



BEECHEN CLIFF



Midsomer Norton
Schools Partnership

About Beechen Cliff



Introduction

Located next to Alexandra Park on the south-side of Bath, Beechen Cliff occupies a glorious site looking over playing fields and then beyond Lyncombe Vale. The main building is an impressive and large 1932 classical-style structure which sets the tone for the character of this school.

Beechen Cliff is a state day and boarding school – for boys only in the lower school and for boys and girls in the Sixth Form. There are over 1300 students at Beechen Cliff, of which 440 are in the Sixth Form.

Our vision at Beechen Cliff is to enable pupils and students to achieve their aspirations and become well-rounded, confident and compassionate individuals, who live fulfilled lives and go on to make a positive contribution to society. The values we prioritise and plan to develop in our pupils are aspiration, compassion, independence, and respect. These Core Values are introduced to our pupils right from the start of their school journey at the beginning of Year 7.

Our approach is based on enduring values and we offer a strong academic curriculum. Although methods of teaching and expectations of society have changed, the essence of a high quality education remains unchanged. It is these qualities that are valued by parents, pupils and students alike.

Beechen Cliff's strong local and national reputation for excellence stems from a determination to provide the strongest support and guidance for academic success to be achieved and an exceptional range of wider opportunities and experiences through our extra-curricular programme. In both 2011 and 2014 Beechen Cliff was judged as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. However, following a well-publicised incident in early 2018 and subsequent inspection report that placed Beechen Cliff at the other end of the judgement spectrum, Beechen Cliff became part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP) Trust.

Since then, the school has made significant progress and has worked hard to ensure exemplary safeguarding procedures are in place. In our most recent Boarding Inspection the school was judged as 'Good'. We work closely with other schools within the Trust and the newly formed Bath Hub to ensure the best possible education both for our pupils and students and across the local area.

The school has an incredibly loyal and supportive parent body and local community. We remain heavily oversubscribed both into Year 7 and Lower Sixth reflecting its popularity in attracting applicants from across Bath and the surrounding areas.

Academic Success

The school is proud of its academic success both in terms of examination results and the destinations its students move on to. GCSE results are well above national averages (particularly for boys) and A' level outcomes are strong, particularly in Facilitating Subjects. Over 70% of our GCSE pupils go on to study A' levels in the Sixth Form with other securing places at college or apprenticeships. Over 70% of our A' level students go on to university (41% of which are Russell Group) and others secure elite apprenticeships or move into employment.

Developing Character

A zest for knowledge and an enquiring mind are important but our view of education goes beyond academic success by celebrating all aspects of success – the creative and the physical as much as the intellectual. We support each student in developing balance within his/her life, giving access to such a significant range of opportunities that all can find activities which will develop these attributes. Our students pride themselves on their participation and the sense of achievement engendered. It is understood that to achieve in life one has to be resilient, dealing with challenges and progressing as a stronger individual who can be confident that he has the capability to remain optimistic and happy.

Overall, our approach to developing our students is based on generations of successful young men and women leaving to take up successful careers and to be productive, positive members of society. The pride that many feel for having been a part of the school is seen in vast numbers of our alumni.

All of our students are nurtured to become increasingly self-confident without arrogance and to recognise the role that their increasing leadership potential can have on others. From an early point students are given the chance to lead and to learn the value of themselves. By the end of Year 10 they are applying formally for the sought-after Prefect positions and in the Sixth Form they become a part of the Senior Prefect Team in the school. This chance to lead and to act as role models for younger pupils has a very powerful effect across the school.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Beechen Cliff is a vibrant, dynamic school which places opportunity at its heart. Our pupils and students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as possible and our teachers give of their time very generously to make this happen. The activities available during the year prior to the pandemic included:

- F1 Car Racing
- Radio Controlled Car Club
- Food Club
- Scrabble Club
- Library Club
- Bee Keeping
- Computer Programming
- Code Breaking & Cypher Challenge
- Climbing
- Cricket (five teams in year 7 alone)
- Tennis
- Ten Tours
- Hockey
- Duke of Edinburgh (Bronze, Silver and Gold)
- Shooting
- Combined Cadet Force (CCF)
- Rugby
- Christian Union
- Book Club
- Choir
- Music ensembles: orchestras/jazz/folk groups
- Bands Nights
- Maths Club
- Art/Photography Club
- Film Club
- Chess Club
- Football
- Netball
- Warhammer Club
- Theatre/Drama Club (including school productions)
- Public Speaking

The range of educational visits which enrich the curriculum and the lives of our students is also, typically, exceptional. In a normal year around two hundred visits take place across the school, all aiming to develop the understanding and character of students. From the first few weeks in Year 7 the boys are taken away to the school cottage in Wales, Tir-y-Cwm, where they bond together and are challenged to develop their confidence and sense of belonging in our community.

