





The College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor was founded in 1440 by Henry VI for the worship of God and for the education of young men to the service of the church and state. Apart from his 70 King's Scholars, who would go on from Eton to King's College, Cambridge, he also made provision for other boys from any part of his realm to come and be taught at Eton, paying for their own maintenance.

In the Founder's time, or shortly afterwards, most of the ancient buildings of Eton were completed, including the Chapel, the Cloisters, Lower School, College Hall and part of College. Building and rebuilding have continued ever since.



ETON
COLLEGE







Over the centuries, styles of teaching, the subjects taught and the expectations of society have changed, but the essence of school life has remained as it was described in the mid-nineteenth century by an Eton Master, William Johnson.

He wrote that at Eton you may acquire a certain amount of knowledge, much of which may be forgotten, although the shadow of lost knowledge at least protects you from many illusions. More important than knowledge, however, is learning the arts and habits which will last for a lifetime.

Our primary aim is to encourage each Etonian to be a self-aware, enquiring, tolerant, positive young man, a well-rounded character with an independent mind, an individual who respects the differentness of others. By the time he leaves the school, we want each boy to have that true sense of self-worth which will enable him to stand up for himself and for a purpose greater than himself, and, in doing so, to be of value to society.

In the pages that follow, we offer a glimpse of our modern interpretation of perennial Eton themes.

Tony Little
Head Master

LEARNING TO LEARN

A zest for knowledge and an enquiring mind are great attributes for a purposeful adult life. The ethos of the Eton schoolroom is to encourage boys to stretch the boundaries of their individual ability. A strong emphasis is placed on discussion, research and the use of resources to stimulate independent thinking.

From the very beginning, each boy has his own study bedroom; there are no shared rooms. Boys thus have their own private space and are encouraged to organise themselves and to develop self-discipline in meeting tasks and deadlines. Under the watchful eye of his House Master and with the guidance of his personal Tutor, a boy develops the learning habits which will be the foundation of his Eton career. For the first year he will follow a wide-ranging curriculum before beginning to make choices of subject as he progresses through the school.

One of the virtues of being in a large school is the extensive range of subjects from which a boy may choose in his later years (11 modern and classical languages for example), and the wide permutations of subjects which can make up a boy's personal programme.



As a Specialist (sixth former), the emphasis is on academic engagement and we encourage boys to develop their chosen interests. As they become Specialists boys choose their personal Tutor. This relationship presents further opportunities to explore and develop particular academic and cultural themes and is often a great source of intellectual stimulation.



The aim of our teaching and our expectation goes some way beyond public examination courses. Boys with academic ambition are strongly encouraged to compete for the many academic subject prizes, the papers for which are set by university dons and marked by them to university standard. A broad Options programme enables boys to study subjects ranging from Wagner to Cookery, from Journalism to Agricultural Mechanics.



Boys have an exceptional range of libraries, museums and other resources upon which to draw, including a remarkable collection of rare books and manuscripts from the time of the foundation to the present day. Etonians live and work in a rich cultural environment.





MAKING THE MOST OF TALENT

Academic study is important and we expect all our boys to achieve high standards, but our view of education celebrates the creative, physical and spiritual as much as the intellectual.

From their first year boys are given the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities and games, and their House Masters and Tutors help them to develop individual programmes.

As they progress through the school, it is striking to see boys thrive in their particular enthusiasms, as sportsmen, musicians or army cadets, certainly, but also as film makers or magicians, by creating a new club or society or through a real commitment to community service. No one activity dominates. Boys find achievement and recognition in a host of different ways. Pursuing an enthusiasm offers great satisfaction in itself, but by pushing for the highest standards boys find a fulfilment which can readily translate into other areas of school life.

There are personal successes to be gained at many levels of experience. Some boys will draw as much satisfaction from participation in House sport, for example, as others do in elite school teams.

Leading actors may take the limelight, but they depend on the work of dedicated and skillful backstage technicians. For those initially less confident as actors or musicians, the collective experience of a House Play or House Concert can be immensely rewarding.



