Introduction

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in working at St. Edward’s.

This is an important moment in the School’s development. The recent opening of outstanding new academic and performance facilities at the heart of the campus is accelerating the momentum evident over the last few years in all areas of school life – in academic results, in the development of the curriculum, in co-education, and in admissions.

For all its recent success, however, St Edward’s remains a refreshingly different kind of school. Our deliberate emphasis on selecting young people broadly and inclusively on their attitude and their ambition rather than narrowly and exclusively on test results makes for a community rich, diverse and rewarding in its interests and enthusiasms.

Academic work is unquestionably the most important part of our pupils’ education, but at St Edward’s there is much more to school life. Talented scholars, musicians, sportswomen and men, performers, dancers, humanitarians, adventurers, entrepreneurs, filmmakers and artists – among many others – live and work together, inspire each other, and become lifelong friends.

St Edward’s is forward-looking and progressive. It is one of the few UK schools to offer both A Level and the IB Diploma in the Sixth Form, and our academic programme was further enhanced in 2020 with the launch of pioneering new courses for the middle school years. These externally accredited new courses, Pathways and Perspectives, complement a core programme of GCSEs, more fully to develop pupils’ skills of research, collaboration and communication. The introduction of co-educational boarding in the Sixth Form is the most recent of the many innovations in the last few years on the pastoral side of the School.

Beyond Teddies, the partnership programme in which we work with other schools and charities, ensures that pupils engage with the community beyond the School and learn to play a meaningful part in the life of the city.

It is an exciting time to be joining St Edward’s. As you learn more about the School, I hope that you will share that sense of excitement and want to be part of the next chapter in its history.

Alastair Chirnside, Warden
‘They will tell you it is very down to earth – we thought it was **FLYING HIGH**’

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE
The School

Founded in 1863, St Edward’s is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 13 to 18 (Year 9 to Year 13). There are presently some 775 pupils, of whom 83% are boarders and 17% are day.

There are 13 boarding Houses of around 60 pupils in Years 9-13 – five for girls, five for boys and three co-residential Houses (boys from Year 9 to Year 11, and boys and girls in the Sixth Form). Pupils have lessons on Saturday mornings, apart from Leave Weekends and Exeats (half-term holidays), which typically occur every three weeks.

The boarding and day arrangements offer flexibility for families. Boarding pupils may choose full or weekly boarding, with weekly boarding at St Edward’s giving pupils the option of going home on Saturdays after sport and other commitments. The lively and varied weekend programme, however, means that typically more than half of the boarding community stays in the School on Saturday nights. Day pupils may leave at 6:30pm or 9:00pm on weekdays, with most opting for the latter so that they can join in the evening programme and enjoy leisure time with their friends.

Pupils take part in a wide range of sports and other activities in the afternoons and at weekends.

All teaching staff play a full part in the boarding and co-curricular life of the School.
‘Leading the way in educational initiatives is instinctive for this DYNAMIC Oxford school’

TATLER SCHOOLS GUIDE
Oxford

The School sits on a vast 100-acre estate, encompassing the Christie Academic Centre, the impressive Olivier Hall, the innovative North Wall Arts Centre, the high-specification Ogston Music School, a fully-equipped sports centre, a riverside boat house, pitches, courts, elegant Quad, golf course and canalside towpath. It is unusual to find such extensive grounds in a city boarding school; St Edward’s is less than a mile from the university city of Oxford and only a 2-minute walk from the busy urban village of Summertown.

St Edward’s staff are able to make full use of the Nuffield Health Fitness and Wellbeing Gym on school grounds.

The School’s location at the heart of one of the most academically and culturally sophisticated cities in the world is a significant bonus for staff. So too are the wealth of transport links to London and beyond.
‘My favourite part of St Edward’s is being immersed in the real world. Other schools can forget to give pupils a perspective on reality. This is where Teddies EXCELS’

FOURTH FORM PUPIL
Ethos

We seek to educate pupils at St Edward’s in a liberal and open community, in which scholarship is promoted, in which there is excellence in every area of school life, and in which there is a culture of service within and outside the School. We celebrate scholarship not only for the acquisition of knowledge through study but also for the development of a life-long interest in the life of the mind. We seek excellence for pupils in learning and in teaching, in pastoral care, in co-curricular opportunity, in diversity, in sustainability and in all school facilities.

