



Boarding in the country... one hour from London

by Colin Baty, Head of Bedales Prep, Dunhurst

At Bedales Prep, Dunhurst, we encourage our pupils to develop a facility for understanding their subjects, and indeed their worlds, from as many different perspectives and experiences as possible. In this way, we hope to fulfil our aim of developing inquisitive thinkers who cherish independent thought. We also want pupils to enjoy school.

Boarding gives our pupils an opportunity to experience what we consider to be particularly important to these ends – the activities that take place outside the formal school day. The day for boarders is longer compared to those of day pupils – typically including lessons, pastoral guidance and extra-curricular activities, with many pupils also involved in weekend activities.

Extra-curricular time can be carefully planned; boarders are encouraged to help design the activities we make available for them after hours, and we draw heavily on the tutoring skills of house staff. However, there is also a healthy slice of serendipity in all of this – if you have a drama teacher as your housemaster or housemistress, you can expect some theatrical activity along the way. Our Heads of Department will also take it in turns to be around for after-school activities. Pupils get to feed off their interests and passions, and in a way that is ever so slightly different to when their teachers are involved in the normal teaching day.

Boarding has a knack of opening some unusual doors. Recently, one group of pupils took advantage of a well-connected technician and went to a restaurant where they got to cook their own food – an

example of the kind of rich experience that isn't typically available to day pupils.

If our arts scholars are going on a trip to a gallery, our boarders will go with them. We like the idea of our boarders 'playing up' – that is to say, spending time in a focused environment where they can enjoy the company of teachers and talented peers, and get a taste of others' passions, and of fresh personal horizons.

Being away from home for the first time can be hard at times for some of our younger boarders, and it is our experience that a school life packed with variety, stimulation and fun can ease the transition. Being busy is one aspect and the other is time to just 'be' as well. All

children and adults need time to connect with the world – slowing down and taking stock can be very liberating and help to develop a healthy internal dialogue.

Helped by this variety of experiences, I see boarding pupils

grow into being rounded, engaged and socially adept individuals, who look after each other. They also tend to thrive academically – those Prep boarders who go on to board at our Senior School do particularly well. This is what we aim to achieve, and we are always mindful of the need to leave room for happy instances and opportunities along the way, of which there are many.

Bedales comprises co-educational day and boarding pre-prep, prep and senior schools set in 120 acres of South Downs National Parkland near Petersfield, Hampshire – an hour train ride from London. Flexi boarding is available at Bedales Prep. For more information about open mornings and taster days, please visit [bedales.org.uk](https://www.bedales.org.uk) or email:

admissions@bedales.org.uk.



OPEN MORNINGS

PREP & PRE-PREP 14 September SENIOR 5 October