

# THE *path to* SUCCESS

**RICHARD JONES**, Acting Head of Bryanston School in Dorset, says small class sizes, a focus on the individual and the ability to instil self-belief and confidence are just a few of the reasons to consider an independent school for your child

**W**henever I'm asked what's the single biggest advantage of an independent school education, I always reply, 'individual attention.'

It's so important that it's the cornerstone of our method at Bryanston. I'll come back to that in a moment, but first, let's consider the hard facts.

### Small class sizes

Any teacher will tell you, and every study shows, that children do better in small classes. Anyone reading this who had to manage home schooling during lockdown will know how demanding it is to teach two or three children. Add a zero to the number, and you've got perhaps 30 children in a class. That's not unusual in state schools. Each child therefore gets two minutes per hour – except they don't, because the least able or most disruptive soak up the time, while the ones who are motivated and keen are often left to get on with it, with little attention from the teacher.

It's not quite that simple, though, because what happens in smaller

Independent-school pupils benefit from a number of academic and extracurricular advantages, from one-to-one tutoring to exceptional creative and sporting facilities



Classes is that the whole group can be focused together – very hard to achieve with 30 children, far easier with 10 or 15. Most importantly, the teacher can get to know the individual children far better, and tailor their approach to suit them. They'll also spot opportunities to stretch children further and find more creative ways to engage their interest. Small classes are a starting point, but what then makes the biggest difference is our commitment to giving each child one-to-one attention on a regular basis.

**A bespoke education**

At Bryanston, every child is assigned a one-to-one tutor, and stays with him or her throughout their time here. That's a level of individual attention you won't find everywhere, but we believe it's essential. We discover what each child is like, what they can do, what they want to do, and we help them achieve it.

We talk about the individual spirit, and we're careful to make it clear that this isn't individualism – attention only or primarily to oneself – but the development of each child's individual personality as part of a wider community.

Thorold Coade, Headmaster of Bryanston from (1932-1959) wrote that a community is more perfect when the individuality of its members is highly developed. On the other hand, the individuality of a person is fuller and nearer to wholeness or perfection, the more deeply they are rooted in the community.

This focus on the individual is clear in the level of pastoral care we at Bryanston, and the independent sector as a whole, are able to give our children. It goes further: we offer a wider and deeper education than the National Curriculum prescribes, because we're free to go beyond it. We can respond to the individual needs of each child.

Our children will do exceptionally well in exams, not because we slavishly follow the curriculum, but because we encourage them to use their minds creatively, and think without limits. We know that a mind set free does better in exams and in life, and we educate around the curriculum as well as through it. ▶



**ON THE PLUS SIDE**

10 benefits of an independent school education

- **Excellent teaching:** independent schools attract passionate and talented teachers who nurture and aim to get the very best out of their pupils. They instil a love of learning, an ability to think creatively and to problem solve.
- **Extracurricular activities:** there can be more than 100 clubs and activities that pupils can participate in covering anything from a wealth of sports, music clubs, CCF and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Independent schools are brilliant at finding something a child can excel at.
- **Small class sizes:** the pupil-teacher ratio is much smaller than in state schools, often with just 12 to 15 pupils in a class.
- **Campus and facilities:** from awe-inspiring school buildings to state-of-the-art science blocks, performing arts centres and the latest rugby, football, hockey and cricket pitches.
- **A bespoke curriculum:** schools can teach freely of the National Curriculum, and they can be broader in their educational provision. This means that you'll find a wider range of subjects on offer, such as modern foreign languages and Latin, politics, psychology, history or art, classics and photography.
- **The academics:** it goes without saying that independent schools achieve excellent exam results, sending their pupils on to a broad range of leading universities. Schools will also re-evaluate their curriculum to ensure that it remains broad, balanced and relevant. Independent school education fosters a culture of aspiration and encourages pupils to achieve their very best.
- **One-to-one attention:** small class sizes enable opportunity for pupil participation. You'll find a more personal one-on-one education resulting in improved performance. Guidance also includes a strong support network when times are tough.
- **Focus on the whole child:** this approach gives children the foundations they need to develop into well-rounded, healthy individuals arming them with the education and life skills needed in order for them to reach their full potential.
- **Outstanding pastoral care:** pastoral care or the wellbeing of pupils is well embedded in independent schools and plays a crucial part in supporting children's mental, social, physical and intellectual development.
- **Committed parents:** The parent body at an independent school is making a significant investment in their children's education and they therefore take a deep interest in it.

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### All the extras

Then there's life outside the classroom. Many independent schools have a huge range of outdoor activities. Sport, of course – and we can find something for almost every child, because we know how much it matters and that you need to offer more than just football, cricket and rugby. Many independent schools have facilities and coaches for almost every sport. And then there's rock climbing, horse riding, sailing, hiking – I can't begin to list everything, because it includes pretty much any outdoor activity you can imagine.

### An education fit for the 21st century

Speaking of the real world – some people imagine independent schools exist in a bubble, insulated from reality and carrying on as if it were still 1950, or 1920, or worse. Nothing could be further from the truth. These are modern schools, preparing our children for a world where many of the jobs they'll do don't yet exist. How can we live in the past when the future is so exciting? I'm not just talking about the massive investment in IT that all independent schools have been able to make. It's also about attitude – our children are imaginative, creative thinkers, confident and ready for whatever life brings.

Confident. Not arrogant, not submissive. Confidence is something we pride ourselves on helping our children develop, and you'll see it if you come and visit – charming, confident people who look you in the eye, smile, say hello and welcome you.

Small classes, breadth of education, wide acres of outdoor space, and a culture of growing self-confidence – these are what you can expect at a great independent school. Plus a lot of choice – boarding, single sex, co-ed, day, weekly boarding – there's something for every child.

All of which stems from our ability and our promise to give each child individual attention and nurture their individual spirit. ☺

### Going the extracurricular mile

A selection of some of the clubs and activities on offer at independent schools:

- **Music** • shooting • **kayaking** • leadership skills • **community service** • judo • **yoga** • sport • **dance** • drama • **silversmithing** • theatre studies • **rock climbing** • rowing • **singing** • chess • **the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme** • debating societies • **CCF (combined cadet force)** • art