



The Priory School



# Welcome

## From the Principal

I am delighted that you have chosen to look at The Priory School and welcome you to the community, through this prospectus. We hope it will provide a flavour of life here, through our values and our purpose.



Not only do we pursue the vital dimension of achieving the best results for all our young people, regardless of their starting point, but we also believe strongly that education is about more than academic results. We want our students to pursue and share their own interests and passions as well as understand the difference between right and wrong.

Our purpose is therefore to work for our students so that they become selfless, self-assured and successful. In turn this is demonstrated in their ambition, independence and resilience. The close working relationships between staff and students, as well as the mutual support the students provide for each other enable this purpose to be fulfilled.

With strong academic results and very good behaviour as our starting point, we expect our students to work hard, be interesting people to be good, kind, generous people, who make the right choices in life and who learn from their mistakes.

An outstanding Ofsted inspection in 2013 has fuelled our desire to improve even further; the message we share is that we will not allow the successes of the past to be the standards we hold in the future. We are therefore restless for improvement in all areas of school life.

I am sure you will get a strong understanding of our school through these pages, but there can be no better way of experiencing it than being here. Whilst external agencies judge outcomes by what can be measured, we believe it is better to judge a school by the immeasurable. Our boys and girls are the outcome of the school, and by meeting them, you will discover the breadth and depth that is vital to an excellent education.

I look forward, very much, to welcoming you here.

**M J Barratt**  
Principal



*“The Priory School has been exemplary and we feel the quality of education, culture, discipline and general outlook of the school have helped our child develop in a very positive way.”*



# Excellence and enjoyment in the classroom

## To enable students to enjoy their learning

At the heart of our school ethos is a determination that all of our students not only succeed but develop a real thirst for, and love of, learning. Our teachers focus on the individual child, ensuring they are supported, guided and enthused. As a community we are continually striving to maintain our outstanding levels of teaching to ensure students are sufficiently challenged and stretched as well as supported, when needed.

*“It was a privilege to watch the wonderful performances at PRO. All the students were so full of confidence, allowing their many and varied talents to shine though.”*



*“The students are a credit to your school, they performed with such enthusiasm, professionalism and talent. We thoroughly enjoyed watching the variety of acts.”*



We offer a wide range of subjects at both key stage 3 and 4 that enable all pupils to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, aimed at producing self-assured, resilient individuals, well prepared for the next stage in their academic career.

At key stage 3 students are mainly taught in a mixed ability setting, apart from Maths and Languages. Our children benefit from highly experienced, subject specialists who convey an energetic passion and understanding of their area which helps each student to achieve their potential in preparation for their GCSE studies. The average number of students within a key stage 3 teaching group is 29, with a smaller number (approximately 20) in practical subjects such as Design Technology.

The Priory School prides itself on offering a pathway to suit all at key stage 4 with a combination of compulsory and optional subjects, allowing them to develop a greater insight into their areas of interest. All apart from a very small number of students will follow an Ebacc combination of subjects when they chose their options in Year 9, ensuring they are well prepared for post 16 studies.

We also offer a more supported route for certain students, where the full number and range of GCSE subjects are not the best option for the individual. This may include one less GCSE option choice, with extra support from our Learning Support department around key skills.



# Beyond the Classroom

In the same way that the classroom experience is an essential part of school life, then equally so is life beyond the classroom. The extra-curricular and curriculum enrichment programme at the school is impressive. Whether it be in the school musical, the House relay team, contributing to our many and varied charity events, one of the school music concerts (singing, playing, acting, percussive miming) the school debating club, the photography club, in the Pro show as a dancer, singer, musician, or in the House rounders team, the school choir, the House choir or the House dance team, the opportunities for involvement are almost endless.

Life beyond the classroom provides opportunities that work to our purpose:-

- Developing the team spirit that is strong at both House and school level. This in turn helps to engender a strong sense of belonging and loyalty; in turn this develops self-belief and undoubtedly gives an individual confidence to contribute.
- Giving an opportunity for those who have a skill or ability to share this with others – by setting an example and being a role-model for others, this inspires others.
- Providing an opportunity for discovery. When footballers learn to dance and violin players get involved in the rounders team, it confirms through example that diversity is interesting and that by coming out of a comfort zone makes an individual interesting

There is a very close relationship between those who are busy and successful (in any form) outside the classroom and those who enjoy and achieve a great deal in their studies. This is because they experience team work, the need to prepare, success and enjoyment and it develops further organisation skills and self-belief.

# Student Welfare

## Even before their first day, we aim to support and care...

Our staff understand the challenge of changing from primary to secondary school, for both students and parents/carers. We have a comprehensive transition programme to help everyone settle quickly.

Staff and students meet with every child and our staff speak to the primary school teachers, which is followed by a full induction day at our school in July – most of the Year 6 pupils want to begin with us the very next day! Many students will be in the same House as their older siblings, but this is not always the case as we aim to put together diverse and well-balanced groups. Much care is taken in placing students in Houses to ensure everyone has the best experience. Parents/Carers are invited to an Induction Evening in July where they meet key staff and hear from the Head Boy and Head Girl about life at the school. There is a second meeting in September for parents/carers, once the new students have started, to find out a little more about the House teams and how the first few days have passed.

