

THE BEDALES DIFFERENCE: BEDALES SCHOOLS' DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction

Bedales started in 1893 with a determination to be different: what follows emerges from three years of consultation with staff, students and parents on what the Bedales difference is now and how it must affect the way the schools develop. Everything here refers to the 3-18 Bedales Schools.

The vision outlined in this paper is shaped partly by Badley's ideals¹ but it also recognises the strong Badley view that schools like ours must evolve and re-define themselves. We must respond to the external environment in two distinct ways – the first is common to all schools, the second much less so: we must provide a suitable preparation for life after school and for the world of work; but also, if we are to keep faith with our tradition, we must also try to counterbalance influences and tendencies prevalent in society that damage children's development and welfare. This is in keeping with Badley's desire to ensure that, from its founding, Bedales was a counter to the regimented and philistine schools that he saw predominating in late Victorian England.

Maybe for this reason Bedales has balked at seeing itself as an inflexible organisation and has instead prided itself on being a community which is moulded by the individual child's aspirations and needs – these we continue to put at the centre of everything. Much of what follows relates to the interdependence of the individual and the community whose humanity, diversity and warmth supports and nourishes each person.

The Bedales difference as outlined below is therefore a mixture of ways in which we have always been different (and will continue to be so) and ways in which we are responding to external pressures. Whether you are reading this as a parent, a member of staff or as a student, we hope that it chimes both with what you thought the school stood for – and for what you think it should stand for in future.

Our aims

The five aims outlined below capture what we consider most important. The ways in which we seek to achieve these aims are described beneath each one. The first section describes activities common to all three schools; then there are activities specific to Bedales, Dunhurst and Dunannie that are listed under each school. Each heading provides a snapshot of current activities – beneath each one will of course be a full plan.

Aim 1

To develop inquisitive thinkers with a love of learning who cherish independent thought

We aim to create an environment where questioning, divergent thinking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged. Academic excellence, underpinned by formative and summative assessment must enable first-rate teaching and learning to thrive in such an environment. These qualities, which create lifelong learners and develop both critical and creative thinking, should permeate every area of our lives – whether that be in assemblies, conversations or classrooms. In a national educational environment, where schools are more constrained by exams than ever before, this need is especially important. We are committed to imbuing in all our children these qualities: responsibility for their own learning, good work habits and a sense that learning can thrill and invigorate.

¹ J H Badley (1865 – 1967), Founder and Headmaster of Bedales School 1893 – 1935 believed in a perfect school community providing an all-round education for life involving 'head, heart and hand'.

THREE SCHOOLS

We are:

- Increasing the provision for gifted and talented students, appropriate to age, in particular through our extension and enrichment programmes.
- increasing staff training and the spreading of good practice in ICT to ensure that the digital resources are used imaginatively to stimulate teaching and learning
- using assessment to support a flexible and creative curriculum

We will:

- improve the continuity in curriculum, in progression of skills and in development of learning between each of the three schools
- continue to review our curricula to ensure that they suit our aims and our children's needs

BEDALES

We are:

- improving the fit between the Block 3 curriculum and the Bedales Assessed Courses in the two succeeding years
- improving the preparation of all our students for higher education – in particular, better equipping those seeking offers to the most competitive courses, at Oxbridge and elsewhere
- enhancing the quality of guidance given to students through increasing the focus of one-to-one on particular issues at the correct time in the academic year.
- developing our use of formative assessment alongside the twice-termly student Review system
- increasing the amount of academic stretch available in the GCSE years through moving to IGCSE for all our Maths and Science candidates from June 2011.
- Increasing the academic stretch and opportunities for independent thinking in the sixth form through introducing the Extended Project in autumn 2009
- continuing to increase the scope and range of our academic societies and publications – The Maths Society and Classic Bedales being recent examples.

We will:

- continue to improve the quality of tracking of students' progress, following the introduction of baseline grades for sixth formers in November 2009
- extend the opportunities available to our staff for the development of their own learning.
- increase the opportunities for independent learning through implementing the findings of the Teaching and Learning Working Group in January 2010.

