

THE BEDALES DIFFERENCE: BEDALES SCHOOLS' DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction

Bedales started in 1893 with a determination to be different: this plan emerged initially from three years of consultation with staff, students and parents on what the Bedales difference should be and how it must affect the way our schools are developed. 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 seek to overturn influences and tendencies 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 present or former 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.

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. First rate teaching and learning, underpinned by formative and summative assessment, must underpin academic excellence. 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.
- Improving the continuity in curriculum, in progression of skills and in development of learning between each of the three schools.

We will:

- 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
- Continuing to improve the quality of tracking students' progress, following the introduction of baseline grades for the sixth form in November 2009.
- Increasing the opportunities for independent learning through implementing the findings of the Teaching and Learning Working Group (from January 2010).
- Improving our use of differentiation through implementing the findings of the Teaching and Learning Group on differentiation (from September 2010)
- Improving our students' access to higher education, both with "Top-up" extension sessions for 6.1 and 6.2 and through the development of our liaison with higher education, through better knowledge of universities and other higher education institutions.
- Enhancing the quality of guidance given to students through increasing the focus of one-to-one discussions 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 the Extended Project (introduced autumn 2009)
- Continuing to increase the scope and range of our academic societies and publications – The Maths Society, Classic Bedales and the Political Society being recent examples
- Extending the opportunities available to our staff for the development of their own inquisitiveness and learning, through the introduction of the staff enrichment programme from September 2010

We will:

- Improve the quality of assessment through the implementation of the assessment working party in September 2011.

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.
- Launching a new academically ambitious programme, QI Junior, led and run by parents.
- Strengthening the pastoral role of Groups class teachers.
- Assessing truly informing learning, fully implemented by our new Director of Teaching and Learning.
- Raising our expectations and aspirations to ensure that all pupils are stretched and challenged, as is appropriate.

We will:

- Introduce a linking theme across the curriculum each year; Earth Exploration is the theme for 2010-11.
- Further commit to an ideas rich environment across all curricular areas in which pupils contribute to, and feel part of, a community of thinking.
- Use the Slave Trade project in Block 2 as an Independent Learning Project.
- Extend Learning Support into the classroom.

DUNANNIE

We are:

- Raising expectations in our pupils, ensuring that their work is matched to their ability and that their potential is fulfilled.
- Continuing to enhance the children's love of learning through a wide range of experiences both inside and outside the classroom.
- Developing thinking skills with a range of resources and puzzles.
- Creating opportunities for independent decision making, beginning in Nursery, to determine the direction of their learning.
- Offering opportunities for children to plan their learning.
- Developing assessment for learning strategies.
- Continuing to have 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.
- Developing Philosophy for Children through staff training and provision of philosophical thinking days for children (especially Year 2 and 3) through the year.
- Continuing to have special days devoted to develop thinking and challenge. A Marvellous Mathematical Matters day to develop mathematical curiosity and understanding took place in the summer term 2010.

We will:

- Establish a Year 2 and 3 classroom full of creative and challenging learning opportunities.
- Create an outdoor classroom in the Orchard.
- Reintroduce Incas assessment (Durham University) in line with Dunhurst.

- Develop tracking procedures to guide the development of Dunannie pupils.

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:

- Conducting a review of the Arts in summer and autumn 2011.
- Improving the quality and range of opportunities of Outdoor Work and Sport, following a review of these areas in May 2010.
- Providing an enriched environment in Art, Design, Drama and Outdoor Work,
- Running imaginative whole school projects, such as Holge Lonze’s work in 2006 and 2007.
- Increasing the centrality of Outdoor Work to a way of life, involving students in the shaping of our grounds.
- 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.
- Develop a long term Landscape master plan to enhance the estate’s rural qualities.

BEDALES

We are:

- Enhancing the links between Outdoor Work and Games following a review in order to increase the range and quality of opportunities available in each (from September 2010).
- 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.
- Running our Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme through the leadership of a dedicated, non-teaching member of staff.

DUNHURST

We are:

- Continuing to timetable Outdoor Work across all year groups.
- 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.
- Introducing more problem solving and team building opportunities, particularly into the Games curriculum, with a view to alternative-style competitions with other schools.

We will:

- 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 the curriculum to incorporate a sculptural water feature using an outdoor 'Sound Garden' to promote musical curiosity and composition for all ages.
- Developing Outdoor Work in line with Dunhurst and Bedales by timetabling all classes with a specialist teacher working in the school grounds and outside classroom.
- 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 project.
- Creating a vegetable, herb and fruit garden to develop awareness of how to grow the food we eat.
- Developing opportunities to play inter-school High 5 netball and football matches.
- Developing Pop Lacrosse as part of our Games activities.

We will:

- Develop the use of our greenhouse.
- Develop a range of features to the fort.
- 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 ISI 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 is also recognised for students to have their leadership potential developed.

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) and joining the Young Social Enterprise pilot scheme (autumn 2010).
- 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:

- Involve student-led initiatives in the campaign to raise funds for bursaries to widen access to the Bedales Schools.

