

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



BEDFORD  
FREE SCHOOL

**RESPECT • HONESTY  
HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

[www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk)



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RESPECT • HONESTY • HIGH EXPECTATIONS

# W E L C O M E

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parent, Carer or Pupil,

### Welcome to Bedford Free School.

In this prospectus, I want to give you a flavour of the school. We run the school along the following maxim: it has to be good enough for my own three children to be good enough for yours. We call this the 'Sophie Test'.

We are very proud of our academic ethos and curriculum. The academic achievement of our pupils is paramount. We deliver a traditional curriculum to an exceptionally high standard to ensure good results. We complement this with enrichment sessions that all pupils take part in every week, and with international trips alongside an annual expedition to climb Mount Snowdon. You can read more about these things inside the prospectus.

Our GCSE results illustrate that we only settle for the very highest standards, and we are delighted that our pupils have achieved so well. Since our opening in 2012, we have established ourselves as an exceptional provider of an excellent education. With ex-pupils at the very best universities in the country, we tell our families that our mission is to ensure that all of our pupils can access university, and are able to choose the most selective universities at age 18.

We are very proud of our pupils, and place a strong strict but warm culture and ethos at the top of our priorities. Pupils are free to learn, uninterrupted by unnecessary

WE DELIVER A TRADITIONAL CURRICULUM TO AN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD TO ENSURE GOOD RESULTS



distractions, because we operate a strict approach to discipline. This ensures our pupils develop the habits that will be necessary to be successful, independent adults. Whilst we are focussed on academic outcomes, BFS is small and hence we know all of our pupils as individuals and get to know their families well.

After reading this prospectus, please do not hesitate to contact us to have a look round. Nothing really matches seeing a school for yourself, and we host visitors from all over the country who come to see our unique approach and our values – of respect, honesty, and high expectations – in action. I would be delighted to conduct a personal tour or a meeting with you.

With very best wishes,

**Stuart Lock**

Executive Principal

WHEN I  
WAS LITTLE  
I NEVER  
THOUGHT I  
WOULD GET  
INTO SUCH  
A GREAT  
SCHOOL

Year 7 pupil

RESPECT • HONESTY • HIGH EXPECTATIONS

# ABOUT US

## WHY WERE WE SET UP?

**Set up in 2012 by local teachers and parents, Bedford Free School exists to offer families a choice in Bedford.**

We believe that the quality of state education in the United Kingdom can be significantly better.

We therefore strive to show how things can be different. A very large number of teachers and school leaders from across the country have come to visit us to see our very high expectations of staff and pupils in action.

Bedford Free School is a unique school with a fantastic educational offer. We really do believe that our pupils can go on to achieve extraordinary things. In our young history, we have proved they can.

We are not afraid to try new ideas, learn from the best schools internationally, and to stop doing things that don't benefit our pupils.

## HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT?

**BFS is a small school of only around 500 pupils, so staff get to know each pupil as an individual and we have a family feel.**

This allows us to encourage, demand and collectively strive for academic and personal success. Where necessary, class sizes are kept extremely small to ensure every pupil makes the progress they are capable of.

We believe that all pupils deserve a 'grammar-school' style education, with access to an academic curriculum, strong discipline, high expectations and access to highly selective universities, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. We run a longer school day, and the building is open until 6pm for use by pupils. We also run 'The Electives Programme' - extra-curricular activities during the school day that all pupils take part in. Examples from the huge range of electives is shown elsewhere in this prospectus.

All pupils go on visits and can travel internationally, and all Year Seven pupils complete our annual trip to climb Mount Snowdon. This is symbolic of the mountain that they climb through their time at Bedford Free School to gain access to the most selective universities.

Examples of our wider curriculum is the "Music for All" programme across Years 7, 8 and 9 that sees all pupils receiving instrumental music lessons, accelerating the development of the school orchestra in the process, and our "100 Classics" reading programme which gives access to the best books, improves reading ability and opens up the wider world of literature and ensuing ideas to our pupils.

We offer extensive support, including 'prep' – supervised study time daily – and our free tuition after school for pupils who have been identified by teachers as needing a bit extra to keep up with our very high expectations.