Typically, during their time at Beechen Cliff, the pupils and students will be offered skiing visits to Europe and the United States, projects in Romania, sporting tours to Devon, South Africa and the Caribbean, Art

trips to Europe together with language exchanges to Italy, France, Spain and Germany. These opportunities are supplemented by an array of experiences which pupils and students will remember for many years to come, led by staff who are passionate about the positive effects of such activities.

Beechen Cliff Challenges

As part of our vision to develop character, throughout their time at Beechen Cliff, boys and girls are encouraged to take part in a range of challenges. These are designed to take pupils and students out of their comfort zones into realms that challenge body and mind – where there are no shortcuts and no easy ways out. It is during these occasions that they discover inner strengths and limits. Annual challenges include:

- The Centurion Challenge – a 100 mile walk to Hungerford and back in 48 hours
- Duke of Edinburgh – Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards; the latter including a mountaineering expedition to the Pyrenees
- Ten Tors Challenge – teams face hikes of up to 55 miles visiting 10 Dartmoor tors over two days
- Coast to Coast Cycle Ride – a 100 mile cycle ride in a day from the north Devon Coast, across Dartmoor, to Plymouth.
- Three Peaks Challenge – climbing the three highest peaks in England, Wales and Scotland within 24 hours.

Support and Guidance

Pastoral Care and the Houses

In the Lower School, the pastoral system, revolving around the House system, is at the heart of the boys' experience of Beechen Cliff. There are around 900 boys in the lower school. Each boy is placed into one of four Houses: Byron, Kipling, Milton and Shakespeare. In this way the boys across the school begin to know each other and contribute towards the family atmosphere which marks out Beechen Cliff and upon which so many visitors comment.

Each house is supervised by a Head of House, appointed from experienced teachers at the school. Within each House there are eight Tutor Groups led by a Tutor. The Tutor's role is to oversee and guide the development of each boy in his or her charge and to provide academic and pastoral support. The school nurse provides another strand to the pastoral care system and another point of direct contact for parents.

Academic and sporting competition between the Houses is fostered – as is charity fundraising activity. At each of the three whole school end of term assemblies a House winner is announced, the House flag is raised and all members of that House have certain privileges.

Parents

We recognise that parents are at the centre of our work in achieving success with students. To help parents support their child we provide clear information on academic performance and potential, guidance on the curriculum and how to support learning, revision and reading at home.

Parents have access to school reports and information on attendance, rewards and sanction on our online portal, INSIGHT. In addition, they are given access to information on the Homework set for pupils on Google Classroom.

In addition to Parents Evenings, we also provide specific Parent Information Evenings to provide information on specific topics including How to Support (for parents of new pupils in Year 7), GCSE Options (for Year 9 pupils), GCSE revision and the UCAS process.

Reporting to Parents

Throughout the Lower School parents are kept informed about their son's progress. This will happen in a number of different ways: each year there are two progress reports and one full subject and house report. These reports are published on Beechen Cliff's online portal, INSIGHT, which is available to all parents pupils and students online. In addition there is an annual Parents' Evening for subject teachers and parents to discuss pupil progress.

Homework

At Beechen Cliff we are very clear about the importance of homework. We believe homework has huge benefits – it improves performance in lessons, enables positive reinforcement from teachers, improves attitudes towards lessons and develops pupils' capacity to work independently. Homework is set rigorously and the school has high expectations of pupils and the quality of the homework handed in to teachers. There is also an expectation that parents will provide the encouragement, the resources and the quiet space to allow homework to be completed well. Beechen Cliff also runs Homework Club, supervised time after school for pupils to receive additional support with homework. Some pupils are directed to Homework Club on a basis of need and some attend voluntarily.

Boarding

There is a small boarding section at Beechen Cliff, catering for up to thirty-two boys for Year 7 upwards. There are a number of reasons why pupils may wish to board, for example:

- parents may have work commitments which demand that they travel some or all of the time
- many Sixth Form students relish the opportunity for a half-way house between school and university
- elite sportsmen and sportswomen can access the excellent opportunities at local providers, including the university
- family circumstances might mean that a period of boarding would provide stability and continuity in a child's life
- a one-off family commitment might mean that flexi-boarding will offer the ideal way to provide childcare while parents are away.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form at Beechen Cliff is the largest A Level provider in the area. There are normally over 400 students in the sixth form with the school taking in students (boys and girls) from across the region. Sixth Form life at Beechen Cliff is vibrant, busy and full of opportunities.