We believe that real public benefit comes not only from the sharing of resources and from working in partnership with others outside the School, but also – and more importantly – from the commitment to serving others which pupils will develop during their time at Teddies. We also believe in allowing pupils to be themselves and to chart their own course through the many opportunities available to them at Teddies, as the School is also affectionately known, so developing the confidence and the independence to thrive at university and in their professional and personal lives.

At the same time, we ensure that pupils take full advantage of the facilities and opportunities available to them at the School, because we know that academic success and personal fulfilment follow from breadth of interest and engagement.
Academic

The academic ethos at St Edward’s is fuelled by a number of complementary principles and beliefs. We urge our pupils to look to long term life goals rather than just exam results; we encourage pupils to be reflective and to find their own solutions to challenges; and we value and promote a range of different learning techniques, actively helping our pupils to understand which work best for them. We are academically ambitious for our pupils and over the last decade have seen ever-improving outcomes in exams.

In the Middle School (the Fourth and Fifth Forms) bespoke new academically-stretching courses complement a core programme of eight or nine GCSEs. These innovative new courses have been designed by St Edward’s in conjunction with leading educationalists and are accredited by Buckingham University. A number of the new courses include direct links with university departments, giving pupils access to the very latest thinking in their chosen subjects.

Sixth Formers find themselves in the rare position of being able to choose between the International Baccalaureate Diploma or A Levels, a stimulating choice that enables our pupils to work to their strengths.
‘They emphasise **KINDNESS** a lot. Ambition and kindness don’t often go hand in hand’

THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE
Pastoral

About 83% of our pupils are boarders which means that our community bustles with life and activities in the evenings and at weekends as well as during the working day. Overseas pupils from more than 40 different countries make up 18% of the school community.

Our day pupils are just as much full members of the School as the boarders, living and working alongside them in one of our thirteen Houses, which are run by caring and experienced Housemasters and Housemistresses (known as HMs) supported by an Assistant HM, Resident Tutor and a Matron. The comprehensive pastoral care and support network we have in place help us to support our pupils during their teenage years at school.

The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for the School’s highly-regarded pastoral care system. Tutors have around 6-10 pupils in their care, and are responsible for both their academic and pastoral life of the pupil. We have three school Counsellors, our Chaplain and clerical team, and Sixth Formers are trained as Peer Listeners. Finally, the Heads of House supported by their Prefects, meet regularly with the Deputy Head Pastoral to raise any areas of concern.
Co-Curricular

Our co-curricular programme lies at the heart of our pupils’ experience of life at St Edward’s. On a daily basis they are provided with opportunities that will stretch and challenge them, develop their resilience or kindle a passion for a new interest or skill to be shared with friends. We fully recognise that learning takes place not only inside but also outside the classroom, be that on our own 100-acre campus or further afield.

From their first days in the School our pupils are encouraged to see their co-curricular programme as a gateway to developing teamwork and leadership skills.

All pupils take part in at least three sports and three non-sports sessions a week. Many do much more than this and we know that our most successful pupils are often our busiest. Half of our Shells sign up for the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, leading to Silver and Gold. Our Fourth Form join either the CCF or Life Skills whilst our Sixth Form are most likely to demonstrate a regular commitment to a service or charity activity via the ever-expanding “Beyond Teddies” programme. Many of our senior pupils also take the initiative by running new clubs and societies.

Above all, we expect our pupils to engage fully with the co-curricular programme and to do so with courage, confidence and curiosity.
Sport

St Edward’s has always had a first-class sporting reputation: both boys’ and girls’ teams have been county and regional champions in a variety of sports and at all ages.

