



DOLPHIN SCHOOL

unlocking each child's full and unique potential





welcome

Welcome to Dolphin School. We see the school as a place of safety when life's storms buffet us and a secure base from which to view the wonders of the world. Whilst your children are with us, we commit to look after them well and to teach them to look after themselves, each other, the wider community and the planet. We have seven years to prepare them for the intellectual and personal challenges of secondary school, and we hope and pray that their experiences here will shed light across their lives long after they have left us.

In this prospectus, I hope to give you a snapshot of daily life in the school which the staff and I have come to love so much.

Mrs Jo Glen
Principal

Note: You will see that I have sometimes avoided the cumbersome 'he/she' by alternating 'he' and 'she' in different paragraphs. Please consider your son or daughter included in all that the school has to offer!

Examples of activities and trips are indicative of the kind of opportunities on offer.



love
learn
leap



love

A school is an intricate web of relationships with strands running in all directions between the Governors, the Principal, staff, parents and pupils. Dolphin School's Christian ethos places these relationships at the heart of school life. We keep our classes small so that we can personalise your child's learning. Our starting point is knowing, and our aim is to get to know your child deeply: his/her strengths and weaknesses, joys and triumphs, fears and concerns, gifts and talents. How does he/she learn best?

learn

We can't start to learn until we know and accept ourselves. One of our first jobs is to encourage children to value themselves and their own gifts so that they can, in turn, learn to value the gifts of others. This will lead to a peaceful community, which forms the right context for learning. We are all different, and we learn differently. Our job is to try many keys as we seek to unlock your child's potential.

leap

Now, from a place of peace, within the context of love, your child is ready to leap into Dolphin School life. He/she is ready to dare to have a go, to risk a wrong answer, to try ideas out. He/she is ready to seize every chance to grow and learn. He/she is ready to face the challenges of life in a community, to grasp every learning opportunity that he/she is given, to ask questions and to wrestle with answers.





express
examine
explore



express

Your child is ready to learn to express herself. She will be encouraged to grow her vocabulary and to manipulate language so that she can articulate her ideas and create imaginary worlds with words. She will be inspired to express her feelings through visual art as she is taught how to turn shapes, lines and colour into images. She will be guided by specialist teachers to express herself through music, singing, drama and sport.

examine

Your child will be taught to examine things carefully: the meaning of words in English comprehension, or in Spanish or Latin; the meaning of shape, number and symbol in Maths; the meaning of the past in History; of the world in Science and Geography; and of life in times of class discussion. He will take a magnifying glass to the processes of language and number, to the stories of the Bible and to the wonder of the natural world.

explore

Your child will have a chance to explore the complexities of life. What can I, as one individual, contribute to this school and to the world? What does it mean to love my neighbour as myself? Or to look after the planet for future generations? What does it take to be a team? She will be given the chance to feel the air on her face, to get muddy, to sail or kayak, or build a raft or a shelter, to learn the names of animals, plants and trees.





T

**train
trust
transform**



train

School is a training ground, and we expect to train. If no child ever made a mistake, we wouldn't have anything to do. We must provide boundaries so that poor behaviour and other distractions do not detract from learning. We expect to train your child as he becomes the best possible version of himself. We expect to train him in every area as he flies as high as he can – a different height for everyone. We expect him to make mistakes sometimes – we all do. He will receive outstanding coaching in a range of sports: football, hockey, tag rugby, cricket, rounders, athletics and so on.

trust

Team sports require trust as different members of the team take up their position: the defender defends, the attacker attacks, the striker strikes and the goalie saves. As it is in the Dolphin football team, so it is in school life: we all take up our role and each is valued equally. We ask you, the parents, to trust us to treat your child with fairness and dignity. We ask you to trust our professionalism as we work in partnership with you to educate your child.

transform

So, as we trust each other and as together we train your child, we start to see the thing that excites us most – transformation. The mental block your child had in Maths is broken down; the struggle to learn to read is won; the child who had to be first in line learns to be second; the pupil who feared the exam wins an award; the child with the impetuous streak learns self-control; the pupil who hated the stage finds a voice. No child is labelled; all of us can change.



