and runs through the house tutors, matrons, house prefects to the Chaplain, medical centre sisters and myriad teachers and friends. There is a strong instinct for care in the school and that comes from the pupils as much as it does from the teaching staff. Pupils don't stand for the kind of behaviour that makes others unhappy and they are a key contributor to the civilized atmosphere at King's.



Many of our parents say the main reason for choosing King's is its pastoral ethos. The house system is the foundation of that care. Our seven boarding houses are about 60 or 70 strong. Each has pupils from all five year groups. We encourage our senior pupils to develop their skills as leaders within their houses and there is a healthy tradition of co-operation and friendship across the year groups. There is nothing more reassuring than the charismatic captain of the rugby team explaining to a homesick junior that he felt the same when he started. New pupils are made to feel welcome and are soon absorbed into the life of their houses, where they feel valued and supported. A visiting ISI inspector remarked favourably on the time devoted to pastoral care by staff and the fact that teachers 'clearly know the pupils well'.

A typical pupil might be a boarder with parents living about an hour away. They will see their parents often; they come to watch sport, a play, a concert, and pupils can go home on some weekends. It is a special feature of the school that day and boarding pupils are well integrated into the houses, to the benefit of both. The fun of being at school means that weekend activities and the opportunity to be amongst friends brings day pupils into school, while the chance to visit the family of a day pupil who lives locally is a bonus for a boarder. On a weekday we are not rushing to complete everything by early afternoon. School goes on to 6:00 p.m. each day and many day pupils stay on for supper,

prep and evening activities. All day pupils can stay over at least one night per week (a free night is part of the day fee package) and many do. We have time to get a lot done properly, at a pace which is humane. Amongst all the very hard work there is time to chat, to relax, to catch up on reading, to practise, to go into town, to make endless rounds of toast.

As pupils move up the school the freedom and sense of responsibility grow accordingly. A Sixth Former will be challenged to think independently, to push themselves harder than they thought possible and to try new activities. They are relieved to find that they are not expected to conform to any type, but are very much valued for who they are. They appreciate the distinction that is made between the formal, working part of the day and the more relaxed atmosphere of the afternoon when a Sixth Former is able to go into town after lessons and other commitments.

The school is small enough to allow us to retain our family atmosphere and to keep an eye out for all. We appoint teachers who love their subjects, but who equally feel the calling to protect and support teenagers in some of their most challenging and exciting years.

King's offers a community which remains true to the Christian ethos of looking after each other and friendships and memories formed here will last forever. 🌸



The Spiritual Life

King's, along with its associated prep school King's Hall, is a member of the Woodard Corporation of schools—one of thirty or so across the country which share the same foundation and a similar ethos. The schools were established by the Reverend Nathaniel Woodard, a visionary Victorian cleric. We are, then, a Christian foundation and the Chapel and Chaplain are central to the life of the school. Woodard schools value and nurture the spiritual. We are strong in those subjects which speak to the soul—art and drama and music. We have whole-school services twice a week, including a Eucharist on Wednesday. All pupils take Religious Studies in the Third and Fourth Forms and we offer The Philosophy of Religion and Ethics as a challenging A level option.

While Christian values lie at the heart of what we do, we welcome pupils of all faiths to the King's community. The Chapel means different things to different pupils. To some it is a place of spiritual nourishment, to others a place of quiet contemplation. Some see it for the outstanding concert venue it is (a key part of the Taunton classical music scene) and love playing or singing in its lavish acoustical embrace. It is the place where we mark our successes and celebrate our milestones. Our community is baptised, confirmed and married in the Chapel; and sometimes it mourns a loss as well. However they see it, the Chapel enriches the lives of all our pupils. 🌸



Sport for All

I saw a lovely sight a while ago. Our UI5B rugby team hadn't won many matches that year, and this encounter was a scrappy nail-biter, with our boys clinging to a slender lead in the dying moments and then, at the final whistle, exploding in joy. There was much leaping about and whooping and yelling and backslapping. And that was just the parents. In assembly on Monday I dwelt more on the ebb and flow of this one match than on the overwhelming victory of our 1st xv. It seemed to embody, for me, what school sport is all about.

Why does King's College spend so much money, energy and (that most precious of commodities) time, running such an extensive programme of sport? Here are some very good reasons.

Sport at school, if done properly, introduces children to a lifetime of sporting involvement and enthusiasm. We are proud of the fact that so many of our pupils keep playing sport long after they have left us.