Our approach on the games field is in line with the School’s belief that opportunity prepares all pupils best for adult life. In sport we believe this holds true, and games are a key feature of school life with every pupil involved in sport at least three times a week. Each term offers a number of Tier 1 sports, namely rugby, rowing, hockey, netball, cricket and athletics, alongside a further range of sports to add variety to the programme. Our sports programme is offered to boys and girls (with the exception of netball) which underpins our commitment to a truly co-educational experience. Whilst participation is a large part of our ethos, we are equally proud of our track record in supporting pupils onto elite performance pathways and we have numerous pupils involved in academy, county and national teams in a number of our sports, rugby, cricket, hockey and rowing to name a few. Our calendar is filled with a strong and demanding fixture list, and many of our teams successfully take part in County and National tournaments and events.

The School’s 100-acre site offers extensive green space that benefits both sporting provisions and pupil wellbeing. We are currently looking to develop sporting facilities on the school site that will enable sport to continue to flourish. This can already be seen by the refurbishment of our Athletic Development Centre and addition of floodlights on our second astroturf.

St Edward’s has fostered positive relationships with local clubs and schools that enhance the strong community feel around the School and surrounding areas. The majority of our teaching staff are involved in coaching the sporting and co-curricular programme, ably supported by a team of sports professionals with significant experience in both national and international competition and a full time strength and conditioning team.

Whatever the sport, we aim to encourage and foster team spirit, camaraderie, sportsmanship, leadership and discipline, and increase self-esteem at every level of participation. Both those that excel and play at the highest level, and those that take part in sport purely for the enjoyment and benefits of physical activity will find plenty of opportunities open to them at St Edward’s.
The Arts

The arts facilities at St Edward’s are unrivalled – the School boasts a nationally-acclaimed theatre and exhibition space, a purpose-built music school, excellent art and design studios, and a 1,000 seater hall, able to accommodate large-scale theatre, music and dance performances.

The stunning Ogston Music School houses all the facilities an ambitious musician could wish for. The elegant wood-panelled Recital Room at the heart of the building is surrounded by practice and ensemble rooms, a recording studio, a rock room and a dedicated Music Library. More than half the School is engaged in Music, with over 500 individual lessons taking place each week.

The North Wall Arts Centre, on school grounds, houses a professional theatre and gallery, and runs a critically acclaimed public programme. Alongside the public facilities, the Arts Centre houses the School’s impressive Drama and Dance Departments. Our Drama Department produces varied and challenging school productions, which are complemented by an annual trip to perform at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Pupils can choose to study drama or just take part in productions as an extra-curricular pursuit. Similarly pupils can choose to take formal dance lessons in a wide range of styles or join dance groups for fitness, relaxation and fun – over 180 girls and boys take up this opportunity, often attending multiple dance lessons each week. The North Wall Gallery is shared with our art and design pupils. All pupils benefit from having access to this creative powerhouse, and it is particularly valuable for those wishing to develop careers in the creative industries.

Our Art Department includes a broad range of teachers, all highly-skilled practising artists, and pupils are able to make use of four well-lit purpose built studios, a dark room and a dedicated ceramics studio with three large kilns and potter’s wheels. Pupils are taught how to express themselves artistically across a range of disciplines. They are taught to observe, to draw, paint, etch, sew, felt, sculpt, laser cut and silk screen print. They are able to hone their skills on the potter’s wheel under instruction from one of the UK’s top ‘throwers’. The Design Technology department is equally well-equipped and pupils are able to design and craft everything from large-scale pieces of furniture to intricate pieces of jewellery.
Beyond Teddies

Oxford as a city is important to St Edward’s, but so too are the people who make up our local community. Learning to work alongside people from a wide range of backgrounds and discovering the value of contributing to society are integral parts of a St Edward’s education. Our pupils run activities for primary school children, work alongside young people with autism, support local charities, help out at the city farm on school grounds, play music for the elderly and take part in public events such as marshalling the Oxford Half Marathon or assisting with city clean-ups. Our thriving partnership programme enables extensive social, emotional and academic learning opportunities for both parties. Our pupils gain an insight into other people’s worlds and an opportunity to find talent and confidence within themselves. We recognise the privilege of our outstanding facilities and share them in any way we can – whether that be running holiday sports clubs with the Cutteslowe Community Association or hosting teas for asylum-seekers with Asylum Welcome.