U

unlock
unleash
unwind



unlock

We do not seek to mould your child into a pre-planned somebody but to unlock what is already there. Sometimes talents, qualities and attributes are hidden beneath an outer shell (perhaps of anxiety, self-centredness or timidity) and sometimes they are glistening on the surface. Whether the task is easy or hard, our job is to find these gifts and grow them. The teacher plants the seed and the pupil must water it though concentration in class, through following the teacher's instructions, through careful completion of homework.

unleash

Children's gifts can be unleashed through love and encouragement, through the hard graft of practice and drilling, through the acquisition of knowledge, through the experience of inspiration or another's belief in them: mathematical wizardry, stage presence, a novelistic turn of phrase, a gift of kindness, footballing flair, a beautiful voice, scientific acumen, a talent for invention, linguistic skill, athletic ability...

unwind

We all need rest, and we therefore do not set homework on Fridays (except on occasions in the final year), leaving the weekend free for families to enjoy together. No-one learns best under pressure. School should be a place of dynamic learning, of myriad opportunity, but also of fun and ease and laughter. There must be a moment for a joke, a chance to go off piste, to enjoy the unexpected tangent, a place to unwind, time to toast marshmallows around the camp fire...



S

sense
savour
see





sense

Every sense helps us to appreciate the wonders of the world – and the senses may easily be dulled by an over-scheduled life, too much cyber-reality or too short a childhood. Let's start with the ears and the dying art of listening which, St James assures us, is better than talking! If you want to do one thing to prepare your children for school, teach them to listen. In this world of multiple foci, help them to focus on one thing at a time. Give instructions once. Encourage them to listen to another's view.

savour

We want children to savour every experience of school life: singing their hearts out in the school choir; abseiling on the rock face at Viney Hill; tasting *churros* on Spanish Day; paddling in the stream at The Mill; smelling Spring in the blossom; learning flamenco or Soca or Irish dancing; trying their hand at the violin or djembe drums; visiting the BBC studios or the West London Synagogue or Hever Castle or the River Thames in Henley or the Houses of Parliament or the Tower of London or the Norfolk Broads...

see

There is so much to do and see in seven years at Dolphin. Every year, alongside the curriculum, we have a new theme inspiring us to do new things, to watch chicks hatch, to release butterflies on the common, to change the life of an African orphan, to decorate an Easter cross, to join Toad in his boat in Wind in the Willows. Every year we enjoy the rhythm of annual rituals: school plays, Sports Day, putting up the Christmas tree, playing in the Consortium Shield, saying good bye to our leavers at Awards Assembly in July. They leave, having learnt, we hope, to see behind appearances, to see beyond the material world, to see from the perspective of another.



LET US...

love learn leap

express examine explore

train trust transform

unlock unleash unwind

sense savour see



**take your child
on a journey**

The Dolphin Journey

Education is a journey, and each journey begins with a single step – in this case, the first step through the school door. One step must necessarily follow another as the pupil progresses, guided by his/her teachers, through a series of attainable targets over seven years. Then he/she leaves through that same door, ready to face the challenges of secondary school and life beyond.

What sort of a journey is this? It is a steady journey of seven stepping stones. The journey is safe because the child always has a guide, a teacher whose face is turned both towards the child (in concern and care) and towards the destination (the end of each academic year, the end of primary school and life beyond). Though safe, it is necessarily challenging. There are

steep climbs, rocky patches, peaceful glades, dense forests, open meadows, beautiful views – for each child these come at different moments, but the guide is always there, always ready to help and support. As each stepping stone is reached, the child feels a great sense of achievement ('I gave it my best and look where I got!'), greeting the completed target with satisfaction and straining forward with ambition and aspiration.

Certain conditions make travelling enjoyable and achievable. Children need enough sleep to travel well each day. They need times of rest and relaxation, time to enjoy the view. They cannot travel hard all day, all evening and all weekend. Children need applauding as they travel, however far they get.

The journey should look like this:



What we don't believe



1 We don't believe in cramming. We start preparing for the 11+ in Reception, because the first step leads to the second, the second to the third, and so on.

2 We don't believe any child is too young to be challenged. The challenge must just be appropriate for his/her age. Potty training is an appropriate challenge for a young child, for example. Challenge should never be avoided, just designed especially for the individual.

3 We don't believe parents should have to choose between happiness or academic challenge. We believe that an appropriate challenge, within an atmosphere of love, leads to satisfaction, fulfilled potential and the discovery of gifts, which in turn lead to happiness. So challenge leads to happiness and high self-esteem, and avoidance of challenge the reverse.

4 We don't believe children should be pushed, like a broken-down car. The broken child finds it difficult to learn; he/she needs ideally to be mended first, although mending and learning can occur at the same time in an atmosphere of love and encouragement. Indeed, learning can be healing. The teacher puts the right key in the ignition, and the car starts. We know that each car (child) proceeds at a different pace, but we don't believe in keeping any car in the inside lane with

the brakes on. Nor do we believe in encouraging cars to spin out of control.