Research has confirmed the correlation between sporting involvement and improved academic results. One of the great things about sport at King's is that most of the coaching is done by teachers and this means that teachers and pupils see each other in a different and sometimes surprising light.

Sport engenders companionship. There is nothing like going through the ordeals, disappointments and triumphs of a team sport together to cement long-lasting friendships.

Sport is healthy: anything that gets children away from their computers and running around in the fresh air must be good.

At King's we are keen to promote the civilizing effects of playing sport: modesty in victory, graciousness in defeat, a stoic acceptance of occasional bad luck, hosting a visiting team and looking after them well, calling close line decisions honestly, lending a spare player to the opposition to make a game of it, the three cheers and shaking hands. This is all good stuff and we never underestimate its importance here. The ability to remain polite and generous under trying circumstances is a precious skill worth learning.

Above all, sport is fun, and at King's we ensure that as many pupils as possible are able to enjoy it. Everybody, no matter what their talents, is catered for and we offer an extraordinary range of sporting options. When assessing the quality of sport in a school it is the health and success of the third team as much as the first that you should be looking at. There is nothing quite like an away match on a Saturday afternoon: the long minibus ride, the hard game, the feast of sausages and beans, the war stories on the way back—each gaining in colour as it is re-told.

King's College enjoys a national reputation in sport. Many of our pupils play for their counties, some for their country. We are, indeed, a centre of sporting excellence in the south west. Amongst all this success, though, there remains an uncomplicated, old-fashioned, honest joy in playing which I find hugely encouraging. You really should have seen the delight in the eyes of those U15B rugby players. 🌸

King's offers: *Aerobics, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Cross-Country, Dance, Fencing, Fitness, Football, Golf, Hockey, Kayaking, Netball, Orienteering, Riding, Rounders, Rugby, Shooting, Spinning, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball, Water-Polo, Yoga.*



Creativity

Joy, exuberance, confidence, passion—I have come to realize that this is how King’s goes about its business when it comes to the arts. We set a very high standard, but there is also an emphasis on wide involvement—everybody is encouraged to get stuck in. The award-winning choir numbers over fifty members. We have jazz bands and orchestras, chamber choirs and more rock groups than you could shake a drumstick at. We have musicals and curriculum drama and pupil-led plays; outdoor productions and even, recently, Shakespeare performed in a pod of the London Eye. We have a well-equipped recording studio and the teaching expertise to match—several pupils have gone on to careers in the music technology industry. All are encouraged to perform at every opportunity and each term boasts a full programme of plays and concerts.



The Art Department promotes an adventurous approach and pupils' art finds its way into every corner of the school: a large straw ox in the reception area, paper angels hanging from the Chapel ceiling. To provide a fresh perspective, professional artists regularly visit the school to work with and inspire our pupils.

If you want to see passion and dedication and fun you should visit the Design Technology Department. It has regularly been named *The Good School Guide's* top A level centre in the country and King's pupils regularly win the prestigious Arkwright Scholarship. It is a place of quiet, inspirational industry, where pupils produce wonderful project pieces. In one corner of the spotless workshop lie the remains of an aged Ford Escort—a car fated to undergo an endless cycle of dismantling and construction at the eager hands of the car mechanics' club. 🌸



The Whole Person

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ome of the most important things we learn at school have nothing to do with the lessons or the formal curriculum at all. What makes the King's experience so special is that alongside outstanding teaching we also provide a huge range of extra-curricular activities and a good deal of the school week is given over to sport, drama, music, outdoor pursuits, CCF, community work and clubs ranging from cookery to shooting to debating. We have a rich tradition of outdoor pursuits, with 40 or 50 Sixth Formers completing Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards annually, and three teams tackling the Ten Tors challenge every year. We have an enthusiastic CCF (voluntary but immensely popular), with annual camps on Exmoor, Dartmoor, the Lake District and sometimes overseas as well.

We try to squeeze in as many drama productions as possible, including everything from brilliant whole-school musical



blockbusters to pupil-led productions which inevitably carry that exciting whiff of uncertainty.

It is not uncommon to see a first team rugby player dash from scrummage practice to orchestra rehearsal (hopefully with a quick shower in between) or the lead singer in the musical spending her Sunday training for her Duke of Edinburgh Gold. Busy pupils are successful and happy pupils and we expect everybody to get stuck in from the start and to make the most of the opportunities on offer. They learn valuable skills of time management; they often discover new enthusiasms and talents. Indifference is not an option.