BEDALES

We are:

- Involving students in shaping the Arts' programme.
- Using quiet spaces, for example, the meditation centre and Cecily's Garden, for reflection.
- 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.
- Enabling excellent opportunities for musical composition through a music studio dedicated to rock music.
- Ensuring that the student input on the Greening Bedales Committee and Landscape & Planning Committee remains strong.

We will:

- Review our Community Service programme to provide a very good range of opportunities from September 2011.
- Seek to extend the range of leadership opportunities available to our students, for example through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative.
- 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.
- Celebrate and facilitate 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 and to induct all new Groups children to this end.
- 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.
- Maintaining links with professional performers to assist with workshops, plays and skill based lessons and to produce a whole-school opera in summer 2011.
- 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.

We will:

- Make full use of the new outdoor classroom to further encourage a creative outdoor learning environment.
- 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.
- Developing the outside classroom curriculum.
- 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 and helping the children to develop a healthy life style in and out of school.
- Offering LAMDA and ballet to boys and girls.
- Appreciating music and art of other cultures, eg Aboriginal Assembly.

We will:

- Continue to review ways for children to take ownership of their learning journals and to develop skills of assessment for learning.
- Expand the range of clubs offered to the children at lunch and after school, including dance, drama, chess, pilates and reporters club and further suggestions from the pupils.
- Develop pupil leadership and initiative skills..
- Share musical appreciation across the school.
- Create a greater awareness in the children of green issues.

Aim 4

To enable students, former students, parents and staff to take pride in the community's distinctiveness, and 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.
- Increasing the use of our website as a means of sharing ideas and celebrating successes.

We will:

- Seek ways to further develop the social and emotional well being of staff.
- Encourage all connected with the schools to become involved in fundraising and development for the schools.

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 one to one tutoring.
- 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.
- Ensuring we remain an innovator on areas of student initiative and influence (Director of Student Welfare appointed in September 2009).
- Encouraging contributions and support from parents through the Bedales Parents Association.

We will:

- Run student symposiums in order to debate major issues – most recently in November 2009 on teenage drinking.
- Increase the number of teaching staff accommodated on site (by September 2012), building two new staff houses in Church Road.

DUNHURST

We are:

- Enabling the child's voice through School Council, whole school meetings, assemblies, notices and committees and individual initiatives such as mock elections.
- 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 the annual celebration assembly.
- Working on promoting healthy lifestyle through the newly designed PSHE programmes.
- Committed to regular whole school productions.
- 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.
- Encouraging parents, through the Friends of Dunhurst, to contribute to the school development plan.

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
- continue to offer the children opportunity to move forward with independent initiatives such as 'The Children's Play'

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 relations 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.
- Giving more opportunities for cross age group activities, for example Book Week, sports events.
- Giving more opportunities for children to take responsibility.

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 (in September 2010 outside classroom/Dunannie entrance).
- Invite parents to be involved in the creation of the new Dunannie Development Plan.

Aim 5

To foster interest beyond the school – engaging with the local community and developing a national and 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, nationally 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 – through engagement with the Steep Parish Plan, Steep School and other local parish matters.
- 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 age-appropriate educational visits.
- 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.
- Operating a travel plan to minimise the amount of traffic generated by the schools.
- Participating in the South Downs Green Fair (May 2011).

We will:

- Seek all further opportunities to open up our schools and our resources to the local community.
- Bolster and develop our Outreach programme, through exploring such programmes as the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and ensuring that our community service programmes are robust across the schools.
- Expand our bursary provision, supported through fundraising, to broaden access for individuals regardless of financial circumstances.

BEDALES

We are:

- Working as a partnership with The Petersfield School Trust.
- 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 sixth form students to work in the local community.
- Re-building Mbalenhle Primary School in Swaziland (visits in February 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010).
- Developing our links with Chuansha School (Shanghai in China), building on the student exchanges and developing reciprocal teacher exchanges (during 2010).
- Celebrating Peace One Day as an annual three schools' event.
- Developing a potential partnership with The Petersfield School Trust.
- Coordinating the various elements that fulfil Aim 5, through establishing the Head of Outreach (from September 2010).

We will:

- Develop our links with the British School in Abu Dhabi.
- Extend students' awareness of social entrepreneurship and the social impact of business.
- Explore further opportunities for UK partnerships.
- Implement the recommendations of the Modern Languages Working Group from September 2011.
- Explore possibilities for further partnership with the Greenhouse Dance project (first visit March 2010).

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 five local and national charities.
- Expanding our ambitious Community Service programme involving local primary schools, Hollywater School (for disabled children) and the Fitzroy Centre (for adults with special needs).

We will:

- Vary and increase the range of whole school tours and trips.
- Encourage staff and children to strengthen links with the Miraflores Community in Nicaragua, for example through visits.

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.
- Increasing the number of events/theatrical productions to which we will invite other schools and staff both to Dunannie and the theatre.
- Welcoming regular visitors to assemblies both from Dunhurst and Bedales as well as outside the school.
- Furthering our international links to develop the children's global awareness, eg Christina Noble Children's Foundation.

We will:

- Create ways in which children can initiate activities and develop their leadership skills.
- Investigate possibility of linking with a local special school and supporting disadvantaged children who visit Dunannie.
- Invite parents to tell children about their jobs.
- Investigate visiting Broadland Centre for Riding for the Disabled to further our existing support.