Every morning, the whole school stands together during our morning address, where we articulate what it means to be a Bedford Free School pupil, how our values guide us, and how we 'work hard and be nice' to enrich the lives of our community and to enrich our futures.

We spend a lot of time working with and communicating with families. We offer two or three parents evenings a year, depending on the year group, regular parents' forums and we seek feedback at every opportunity.



# OUR VISION AND VALUES

## WHAT WE STRIVE FOR

**We believe, given the right circumstances, all children are capable of extraordinary things.**

We take our values of Respect, Honesty and High Expectations very seriously. Every day we talk about them during our morning address. They underpin our routines, our curriculum, and what we strive to develop in our pupils.

We are a centre of excellence for pupils between year 7 and year 11, playing a key role in the community that we serve.

We work hard on our culture in which the highest expectations and aspirations surround all of our pupils, delivering on our families' demand for excellent educational opportunities.

In turn, we expect our pupils to work very hard to meet the high expectations that the school and parents have of them. Our aim is that pupils who come to Bedford Free School break through any barriers and achieve their full potential.

WE ARE A  
CENTRE OF  
EXCELLENCE

For pupils between year 7 and year 11



# WORK HARD AND BE NICE

## EXCEPTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

**We are a warm and happy school because we are a strict school. Corridors are calm and there is no yelling or pushing, because they are silent.**

We recognise when pupils do well, announcing achievements in front of the whole school in the morning, writing to parents and ensuring that they know, and routinely awarding house points as public recognition. Our 'achievement card' allows parents to see how pupils have done every single day.

We do not tolerate distractions like mobile phones or other electronic devices. Everything is focussed on making sure that pupils can work hard and learn in an environment designed to maximise their achievement.

If things go wrong, we work with families to resolve them, and we always take action so that we can guarantee to pupils that they are able to learn productively at Bedford Free School.

Behaviour at BFS is exceptional, and visitors come from a significant distance to see how superb our pupils are.

## WE RECOGNISE WHEN PUPILS DO WELL



# CURRICULUM

## ACADEMIC AND BALANCED

**We deliver a broad and balanced curriculum at BFS. Our extended school day allows us to ensure that all pupils have mastered the basics, and hence we give extra time to English and mathematics.**

All pupils study the following lessons in Years 7-9: maths, English, science, Spanish, PE, religious education, history, geography, art, music, graphics, drama, computing and two electives. Many pupils go on to take French as well. In music, all pupils learn how to play at least one musical instrument and there are opportunities to play in the school orchestra or sing in the choir.

In Key Stage 4, all pupils continue to study a broad and balanced academic curriculum to GCSE, but are able to opt into additional subjects. All pupils study maths, English literature and English language, Spanish or French, biology, chemistry, physics, PE, history or geography, two other options and two electives. We enter pupils for rigorous GCSE examinations at the end of year 11 and support this with independent careers advice for all.

We work very hard on the content of our curriculum in each subject across all of their five years at BFS to ensure that pupils gain the necessary knowledge to play a full part in shaping the world as young adults.

The curriculum is supported by high-quality electives for all years.





# ELECTIVES

WELL-ROUNDED PUPILS

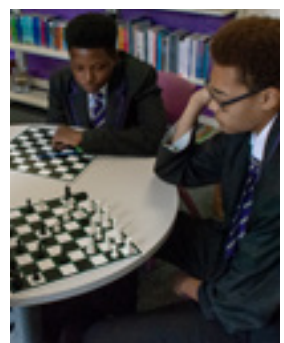
**Electives are specific to Bedford Free School and these are something that we are very proud of, as they help to create not just academic but well rounded pupils.**

Electives are school clubs which take place within the timetabled curriculum and provide the pupils with an incredibly broad range of activities that would not be possible to deliver in a normal after school setting. As electives are during the school day, every student at BFS has the opportunity to take part.

These activities change each term to give pupils more choice and experience. Electives give staff at BFS the opportunity to share their skills and expertise from outside of school plus a wide range of external suppliers supplement what can be offered to BFS pupils.

Rowing, Poetry, Foreign Language Leaders, Code Club and Sports are just a small sample of the electives available.

