

# MY SCHOOL REPORT

Designer, entrepreneur and inventor *Sebastian Conran* is chairman of design group Conran & Partners



Bryanston School

**What school did you go to and when?** I went to Bryanston School in Dorset from 1970 to 1974.

**Were you a boarder or day pupil?** As we had a full-time working single mother, boarding at Bryanston was a very good option for me and my brother, Jasper. Also, being able to spend my formative years in the English countryside rather than London was, in hindsight, a real bonus.

**What A-levels did you choose?** I was really quite dyslexic (like most of us Conrans), so O-levels were difficult as humanities meant having good handwriting, spelling and grammar. For A-levels, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry felt much easier as there was more of an emphasis on creative rationality rather than spelling. Ironically, I then went to art school to study Industrial Design Engineering at Central St Martins.

**What were your passions at school?** As I wanted to be an inventor when I grew up, making things in the metal workshop and all things scientific was where my heart was. Having very poor eyesight and thick glasses, it was wonderful being able to do pioneering – which then involved helping to manage the school grounds, as well as getting involved in the construction of school buildings, including the Greek Theatre and the old music school – rather than ball-based sports. That said, I did enjoy long-distance running and rowing (although I wasn't good at either).

**Did you have a memorable teacher?** My chemistry teacher, Douglas Cox; my tutor, Kenneth Greenwood, who was very interesting

to talk to; as well as my housemaster, John Griffin – who was strict but fair. I particularly enjoyed Mr Cox as he got me into photography and he made chemistry very interesting and understandable – I also played Tom Lehrer's *The Elements* once at the end of term.



Sebastian Conran

**What do you remember about school food?** The food at Bryanston was good, but the standard is even higher today. The pupils can join the Food Committee and contribute ideas on what they'd like to see on the menu. There's also a lively café with a team of baristas making the coffee, who also double as mentors to the pupils.

**Can you recall the smell (and if so what is that)?** Mainly disinfectant.

**Any regrets?** None that I can think of – apart from being caught being mischievous occasionally! Bryanston was ideal for me and there was a lot to do if you weren't sporty. It is a pity that the education system did not understand neurodiversity in those days, but Bryanston seemed to get the creative mindset better than most.

**Have you been back since?** As a parent, godparent and long-term governor at Bryanston I must have been back 30-40 times. I really appreciated the number of times that both my parents visited – one of the few benefits of being a child of divorced parents is that they would both visit twice a term!

**If there was one perfect**

**day at school you could relive what would it be?**

The day after finishing O-levels when the pressure was off. My last day at Bryanston was my saddest ■

## QUICK FIRE ROUND

**MATHS OR ENGLISH?** Maths. **HOCKEY OR TENNIS?** Pioneering or rowing. **UNIFORM OR MUFTI?** Stylish uniform is much better as it is non-competitive and you don't think of what you need to wear every day. Also at Bryanston, when I was there, shorts were an option that the cool crowd used to go for (either ludicrously tight or baggy). **PIANO OR GUITAR?** Trumpet. **HEAD BOY OR CHEEKY REBEL?** Rock'n' roll.

PHOTOS: SEBASTIAN CONRAN