5 We don't believe we can teach your child everything in seven years. Knowledge is infinite. We provide the tools to unlock knowledge. Different methods of reasoning are passports to future learning. Maths and English are foundational. For example, until you can read fluently and unlock the meaning of complex words, most subject disciplines are closed to you. So we cannot teach your child the whole of History, but we can give him/her the tools to begin a lifelong interest in History. First, he/she must learn to read, to listen, to decipher, to uncover facts, to understand the difference between objectivity and subjectivity, to see that different people in different places at different times were valuable, that their experiences of life differed, that this affected their choices and self-understanding, that we should not generalise or stereotype, that we cannot assume that we (or our era) has everything right. We cannot teach your child the whole of History, but we can give him/her a hunger to learn more about the past and the sensitivity to approach the past well. And thus with Geography, Science and so on.

6 We don't believe we can provide your child with every single opportunity there is. We cannot visit every museum, nor can we play every single sport, nor can we

provide every club. Opportunities are multitudinous, and we would kill ourselves and your child trying to provide all of them. Instead, we can provide a selection of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities from different areas to ignite artistic, dramatic, musical, linguistic and sporting passion.

7 We don't believe that rushing, exhausted, from one thing to another is healthy. We believe that calm and order are the right conditions for learning, and that repeated daily routines are very helpful for children's personal and academic progress.

8 We don't believe there is anything shameful in going wrong. School is a training ground, and we expect to train. Training includes sanctions, which are designed to refine behaviour. Refined behaviour leads to growth of character, which gives the conditions for maximum progress.

9 We don't believe every second of every day need be either fun or easy. Some things need drilling: times tables, for example. Drilling can be dull but is very important at primary school. Some things are hard – that's ok.

10 We don't believe that children should feel anxious or pressurised. That's why the journey proceeds in graduated attainable steps, not in a big rush at the end. Homework is, therefore, done in small 'portions' from Monday to Thursday, with the

weekend (except sometimes in Year 6) for rest and family time.

11 We don't believe in over-examining children.

12 We don't believe parents should have to do children's homework – it's designed for the child. We do believe parents have a key role in providing an ordered routine and a quiet space for homework – and that parental interest in academic progress has a hugely beneficial effect.

13 We don't believe that we educate alone. We educate in partnership with parents. This is definitely not a 'singles' match, where the school is pitted against the parents. It is a 'doubles' match, where you, the parents, and we, the school form one team. We look over the net together at your child's future.



Dolphin information

- » At the back of the prospectus, you will find information about term dates, current school fees and extra-curricular activities as well as the range of secondary schools typically attended by Dolphin leavers.
- » If you think Dolphin School might suit your child and your family, please phone the Registrar on 020 7924 3472 or email her at admissions@dolphinschool.org.uk to arrange a visit. Visits take place at fixed times during the week and include a chat with the Principal and a tour of the school on a normal working morning.
- » The next step (before or after your visit) is to register your child, and the registration form may be found at the back of the prospectus.
- » If you are interested in Dolphin School, you are encouraged to register as early as you possibly can, as your registration date will inform your position on the list. Siblings of Dolphin pupils are given priority and a proportion of places are reserved for children attending Noah's Ark Nursery Schools (prioritised in order of registration date).
- » Children who join a class other than Reception are invited to join their prospective class for a Trial Day to see if they would fit with ease into the existing community. More details are available from the Registrar.
- » The school doors open each morning between 08.30 and 08.45. There are staggered departure times between 15.25 and 15.45 according to age. After-school clubs are available for older children on Monday to Thursday between 16.00 and 17.00. Children in Reception are dismissed at 12.25 on Fridays during their first year, and at 12.25 on Wednesdays in the Autumn Term in order to effect a happy transition and to preserve energy levels!
- » You are invited to join us for Friday Assembly – a service where the whole school comes together to celebrate our relationships and achievements.
- » Dolphin children wear a school uniform, and the Uniform Policy is upheld robustly. This relieves pupils of anxieties over wardrobe and image, builds a strong school identity and enables the children (who are by far our best advert) to represent the school with pride in the local community.
- » Homework starts with plenty of reading practice, and gradually expands to include spelling, Maths, English and other subjects. Our aim is that children complete homework daily as early in the evening as possible, spending about 10 minutes each day in Year 1, 20 minutes in Year 2, 30 minutes in Year 3 and so on.
- » Detailed information about the minutiae of school life is available in the Parents' Handbook.
- » If you would like to read the school's most recent Ofsted report, please visit www.dolphinschool.org.uk