Students' attainment and progress is above national average and particularly strong in facilitator subjects in which around a fifth achieve AAB in at least two such subjects. Russell Group, Oxbridge, Medicine and elite apprenticeship destinations are very well represented. As well as receiving excellent teaching, becoming an independent learner is at the heart of every student's success and our vision is that they leave fully prepared for the demands of higher education and the world of work.

Equally important are the high standards of dress, punctuality, conduct and application to their studies; these form the bedrock of all else they do and make the Sixth Form the flagship for the rest of the school. Life in the Sixth Form extends well beyond the classroom. Sport, of course, is of a very high standard and there are excellent opportunities both for young men and young women to take part in either our elite or recreational teams. Our extra-curricular activities are exceptionally popular. The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Scheme, charitable fundraising events including the Romania Project, and societies ranging from drama to medicine, debating to STEM are prominent features of life in the Sixth Form.

In addition, there are numerous cultural opportunities – such as theatre visits, music and our annual representation at the International Model United Nations. Our super curricular programme stretches students beyond their A' levels including the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Meanwhile, our annual TEDx event, run by students, provides a platform for our community to share “ideas worth spreading”. The great advantage of the Sixth Form being attached to a school is that Sixth Form students can begin to acquire skills of leadership which are so important in later life; we expect our Sixth Form students to exercise responsibility in a variety of ways for the mutual benefit of the school and themselves.

Within the Sixth Form students are placed into a tutor group within a House and students are part of the House community. Students have the opportunity to apply to be House Prefects and to lead activities or initiatives within their House in addition to opportunities to apply for Senior Prefect roles within the school.

Some Sixth Form students give valuable in-class support to young pupils experiencing difficulties in their studies, while others support staff on trips, for example the Year 7 visits to the school cottage in Wales. The Sixth Form at Beechen Cliff is large and vibrant. It is a genuine community to which young people are proud to belong. It is open to students who are committed to their study, the broader life of the Sixth Form and to Beechen Cliff as a whole.

The Super Curriculum

The Super Curriculum is our range of opportunities aimed at enriching students' academic experiences, developing and challenging their thinking, and inspiring them beyond the formal curriculum. The most competitive universities expect students to have researched and read beyond the scope of their A' level specifications and the Super Curriculum also provides stimuli to do this.

Throughout the academic year there are arranged events, information and input from the school and external bodies, principally through the monthly Super Curricular Bulletin.

The Super Curricular Lecture Series is a weekly lecture on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, often delivered by an external speaker from a university or industry on a topical subject of their research, academic interest or application of knowledge beyond the A' level specification. These are free to attend and refreshments are provided. Parents are also welcome. Examples of lectures include “Galaxy”, delivered by an old boy of the school and recent graduate of Exeter University in Astrophysics and “The importance of an open mind”, a reflection through history of the need to entertain every opportunity we face, delivered by our Head of History.

In addition, there are a range of trips, visits and opportunities designed to enhance students' learning offered through curriculum areas and the Sixth Form. Examples of curriculum-based visits include a Physics trip to CERN, Geography visit to Iceland and Languages trips across Europe.

The Extended Project Qualification

At the heart of our Curriculum is the opportunity for every student to develop and realise an advanced level project devised entirely by the student. The Extended Project offers the chance for students to gain real independence, resilience and maturity as an advanced level learner, while pursuing any topic.

Taught in a university style through seminars and 1:1 tutorials, this is a qualification that prepares students for higher education and employment. Just as importantly, it allows students to carve out entirely their own pathway and follow their own interest. Best of all, the Extended Project Qualification is a Level 3 qualification. It is well regarded by universities as evidence that the transition from Beechen Cliff to university will be a smooth one for students who have successfully demonstrated their aptitude for independent learning.

Examination Results 2019

GCSE

33% of grades achieved at 9-7 (A*/A)

83% of grades achieved at 9-4 (A*- C)

83% of pupils achieved at least a standard pass (grades 9-4) in both English & Mathematics

52% of pupils achieved the English Baccalaureate with at least standard pass grades

A' level

52% of grades achieved at A*- B

75% of grades achieved at A*- C

19% of students achieved AAB in at least 2 Facilitating Subjects

(Examination results for the last few years including the 2020 Centre Assessed Grades and 2021 Teacher Assessed Grades are available on our website)