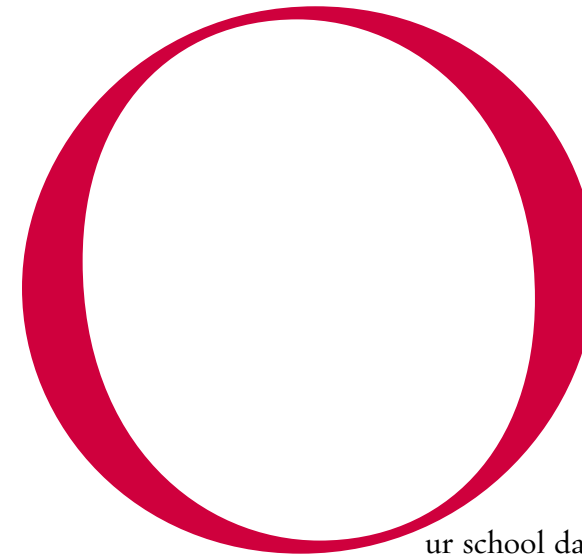
Leading the School. The Sixth Form experience at King's is a special one and forms an excellent bridge between school and university. Not surprisingly, dozens of new young men and women join us at this stage. We expect Sixth Formers to look smart (suits during the day), to work hard and to show a genuine interest in the subjects they have chosen. We offer a range of traditional, academic, rigorous A levels, taught in small classes by subject experts. Our Scholars' society meets regularly to debate and to discuss. A programme of visiting speakers enriches the classroom learning, and trips and tours (both academic and sporting) do much to expand horizons. Sixth Formers choose their own tutors, who monitor progress and advise on work habits, reading and university choices, supported by two Senior Tutors and an outstanding Careers Department. With independence comes responsibility. Sixth Formers are an integral part of the larger school and have plenty of opportunities to develop their skills as leaders: as prefects, as captains, as club secretaries, as chairmen, NCOs and representatives. We expect Sixth Formers, too, to get stuck in and make the most of all that the school has to offer; also, to show imagination and initiative in suggesting new ideas.

I will always support the odd requests for new activities: you want a croquet club, a barbershop quartet, a rock band, to produce *Waiting for Godot* in a fish pond? We'll see what we can do to help...

Our Sixth Formers lead a very active social life as well. The Sixth Form bar, open every Saturday night, is a great place to catch up with the events of the day, to describe that winning goal in ever-growing detail, or to make plans for the next day's outings. We have regular formal dinners for our senior pupils, usually in the splendid setting of our Dining Hall. The art of tying a bow tie has been revived! At the other end of the entertainment spectrum, regular school discos, often planned and run by senior pupils, are a hugely popular way of raising money for charities. The Sixth Form experience ends with a grand Leavers' Ball on the final day of the Summer Term; eagerly anticipated, great fun and a poignant mixture of celebration and sadness.

Our leavers move on to good universities and are successful there and beyond. They keep in touch with us (via our active alumnus club and Development Office) and with each other. They carry with them fond memories which stay with them forever. 🌸

Warm Memories



ur school days should be happy and memorable ones. The best memories are all tales of adventure, camaraderie, danger, good times, success and pure fun.

My father often talks of his days at school in Grahamstown. He tells of annual trips into the forest to make toffee over open fires; of stringing up a web of wires from one boarding house to the next and then spending illicit nights tuned into crystal radio sets; of keeping a baby owl hidden from the authorities in the trunk room until it could be taken home to the farm. My own memories are of marble and yo-yo season and choir trips by steam train to remote Free State hamlets. Our own alumni at King's often mention the glider: a perilous, single-seater contraption which was wheeled out on CCF afternoons and launched with rubber bands, the pilot hoping desperately to gain sufficient height to clear the hedge at the end of the 1st XV pitch. I have heard tales



of the entire squash team squeezing into a master's aged MG for an away match at Millfield.

I want the men and women who leave my school to remember it fondly. I worry that the modern management of our schools overlooks the value of incident and excitement in its sometimes rather sanitizing zeal. There is nothing as conservative as a schoolchild and traditions mean much to our pupils. Those quirky little rituals that are peculiar to our school are memory gold dust: esoteric and local and steeped in folklore—and priceless.

And then there's the eccentric, brilliant, challenging, teacher. The one who blows up laboratories. The one who really inspires, who is in love with the business of learning and is not afraid to show it. The teacher who is occasionally led away from the restriction of the syllabus and into the fertile territory of black holes and atom bombs. You remember them. I remember them. In the brave new world of appraisals and targets we are determined to keep the sheer love of learning and discovering burning brightly. 🌸







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