DUNHURST

We are:

- maintaining as much freedom as is practicable from the pressures of testing, exam results and Common Entrance preparation

- continuing to develop a discursive approach to all subject areas and encourage philosophical discussions and thinking in classes, tutor groups and whole school debates
- operating an inclusive academically ambitious programme
- strengthening our tutoring system
- raising our expectations and aspirations to ensure that all pupils are stretched and challenged, as is appropriate
- committed to presenting continued opportunity for independent learning, particularly in Maths, a new Science scheme and the integration of History, Geography and RE as Humanities
- implementing a 'skills based' curriculum to allow flexibility, daring and variety in content and theme

We will:

- introduce Philosophy and 'Creative Thinking' into the curriculum
- allow assessment to genuinely inform the achievement of academic excellence and progression of learning
- continue establishment of cross-curricular projects across the school and specifically move to integrate the teaching of History, Geography and RE

DUNANNIE

We are:

- reviewing and updating the approach to the curriculum in order to put children first in terms of what they learn. There is a commitment to look at the skills and dispositions the children learn and we are embracing different learning themes to do that.
- continuing to enhance the children's love of learning through a wide range of experiences both inside and outside the classroom
- developing Outdoor Learning in line with Dunhurst and Bedales by having a specialist teacher for this area.
- developing thinking skills with a range of resources and puzzles.
- creating opportunities for independent decision making, beginning in Nursery and Reception, to determine the direction of their learning.
- offering opportunities for children to plan their learning.
- having visitors to excite, stimulate and extend children's thinking.
- creating opportunities for the children to be independent in thought, interpretation and presentation of ideas and action.

We will:

- develop Philosophy for Children through staff training and provision of philosophical thinking days for children (especially Year 2 and 3) through the year.
- continue to have special days devoted to develop thinking and challenge. A Marvellous Mathematical Matters day to develop mathematical curiosity and understanding is planned for the summer term 2010.

Aim 2

To enable students' talents to develop through doing and making

Great value has always been attached to first hand experience at our schools. This aim, linking closely as it does with Aim 3, means that excellent resources and ample time are provided for

creative and practical activities. When the school moved to its present site the students were involved in making the main school building. For our students, the ability to be involved in practical spheres – “hand work” as opposed to “head work” in Badley’s terms - pushed the arts and outdoor work to the fore. Sport has also played an increasing role in the school’s life. We believe that within the curriculum hands-on experience should infuse our students’ learning. We will continue to seek new opportunities for practical experience, whether those be through the range of opportunities provided by the Public Arts’ Programme, school drama and music performances, curricular Art, Design and Technology or Outdoor Work.

THREE SCHOOLS

We are:

- providing an enriched environment for all our students to enjoy in Art, Design, Drama and Outdoor Work, often through imaginative whole school projects such as Holge Lonze’s work in 2006 and 2007 increasing the centrality of Outdoor Work to our way of life, involving students in the shaping of our grounds
- implementing an agreed Landscape Plan which emphasises the rural qualities of our estate
- providing the opportunities for students, staff and parents of each school to work together, through holding our annual Badley weekend in the early autumn, enabling each school to have its whole school effort and other activities which celebrate the schools’ values and the benefit of doing and making
- promoting healthy living, especially the importance of good diet and the right level of physical activity

We will:

- Set aside in our annual capital budget a sum for an Outdoor Work department-led building project.

BEDALES

We are:

- reviewing the links between Outdoor Work and Games in order to increase the range and quality of opportunities available in each, for September 2010 introduction
- creating a broad range of performance opportunities for students and staff through Directors’ Cut performance opportunities in the Theatre
- extending the range of sporting opportunities and ensuring students’ awareness of the link between exercise and healthy lifestyles
- realigning our medical services to promote a philosophy of wellness and a healthy lifestyle
- Encouraging student leadership of a range of creative and practical activities.
- Improving the quality of our Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme provision through increasing our resourcing of it and having a larger team of trained staff.

DUNHURST

We are:

- ensuring that doing and making are involved in all kinds of learning, both in the creative arts, practical work and in intellectual pursuits

- acknowledging the value of the creative subjects in our allocation of lessons to them within the weekly timetable
- involving parents in whole school efforts and particularly in the building of an outdoor classroom
- extending the range of sport offered, increasing students' awareness of sport's role in a healthy lifestyle

We will:

- continue to timetable Outdoor Work across all year groups
- expand Outdoor Work to include use of parental expertise
- build a working kitchen on site
- seek to build a 'treehouse' classroom for more outside learning

DUNANNIE

We are:

- developing a sculptural water feature incorporating design ideas by the children.
- using an outdoor 'Sound Garden' to promote musical curiosity and composition for all ages.
- developing opportunities to play inter-school High 5 Netball and Football matches.
- timetabling outdoor work for all years.
- relishing being outside by incorporating nature walks and activities to develop understanding of the natural world.
- participating in community arts events such as 'The Petersfield Festival of Youth Exhibition' and 'The Big Draw'.
- including all children in an annual whole school production preceded by a cross-curricular performing arts fortnight.