We also have our team of buddy mentors selected to play a key role in the first few days and weeks for our new students. They form immediate bonds of friendship with our Year 7 students and provide support and guidance that is much valued by the new students. We also have a team building trip which gives an opportunity for friendships to be made outside of the classroom.

*“Thank you for a brilliant Open Morning at The Priory School. We were extremely impressed with how articulate and confident the students were. The sense of pride the students felt in belonging to the school was obvious throughout.”*





## ...in every moment in school, through the House System...

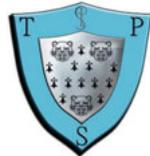
An essential pillar of the approach we take to student welfare is the House system. Students are assigned a House from the very start, which becomes a community that they come to regard as their family. Led by a Head of House, and supported by Form Tutors, the Houses provide support, care and guidance to our students. The team spirit that builds (which can sometimes be fierce!) creates a strong sense of loyalty and belonging. Either through the team of students in Year 11 that oversee the House, or through contributions made by younger students, the House system enables students to contribute and to support each other, in turn leading to them growing in confidence – to give to others, to make the right choices, and to do so with confidence.



Acton



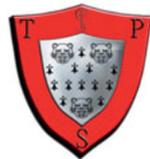
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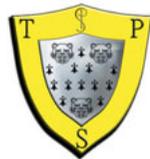
Clive



Darwin



Housman



Webb

This covers a wide range of needs, from those students who may require some temporary support to those who have long term needs. With a dedicated team of staff who advise and support the teachers in lessons we enable students to access our curriculum. There are separate Learning Support rooms available for students that may need smaller group work or even individual support.

## ...and our Student Support...

Students and families can have times in their lives when they need additional support and help. In school we have a dedicated Student Support Officer and Learning Mentor who are full time members of staff, working exclusively with students and families who need support. We also have access to a team of trained counsellors for students that need this support.



*"I wanted to say a big thank you for the exceptional support the teachers and the school have given my child. The support and encouragement teachers gave was over and beyond their normal call of duty."*





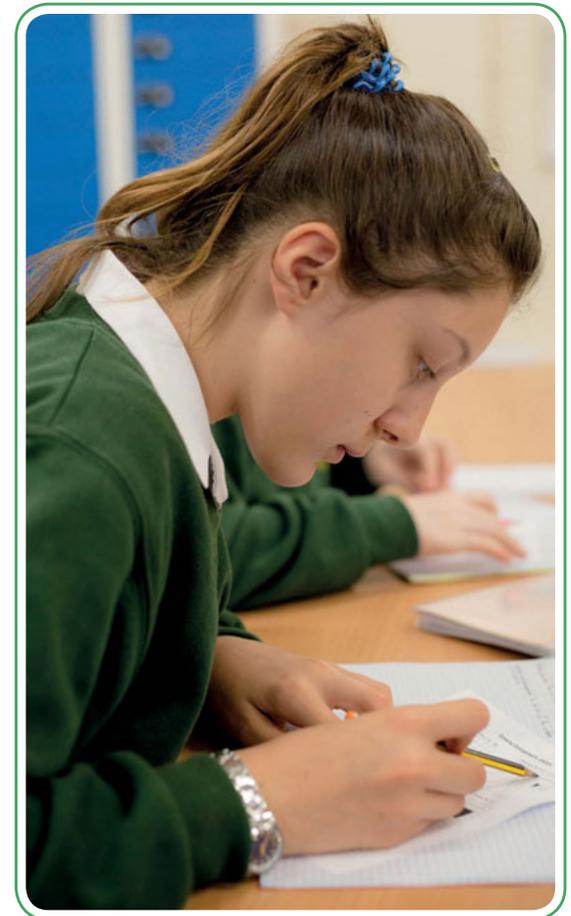
# Beyond the school

## ...until the final day arrives

School is about learning, making friends, having fun, then moving on. As our students progress through school, their eyes move towards the next stages of their education, their training or employment. Developing those characteristics of resilience and independence is designed to help them stand on their own two feet, either whilst they are here, or very soon after they leave. In order to facilitate the next stage, we have developed very good relationships with the main providers where our students continue to thrive. Whether it is studying A levels, engaging in vocational qualifications, enjoying an apprenticeship, or working, our Careers advice and the preparation we provide for our students enables them to access routes that they want to follow.

Results day is a bitter-sweet occasion for our students; they are saddened by the fact that it is their last day, but excited about the prospects for the future. But even that is not the end of it – frequently our students return to our community either to secure some work experience, to work as an Intern or to train as a teacher, or they even return as a teacher in order to enjoy life from the other side! Yet most likely is that they just come back to say hello and to meet up with old friends (and by that we mean the teachers that helped them to succeed).

*“We cannot speak highly enough of how our child has developed by attending The Priory School. I can without doubt state this is down to the environment which the school has created which has helped our child become a really rounded young person.”*



*“Our daughter has achieved more than we ever imagined and that is because of the care and dedication of the fantastic staff at The Priory School.”*



# The Priory School

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