

## **QUEEN MARY'S SCHOOL – VALUES AND ETHOS**

### **VALUES**

We believe that truth, justice and goodness exist absolutely, and we teach our children the appropriate Christian knowledge and disciplines to enable them to begin their own personal search for that truth. We stress traditional Christian teaching of right and wrong, and teach children that God can help lead them towards truth; but we also explain that no one human being can fully comprehend truth. We therefore encourage in each child the ability and willingness to understand the views of others, and to judge for herself. We emphasise that it is the ability and willingness to seek for truth and to judge our own actions against an absolute standard that makes each of us human.

Personal happiness may contribute towards effective learning, but it is not a sufficient condition for human life. Pain and sorrow are part of the experience of humanity. Feelings are therefore not a safe way of judging whether an action is right or wrong. We teach that each child needs to pursue the spiritual dimension in order to be able to live a fulfilled life. In particular she must learn to avoid those actions which diminish her as a human being and seek to do those things which make her more fully human.

We seek, in a positive and supportive atmosphere of constructive criticism, to lead each child through reflection to better self-knowledge and self-discipline. As she leaves us she will be aware of the responsibility placed on her by God's gift of free will, and will have learnt those academic, spiritual and personal disciplines that enable her to exercise it to the good of her soul and of humanity.

### **ETHOS**

Queen Mary's is a medium sized non-selective independent school for day and boarding girls up to the age of 16 (accepting boys up to the age of 8). Our priorities are individual academic achievement to the extent of each child's ability, the development of musical and sporting talent to the highest level possible, and the encouragement of each child's leadership qualities and spiritual awareness.

By non-selective we mean that we do not on entry require any minimum standard of prior scholastic achievement. We welcome those with special educational needs within our competence. We encourage in each child a work ethic that leads her to work independently and thus we enable the academically gifted to study a wide range of subjects, including the classics, to scholarship standard, while allowing the average and less gifted to achieve more than a raw measure of her aptitude might suggest.

The arts (specifically music, art and drama) are taught formally, and encouraged in a range of extra-curricular choirs, groups and clubs. Excellence at the top informs and raises standards amongst beginners and those at intermediate levels of development. Physical Education is taught through the medium of gymnastics, swimming, dance, athletics and team games, both formally and in extra-curricular clubs. Individuals and teams are encouraged and helped to achieve national and county standards.

We develop in each child her leadership qualities of independence, courage, resilience, a love of adventure and commitment, along with the ability to work as a

member of a team and later to lead a team. Many of these characteristics and qualities are included within the general teaching and supervision at the school. Extra-curricular activities include riding, outdoor adventurous training and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Queen Mary's is a Christian school founded on an ecumenical Anglican tradition. We nurture and cultivate each child's spiritual curiosity, awareness and development, so that she may understand and value traditional Christian virtues (humility, unselfishness, temperance and calm), while learning to understand her own place and purpose in God's world and work. The school chaplain leads formal worship, but is also a full-time member of the teaching staff, constantly available to children.

In all these activities we encourage children to see their school as another home, their teachers as guides and mentors, and other children as their colleagues and teammates. We encourage a culture of kindness and an atmosphere of mutual respect, informed tolerance, trust and quiet self-discipline. Children are treated alike in all respects, but the nature and character of the school as home, rather than an institution, relies upon children (and staff) living at the school; thus boarding, whether full, weekly or occasional, is encouraged and weekend activities planned for year groups in turn. In order to allow time for all the above we shall continue to teach Year 6 upwards on Saturday mornings.