EVERY PUPIL  
HAS THE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO TAKE PART



# SPORT

## MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION

**At BFS we encourage all our pupils to have a full and active involvement in sport.**

In the PE department we strive to give pupils as many sporting opportunities as possible and are proud of the high numbers of pupils we have participating.

Pupils at BFS go offsite for PE lessons to venues such as the International Athletics Stadium, Bunyan Centre double sided sports hall and Kings Oak Primary school. This gives our pupils top class facilities in which to learn. We aim to include every pupil at BFS in school fixtures each year. If a pupil wants to represent the school in a fixture then they are guaranteed to represent the school in a fixture. Fixtures run every day at BFS throughout the school year, for every year group and gender.

BFS has a proud tradition of leadership in sport. Pupils from all year groups have the opportunity to visit local primary schools and lead on different community sports events in order to develop their leadership skills.

The PE department run numerous sports trips each year to expose pupils to professional sport and venues. Pupils can expect, for example, to visit MK Dons, Northamptonshire County Cricket and Milton Keynes Lightning Ice Hockey for matches plus take part in stadium tours of world renowned venues such as Wembley Stadium and Lords.

## BFS HAS A PROUD TRADITION OF LEADERSHIP IN SPORT





# MUSIC

FOR ALL

**Our 'Music for All' scheme enables every child in Key Stage 3 to learn a musical instrument.**

Pupils will have whole-class violin or guitar lessons once a week. This is in addition to their weekly curriculum music lessons. Through, 'Music for All' every pupil will be taught how to read from musical notation as well as perform within a class ensemble; which are amongst some of the skills required when studying for their GCSE Music.

Bedford Free School is also privileged to be collaborating with the Salvation Army, for their 'Just Brass' programme, which offers all pupils the opportunity to learn a brass instrument at no cost. Pupils rehearse twice a week in preparation for many concerts throughout the year. Currently, we have our own Bedford Free School brass band of 40+ players.

Pupils are therefore able to join our school orchestras very easily and have enormous numbers of opportunities to perform to parents and the community.

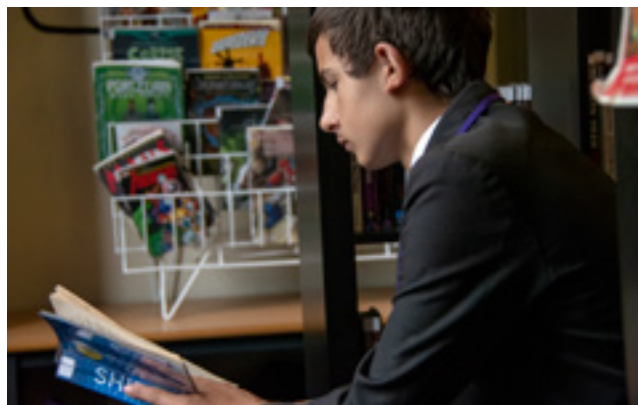
ALL PUPILS  
WILL BE TAUGHT  
HOW TO READ  
FROM MUSICAL  
NOTATION

# D.E.A.R

## DROP EVERYTHING AND READ

**Every day, for half an hour, the whole school reads a classic work of literature in supportive groups.**

Teachers model expressive reading and all pupils participate, taking it in turns to read aloud. As a result, our pupils are confident reading even the most demanding language, which helps them get to grips with the kind of sophisticated texts they will read at college and university. Even more importantly, it ensures they have the opportunity to experience the best that great literature has to offer: to be introduced to vibrant characters, to explore exciting worlds, and to discuss weighty themes.



# TRANSITION

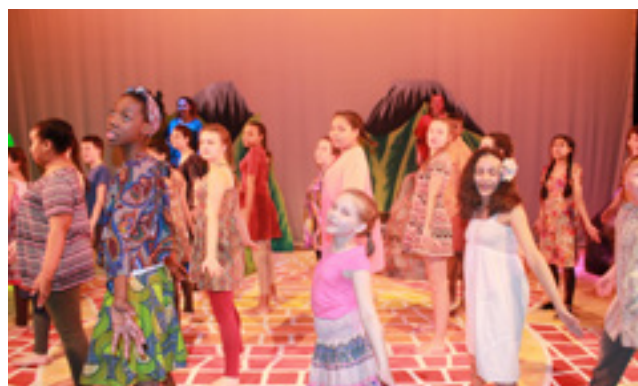
## TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Starting secondary school is a big step, so we make the transition process as smooth as possible.**

We contact families regularly once we know your child is joining us.