We will:

- develop Pop Lacrosse as part of our Games activities.
- create a vegetable, herb and fruit garden to develop awareness of how to grow the food we eat.
- build an outdoor Cobb oven.
- construct a greenhouse.
- build a slide.
- continue to encounter real life people at work in a range of occupations and having visitors in.

Aim 3

To foster individuality and encourage initiative, creativity and the appreciation of the beautiful

The ability to foster individuality and to nurture individuals' creativity will continue – enabling a community where “students inherently question who they are and this defines the spirit of the school” (ISI Report 2008). In the words of the 2002 Bedales inspection report, this was described as “an environment in which the unconventional is valued, individuality is truly recognised and a diversity of interests encouraged.” In addition to the life-enhancing gifts these qualities bring, they are seen as increasingly valued in a world of work where a premium is put on intellectual capital and creativity. The need for students to have their potential as leaders developed is also recognised.

Individuality must flourish, but within a clear moral structure: there must be a good balance between the rights of the individual and the individual's responsibility to the community. Whilst the boarding experience at Bedales and Dunhurst especially helps boarders learn this balance, the shared sense of purpose between boarders and day students allows this experience to be common to all.

We seek all opportunities to develop the connection between the moral, spiritual and aesthetic capacities of our students through contributing to the community via such events as music, drama, Outdoor Work and student-led enterprises.

As well as enabling appreciation of the beauty of our surroundings, we must promote the value of sustainable living through word and action.

THREE SCHOOLS

We are:

- running a flagship Arts Programme including professional touring theatre, dance, jazz, and national touring exhibitions.
- celebrating beauty wherever we find it, whether through listening to students playing music in assemblies, poetry readings or the beauty of maths.
- encouraging an increasing awareness of environment and social impact issues through, for example, the inception of the Bedales Fair Trade Group (autumn 2009)
- bringing practising artists into our schools to work alongside students and staff on particular projects
- working with the local community in arts' initiatives such as the Bedales Youth Dance Platform, Petersfield Youth Dance, the Petersfield Youth Festival and the Petersfield Music Festival
- implementing the recommendations of our Green Plan (devised in March 2009) as they become affordable
- promoting greater awareness of the breadth of religious and spiritual belief through the Jaws and through Religious Studies in the Curriculum

We will:

- ensure that the Schools' next big building project (the Bedales Music School) is Carbon-neutral when it gets the go-ahead
- ensure that the student input on the Greening Bedales Committee and Landscape & Planning Committee remains strong.

BEDALES

We are:

- involving students in shaping the Arts' programme
- using quiet spaces, for example, the meditation centre and Cecily's Garden, for reflection
- providing a good range of opportunities for voluntary community service
- enabling a stimulating range of musical opportunities, through informal concerts, jazz bands, the annual Rock Concert and JFPs (Jazz, Folk and Poetry concerts)
- extending the strong position and influence of the student-elected School Council
- empowering students and staff to take on challenges and "safe risks" such as Kids' Camp
- improving the guidance offered by tutors to encourage students' diversity of choice
- reviewing and making more distinctive the Bedales Assessed Courses in Blocks 4 and 5 in order to foster individual interests beyond the constraints of the curriculum

- enabling excellent opportunities for musical composition through a music studio dedicated to rock and folk music

We will:

- extend the range of leadership opportunities and training available to our students
- increase the range of opportunities for students' involvement in spiritual and moral matters, through aligning Jaw and other community occasions more closely with student interests and concerns
- further enhance the range of activities and align it with student aspirations
- celebrate or initiate student-led fund raising pursuits such as Swaziland 2009-2010
- cultivate an environment where student initiatives are invited and developed through School Council and other committees.