A quietly thoughtful boy can become a leader of opinion in his own way through school journalism, perhaps, or through the range of artistic opportunities on offer. Eton's size and scope enables boys to find kindred spirits among their peers, and with adult encouragement and guidance in the development of their interests and talents, many put together a richly contrasting portfolio of individual achievement.

We support our boys by continuing to provide the finest facilities we can. We have built a national standard athletics stadium in partnership with local clubs, and an international standard rowing lake at Dorney, venue for the Olympics in 2012. New projects include a major re-structuring of the Art and Design facilities, the building of new departments for Divinity, Modern Languages, Economics and Politics, and the creation of a centre for excellence in tennis.

BECOMING A WHOLE PERSON

Eton offers a distinctive balance: small Houses, which give boys a strong pastoral base, within a large, varied, challenging school.

Eton is a full boarding school, with no day or weekly students. Typically there are 50 boys in a boarding House, ten in each year group.

A boy new to the school will come to know the people in his House community well – especially his House Master, who is principally responsible for him, his Dame, who looks after his domestic well-being, and House Deputies. Both House Master and Dame offer full residential support and encouragement, helping boys through any periods of uncertainty or difficulty, but without intrusion. It is a delicate and important balance: boys are encouraged to talk about problems with those who can help, but also are encouraged to find their own solutions. It is a feature of Eton life that boys are given the space and freedom to develop themselves.



The needs of the whole community must also be taken into account, as well as those of the individual. At heart, teenagers like clearly drawn parameters and these are continually reviewed in discussion with Masters and with boys through meetings with prefects and representative year group forums. In particular, we want to encourage boys to exercise that self-discipline which will be invaluable to them in later

life. Within the House, senior boys are expected to exercise supportive leadership and to be welcoming and helpful advisers to younger boys.

Boys are encouraged to take on a leadership role at some stage, through the House, through the games programme, as Secretary of a society – there are many possibilities. Boys are encouraged to discuss social and health issues regularly in small tutorial groups, and to engage in a healthy physical programme, whatever their sporting ability. Through their academic and pastoral relationships, boys learn to talk comfortably and openly with adults.



Pastoral support also comes from our chaplaincy team, comprising Anglicans and a Roman Catholic chaplain, who are active in visiting Houses and readily available to individual boys. They also conduct the formal worship which is central



to the life of our community. Eton is an Anglican school in the broad Christian tradition which welcomes boys of other faiths; Jewish, Muslim and Hindu Tutors, for example, minister to their own groups. We expect boys of all faiths and none to attend weekday services and assemblies together, in the belief that a corporate gathering emphasises the significance of spiritual life within the community. The aesthetic and reflective impact

of chapel can be as powerful as the religious experience. We want our boys to listen to the 'still small voice' within them and to have the openness to allow their spiritual life to grow.





CONNECTING INDIVIDUALS

Most of our boys are drawn to Eton from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, and smaller numbers come from all around the world. Diversity has always been an Eton strength, and the range of nations, religions and home backgrounds represented in the school is considerable.

So, too, we look for diversity in the character and attributes of the boys who come to Eton. House Masters wish to recruit a lively and healthy mix of boys, the gregarious and the quiet, the star in a particular field and the all-rounder.

We aim to promote and protect different personalities, talents and interests and to inculcate a culture of mutual respect. Within the House communal values are stressed, yet boys also have their independence and privacy within that community.

With its own language and traditions, not least the distinctive uniform, Eton creates a world in which boys are recognised for their character and their achievement, not their background. Nurturing individuality and yet understanding and appreciating the differentness of others is a central tenet of Eton's philosophy.



The House produces a paradigm of society within which boys learn how to cope with different styles and thinking, and work together for the good of the House community. We seek a spirit of active tolerance in which listening is as important as verbal assurance. Teaching and tutoring styles also encourage involvement and discussion.