In the summer term each pupil is invited to attend an extended personal 'getting to know you' meeting, followed by a meet the tutor evening for all families to welcome them to the Bedford Free School family and finally a wonderful taster day to help pupils prepare for their new term in September.

In September, we have a whole week dedicated to having year 7 only in school. This means that they get to know our routines, the school and the staff without worrying about others.



Our strong pastoral system mean there is a dedicated Pastoral Leader for each year group, and extra staff to support the most vulnerable.

# INFORMED

## KEEPING YOU UPDATED

**We ensure that all parents receive two reports a year on academic progress.**

As well as this, parents are informed daily if pupils need to stay behind for any reason, including for free and targeted tuition.

To keep pupils safe, we keep in regular contact, including ensuring we know reasons for any absence, how we can support and not allowing pupils to fall behind. We therefore devote lots of resources to enable daily communication if your child can't attend school.

All pupils have a dedicated tutor, and part of their job is to ensure that communication between school and home is regular and productive.

# THE SITE

## CONVENIENTLY LOCATED

**Bedford Free School is housed in a specially converted building right in the middle of town, conveniently located for all of Bedford and Kempston.**

We have a purpose-built on-site library, hall, drama studio, extended canteen, specialist science, music, technology and art classrooms, and we go off-site to excellent PE facilities.

# ADMISSIONS

## NO SELECTION BY ABILITY

**Bedford Free School is a comprehensive school. We do not select by ability or aptitude.**

All applications for places at Bedford Free School are made in accordance with the Local Authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the common application form provided and administered by the Local Authority. These can be obtained through the Bedford Borough website [www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)

Once Bedford Borough has processed your application it will be forwarded to us here at Bedford Free School. A place will only be offered if we have not reached our optimum number in that year group.

A member of our Pastoral Team will then contact you to arrange an initial meeting. If we are unable to offer a place you will be contacted by Bedford Borough Council who will advise you on how to proceed.

# UNIFORM

## PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

**Bedford Free School uniform is extremely smart, with a professional appearance**

Please see the pocket at the back of this prospectus or the website for further more detailed information:

[www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk)



# SCHOOL DAY

## SUPPORTIVE OF FAMILIES

**We run an extended school day that is supportive of families and ensures that our pupils learn more. A typical day runs as follows:**

<b>7.30:</b>	School opens, library available for quiet study	<b>11.50:</b>	Period 4
<b>8:00:</b>	Canteen open for breakfast	<b>12.40:</b>	Drop Everything and Read
<b>8.20:</b>	All pupils arrive	<b>13.10:</b>	Lunch
<b>8.25:</b>	Whole-school morning address on the school values	<b>13.40:</b>	Period 5
<b>8.30:</b>	Morning meeting or Assembly	<b>14.30:</b>	Period 6
<b>9.00:</b>	Period 1 (elective on Wednesdays)	<b>15.20:</b>	Prep
<b>9.50:</b>	Period 2	<b>16.00:</b>	Free tuition/ catch up and optional homework club
<b>10.40:</b>	Breaktime	<b>18.00:</b>	School closes
<b>11.00:</b>	Period 3		



I HAVE  
PLAYED IN  
OVER 100  
FIXTURES  
IN MY  
TIME  
AT BFS

**Head Girl, Year 11**

IT IS  
AMAZING  
TO BE HERE.  
IT'S SUCH  
A HAPPY  
PLACE TO BE

**Year 7 pupil**



BFS REALLY  
SET ME UP TO  
ASPIRE TO GO  
TO A TOP  
UNIVERSITY

**Ex-pupil, at local 6th Form**

I was part of the team that opened Bedford Free School in 2012. Our aim was to create a school able to provide a world-class education for children of Bedford. We are driven by the desire of families who want the same for their children as us; for them to grow up to be happy, knowledgeable, very well qualified and successful young adults.

**Jane Herron**  
Head of School



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FREE SCHOOL

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