DUNHURST

We are:

- offering numerous opportunities for pupils to organise themselves so that they learn good time management skills of both academic and free time
- equally valuing creative arts with other subjects and ensuring timetable allocation reflects this
- drawing in external practical expertise, whenever possible, to enhance the curriculum, e.g. the artist-in-residence scheme and entrepreneurial and financial advisors for the Fair Trade Committee
- having whole day 'artistic' projects for the school community and offer opportunity to forge cross-curricular links and more fully creative activities across the school, for example, in science
- building 'quiet spaces' around the school for reflection
- celebrating beauty wherever we see it

We will:

- exhibit work around the school and in the grounds
- encourage and fund Dance, photography and film as creative opportunities
- support the 'Green Team' to voice our community's commitment to 'green' issues

DUNANNIE

We are:

- developing appreciation of beauty through the work of poets, musicians, and artists.
- continuing to value children's work through display, learning journals, performance and assemblies and celebrating children's success and achievements
- using Festivals and events to develop the children's awareness of different cultures and beliefs
- making greater use of the Bedales school grounds (farm, woodlands, gallery) to extend appreciation of both the natural and man-made environment
- involving all Year 2 and Year 3 children in an orchestra either playing percussion or other instruments listening to a variety of music, including a composer of the month to develop music appreciation.

- implementing SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning) to develop social skills and emotional understanding.
- offering LAMDA and ballet to boys and girls.

We will:

- continue to review ways for children to take ownership of their learning journals.
- share musical appreciation across the school.
- appreciate music and art of other cultures, eg Aboriginal Assembly.

Aim 4

We will enable students and staff to take pride in the community's distinctiveness – to feel valued and nourished by the community

Central to our schools' success is the sense that each person is a member of the community whose voice is entitled to be heard and be treated with respect. Staff and students expect of each other the best kind of relationships - co-operative, trustful and tolerant ones. In this respect the school community and environment should enable all members of the community to feel that they are learning and developing.

THREE SCHOOLS

We are:

- ensuring that in all three schools the student voice is heard in an age-appropriate way – such as through whole school meetings, committees and school council
- enabling more effective staff professional development and higher performance through operating a yearly appraisal system
- offering teaching staff access to regular sabbatical leave and the training they need for their professional development
- celebrating through holding a Badley weekend each year, the life, work and influence of the schools' founder, John Badley
- ensuring we are up to date with the latest developments in social and emotional learning
- developing the school further as an environment which fosters emotional well being and a strong sense of community and using this as a foundation for developing further behaviour strategies

We will:

- seek ways to further develop the social and emotional well being of staff

BEDALES

We are:

- fostering and promoting the importance of mixed age friendships, through distinctive elements of our social fabric such as the mixed age dorm
- enabling the full involvement of day students
- increasing the attention devoted to the individual student's needs through improved tutoring

- increasing the use of our website as a means of sharing ideas and celebrating successes
- enabling individual voices to be heard and the community's distinctiveness to be celebrated through the breadth of the school publications, student-led committees and weekly school council meetings
- improving the dining experience at Bedales - so enabling staff and students to dine together in a convivial and civilised ambiance
- improving yet further the quality and range of student initiatives, influence and responsibility through the appointment of a Director of Student Welfare in September 2009.
- aiming to become an exemplar school for Student Voice through scrutinising and improving all areas where student influence is involved.

We will:

- run student symposiums in order to debate major issues – most recently November 2009 on teenage drinking.
- review the programme for staff continuous professional development to boost the opportunities for individual learning.
- Increase the number of staff accommodated on site (by September 2012)

DUNHURST

We are:

- enabling the child's voice through school council, whole school meetings, assemblies, notices and committees
- enabling older pupils, as peer listeners, to take an active role in the community by listening to the concerns of others
- offering numerous opportunities for pupils to organise themselves so that they learn good time management skills of both academic and free time
- acknowledging and celebrating highlights of school life in special celebration assemblies twice a year
- working on promoting healthy lifestyle through improving the dining experience and through Sports / PSHE programmes
- committed to regular whole school productions
- providing a range of ways for students to have their say - via the tutorial system, peer listening, the committees and the activities programme
- working on promoting a healthy lifestyle through revolutionising the dining experience
- providing an understanding of the school's history and ethos through Jaw, Badley Weekend and the Dunhurst Annual Lecture
- moving in-house individual counselling and family counselling to the centre of school life

We will:

- Appreciate silence and the ability to be silent
- Continue to provide Childtalk programme for parents
- Offer personal and professional support and care to staff through appraisal and other means

DUNANNIE

We are:

- sharing good practice: swimming club, yoga etc.
- providing a nurturing environment in which children can flourish, whatever their social , emotional and academic needs
- providing opportunities for the children to feel valued by awarding 'Wow' stickers celebrating home / school achievements.
- holding a number of assemblies, concerts and productions for parents and grandparents during the year and inviting them into school
- developing the children's awareness of responsibility for themselves and others
- involving parents in many aspects of Dunannie life from the Friends of Dunannie reading stories and sharing professional experiences with the children.