Through participation in social services in the community around us or attending meetings of societies organised by boys, by speaking at House Prayers and school assemblies, by questioning the world around them, boys' horizons are expanded. We want our boys to be purposeful citizens of the world. We want them to believe that they can make a difference.

VALUING STYLE AND SUBSTANCE – AND KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM

Self-confidence without arrogance, enthusiasm unfettered by cynicism, perseverance to withstand setbacks and active tolerance of others are qualities we admire and wish to see in our boys. Above all we wish them to develop their own sense of integrity so that they can identify right from wrong and have the courage to stand for what they believe is true.

It is said that Etonians often appear confident and relaxed when in public. That they are self-assured, articulate and polite is both expected and applauded. We want our boys to be socially adept. It is important, however, that they understand the difference between social style and substance of character. Throughout their school career boys have to reassess their positions and defend their views. The schoolroom, the House and the tutorial group are dynamic places in which the pompous and arrogant receive scant regard. Boys challenge each other in both the spoken and written word, and drive each other towards high standards.

Most boys lead very busy, active lives. Sometimes the pressure to produce work of quality in a demanding schedule is tough but that, too, is an important lesson. Teenagers have a tremendous



capacity to be productive and creative and it is our responsibility to give them a challenging, supportive environment which enables them to achieve at levels of which they might not otherwise have dreamt.

It is rare for a boy to leave before A levels and almost all boys go on to a good university, whether in the United Kingdom or abroad. Boys' career choices take many along traditional paths to the city,



the law, medicine, the army and public service, but also these days in greater numbers to the media, the creative arts and entrepreneurial adventure.

If ever the Old Etonian stereotype existed in reality, it is hard to find him now. Boys leaving Eton know they have to make their way in a competitive world and achieve success through their own effort and character.





An Eton education
is not an end in itself –
it is the foundation for
a fulfilling life.

ETONIANS AT 18

The three extracts which follow are taken from House Masters' final reports to the Head Master on recent leavers.

LEAVER REPORT ONE

Far from being deflated by his near-miss in the King's Scholarship five years ago, J. quickly set about showing the Collegers a thing or two, and achieved an Oppidan Scholarship in double-quick time. His sustained academic excellence goes far beyond polished expertise in examinations, for he has a driving intellectual curiosity and is an incisive and independent-minded contributor in the schoolroom – yet his confidence always incorporates tolerance and generosity, and is never arrogant or priggish.

A young man who sets himself the highest standards in every way, he has also made his mark in our theatre with a series of well-crafted roles in House plays, and eventually directed a production which went to the Edinburgh Festival. He has been a versatile mainstay of House sport, and a wonderfully noisy and encouraging supporter of others' efforts. His infectious sense of humour has been a great asset in the House, but he also knows where the lines are and when to be serious, and his civilised sensitivity has been appreciated by his peers and by younger boys.

LEAVER REPORT TWO

After difficult early days at Eton, D. has enjoyed great success. Once his previously undiagnosed dyspraxia was identified and addressed by our Learning Centre, his frustrations fell away and his natural intelligence blossomed. He scored nine starred A grades at GCSE, and went on to win advanced placement at a top U.S. university.

Equally importantly, his personal confidence and expansiveness have grown to the point where he has become a leader of thought within the school, a sharp debater and a mature journalist who is not afraid to take an unfashionable line. His early struggles also extended to the sports field, but this apparently unathletic young man found his niche and a talent to be developed in fencing; for good measure he also finished as the passionate and proud captain of the House second football team which swept all before it.

LEAVER REPORT THREE

N. has had a number of brushes with authority along the way, but as his House Master I have warmed to his mature and sincere personality. He never deceives himself or others about his feelings, and he allies genuine creativity with a passionate yet courteously-expressed sense of justice.

Whether in sport, on the stage or in discussion of literature or philosophy, he has been a natural leader who cares deeply about any commitment he takes on and expects the same from those around him. His enquiring mind and intellectual passion will surely bring him a place at a top university, where he will also shine as an actor with a strong and engaging stage presence, and as a robust sportsman who always wants to win but always respects his opponent.





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