

BRUERN ABBEY MISSION STATEMENT

Bruern Abbey School is unique in the market place because it is the only school in the country that caters exclusively for children diagnosed with learning difficulties and prepares them for Common Entrance to mainstream public Schools; learning difficulties should not preclude academic success. ISI has stated that 'pupils are successfully educated in a secure and nurturing environment where they are given every possible help and encouragement to overcome the challenges presented by their specific learning difficulties'. Bruern provides a tailored education in beautiful surroundings and maintains high expectations for the academic future. We aim to enhance boys' self-esteem, in the firm belief that confidence is the key to academic success. A recent Crested report stated that 'Bruern Abbey is a unique school with its own special way of delivering an all-round education for its pupils. It successfully prepares boys for the Common Entrance Examination whilst at the same time developing each boy into a happy and confident individual'.

In most other respects, Bruern models itself on traditional preparatory schools, with breadth to the curriculum, including French to Common Entrance, full and varied sports, activities and cultural programmes, and the adherence to good manners, self-discipline and common courtesy. We encourage boys to share their aspirations and their anxieties. Ofsted has stated that 'the school has an incredibly warm and compassionate approach to all the boys' and also that 'pastoral care is exceptional-very understanding and caring staff'.

At Bruern we place great emphasis on experiencing all that prep school life has to offer; specialist teaching should not mean missing out on all the fun. We also make every effort, despite our somewhat diminutive size, to give the boys an action-packed time – be it musical, theatrical, cultural or sporting.

Bruern differs from traditional preparatory schools in many ways which allow our boys to succeed at Common Entrance and be ready for life beyond. These are regarded as the 'pillars' upon which the School's ethos and reputation, founded by the Principal in 1989, still stand, not to be compromised under any circumstances, and ingrained within the mission statement. They are not necessarily in any order of priority, but are:

- A clear focus on literacy and numeracy, with nine periods each of English and Mathematics a week. We have approximately twice as many English and Maths lessons as standard prep schools for all our Junior School boys, and there are two teachers in each class for these key subjects;
- small classes (eleven pupils or fewer) which allows boys more individual attention in class;
- limited withdrawal for remedial support, as boys needs are met in class;
- the extensive use of IT as a tool with which to deliver the curriculum;
- the use of laptops in lessons. For those who have difficulty in expressing themselves as swiftly or as coherently on paper as they do in speech, this is an absolute godsend;
- the teaching of reading as a distinct curriculum subject and
- the importance attached to good food and to finding the time for children within their busy schedule to eat, talk, play and relax together without the distraction of television or electronic games.

The School's marketing initiatives continue to be more subliminal than aggressive, relying on word-of-mouth and recommendations from Educational Psychologists, many of whom are London-based, and from the Heads of Pre-Preparatory Departments and Preparatory Schools.

John Floyd