We will:

- continue to use a variety of ways to hear children's views.
- continue to encourage children's active participation in the curriculum, eg in the planning of activities to work out solutions together.
- develop annual family days to share in the development of the outside environment e.g. Badley Weekend.
- give more opportunities for cross age group activities, for example Book Week.
- give more opportunities for children to take responsibility.

Aim 5

To foster interest beyond the school – engaging with the local community and developing an international awareness

We will seek a yet fuller range of opportunities for students and staff to engage with other communities in partnership. Aware that we should foster links locally and globally and that we must equip our students to work with a broad range of people, we will find new ways of ensuring this exposure, building on such excellent platforms as the public Arts' programme.

THREE SCHOOLS

We are:

- seeking opportunities for our students to perform in local and national arts and sports events
- fostering our links with Steep village – Steep School and the local parish
- enabling our students to encounter a range of careers, lifestyles, viewpoints and cultures through the diversity of visiting speakers and artists
- ensuring that all our students have a good progression of educational visits (for example Dunannie's Year 3 visit to Dorset, the Dunhurst camps and the Block 3 outdoor adventure week at Ullswater)
- committed to promoting students' awareness of global ethical issues such as fair trade and civil liberties through such initiatives as designing our own fair-trade T shirts and Amnesty International
- raising the children's awareness of other's needs through fundraising for both the local community and international charities mainly through annual events (such as the Bedales Amnesty Ball, Dunhurst HOPIT fair and the Dunannie Fun Run)
- operating a travel plan to minimise the amount of traffic generated by the schools

We will:

- seek all further opportunities to open up our schools and our resources to the local community

BEDALES

We are:

- celebrating and continuing the Kids' Camp which brings disadvantaged children into the school from children's homes
- running a voluntary service programme which commits our students to work in the local community
- re-building Mbalenhle Primary School in Swaziland (visits in February 2007, 2008 and 2009)
- establishing links with Chuansha School near Shanghai in China
- celebrating Peace One Day as an annual three schools' event

We will:

- develop a teacher exchange programme with Chuansha School.
- develop our links with the Sekem Community in Egypt and with the British School in Abu Dhabi
- review our provision of modern languages in 2010
- extend students' awareness of social entrepreneurship and the social impact of business
- explore opportunities for UK partnerships

DUNHURST

We are:

- enabling Block II to workshadow using placements which expose pupils to the world of adult careers and work
- running the HOPIT (Helping Other People In Trouble) annual fair every December with full pupil participation raising up to £8,000 for some 5 local and national charities
- re-launching an ambitious Community Service programme involving local primary schools, Hollywater School (for disabled children) and the Fitzroy Centre (for adults with special needs)
- supporting links with the Miraflor Community in Nicaragua

We will:

- vary and increase the range of whole school tours and trips
- establish a new Weekend Boarding programme using local farms and homes
- encourage staff and children to visit the Miraflor Community

DUNANNIE

We are:

- working alongside local schools, eg Challenge Day, theatre.
- linking with a local sheltered housing for the elderly and singing for them, inviting them to Harvest Festival.

- enabling staff to visit other pre prep schools through IAPS Cluster Groups
- joining local schools through Foundation Stage Cluster Groups
- developing links in other countries, eg Laos 'Big Brother Mouse'.
- celebrating multicultural festivals and inviting speakers and artists from different cultures.
- teaching French throughout the school.

We will:

- have more events/theatrical productions to which we will invite other schools and staff both to Dunannie and the theatre
- have regular visitors to assemblies both from Dunhurst and Bedales as well as outside the school
- explore furthering international links to develop the children's global awareness.
- Investigate possibility of linking with a local special school
- invite parents to tell children about their jobs