



Beyond & Above

OUR PROSPECTUS



CHEL TENHAM
COLLEGE

Mr Chris Townsend
The Head

Families and their children who could go to any school they wish, choose to come to Cheltenham College. Why is that? Why do we become their first choice? What is it that, for them, puts Cheltenham College somehow beyond and above the others?



For sure, we consistently produce top academic performance thanks to an outstanding cadre of staff who will, with dedication, kindness and drive, get each pupil to their own best possible place.

We are certainly academically ambitious and becoming ever more so, but ambition can be a much over-used word by schools. What it means for us is a level of academic achievement beyond realistic expectation.



"We never thought our son would be able to do a highly competitive science degree because he didn't like Maths. But the College supported him, gave him the confidence to succeed and he's had five university offers."

Parent







Appetite & Ambition



Quite simply, we look to astonish.

Whether that be for the already bright pupil who goes on to become exceptional, or for the child who arrives with us with no particular love of learning and emerges with a clutch of top grades.





"The College is big enough to have lots of different niches so pupils can develop their passions – it is a school where all children can thrive."

The Good Schools Guide



For sure, we also have a fabulous track record for sport of all kinds, from the mainstream to the less usual. Again, generating a love and talent for sport beyond initial expectation is our aim.

Performance

With a full calendar of fixtures each year and teams of all abilities, everyone at Cheltenham College has the opportunity to participate and succeed in sport. Those pupils that wish to reach the highest levels in their chosen sport are supported through the Talented Athlete Programme. Everyone benefits from our extensive sports facilities and the coaching and support of the College Sports Professionals. They include former and current international players and coaches as well as Olympians.

Sport at Cheltenham College

Athletics	Rackets
Badminton	Rounders
Basketball	Rowing
Clay Shooting	Rugby Sevens
Cricket	Rugby Union
Equestrian	Squash
Football	Swimming
Golf	Tennis
Hockey	Ultimate Frisbee
Netball	Volleyball
Polo	Waterpolo





For sure, our House system and associated pastoral care is exceptional, and I shall say more about that later. For sure, our range of co-curricular opportunities for all is as wide as that of any school. **And yet, it's more than that.**

'Excellent' all round

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils make excellent progress in developing a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils are excellent communicators; in particular they are articulate and expressive speakers and respectful listeners.
- Pupils' application of information and communications technology (ICT) skills across all subjects is outstanding.
- Pupils' achievements beyond the classroom are wide-ranging and sometimes at the very highest level.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.

"Teachers provide a positive learning culture so that pupils engage readily and positively in their learning."



Tangible & Intangible







After a tour of the school with one of our older pupils, the parents, who know their daughter or son better than anyone else possibly could, say, 'this just seems the right fit.' I am, of course, delighted to hear that, but how and why does that happen?

One reason is perhaps the resolution of a paradox. Parents want, simultaneously and without compromise, a demonstrably high level of academic achievement as well as a happy, adventurous, fulfilling childhood and teen years.

What we have managed to achieve here, with our Houses and how they work, with the relationship we foster between pupils and staff, which is based on respect and reciprocity rather than command and control, is a relaxed informality that never gets in the way of top level performance. **In fact, I believe it enhances our performance in all areas of school life.**

Cheltenham's 5Cs

Whilst pupils are at Cheltenham we support them to fulfil their unique goals and aspirations through the Cheltenham 5Cs.

Character

Developing skills and an attitude to succeed in the complex society we have; showing sound judgement, compassion and integrity.

Community

A commitment to the service of others and a readiness to contribute to the common good.

Curiosity

Intellectually, showing academic rigour and independent learning.

Creativity

Developing interests and talents beyond the classroom, and developing spiritual, moral and aesthetic awareness.

Continuous Excellence

Not giving up, and understanding that 'hard work conquers all'.





Heart & Soul



Why? In all areas of Cheltenham College, but particularly in the classroom, our relaxed atmosphere fosters originality and creativity in both teaching and learning, and what's more, it promotes agency – the pupil is encouraged to take ownership of their own trajectory.





"Despite its traditional exterior, the school prides itself on being innovative and forward-thinking."

The Good Schools Guide



Here at Cheltenham College, high achievement in no way equals high stress, something which all our community, pupils, staff and parents recognise and value highly.

It becomes natural to try harder, to go beyond, to achieve above.



I would like to talk a little here on our Houses, what makes them special and how they are central to establishing this sort of environment.

Mentoring by staff and by older pupils plays an important role. The creative planning of social spaces, House activities, House competitions, House down-time makes for an informal yet purposeful place, run as much by the pupils as by the staff. **All of this enhances the sense of togetherness.**





Always & Forever





That's how we go beyond acquaintances to friendships, beyond inclusion to belonging.

I cannot overstate the importance of this: belonging is a two-way street. The child belongs to 'here' and a part of 'here', for always and forever, will belong to the child. And that, of course, is the way that friendships that last a lifetime are formed.

And these friendships are vital for the future. Obviously all parents want their children to have a diverse and enriching social circle. But there is more to it than that. Every day I see that from a place of safety and security amongst their peers, our pupils are prepared to take a risk, to step right out of their comfort zone; in the classroom, where we encourage the pupils to leave the intellectual security of the known and practised in order to expand their horizons, on stage, in debate, at the batting crease, on the netball court, a violin solo, an abseil down a sheer rock face.



"Leaders provide a wide range of co-curricular opportunities that have a positive impact on pupils' mental and physical development and wellbeing."

Independent Schools Inspectorate 2026







The point is that every single one of the pupils doing these things stands by themselves but is not alone. Their friends are with them and they know that it does not matter if things go wrong. Here, at Cheltenham College, there is room to make mistakes and space to put them right. They will try again, and again and again, and with the encouragement of all around them, each child will succeed. **They know that determination and hard work will pay off. Just ask them.**



We do not have over 100 clubs, societies, activities for the sake of boasting about co-curricular breadth. There are two important reasons why our choice of things to try, to do, to join is so large.

The first is that, to develop the always-valued all-rounder we put our stock in pupils doing different things and everything in a free and continual exchange without ever imposing a hierarchy on the activities. Just pursue excellence in whatever field – horse-riding or history, science or scrum-half, acting or rackets, painting or piano. We are mindful of the imperative to develop the whole mind. The moral is ‘try to become good at ‘it’, whatever ‘it’ is. **This is crucial for taking the steps to university and into a career. I think it is also vital for a life fully lived.**

The Next Steps

Our most favoured university destinations over the last ten years:

Exeter, Bath, Newcastle, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Manchester, St Andrews, Leeds Oxford Brookes, Durham, Southampton and Royal Agricultural University.

Each year, approximately 25 pupils apply to both Oxford and Cambridge, with around four to six receiving offers and around 10 pupils apply for Medicine.

We are also delighted in the increasing interest in work-based learning options and applications for degree apprenticeships in particular. Recent leavers have applied to companies as diverse as JP Morgan, GCHQ, WSP, Cisco, PwC, BT and The Royal Navy.





And finally, as all of us with children know, when the child becomes good at one thing, they quickly become good at another, often unrelated thing. An applauded piano performance can boost a maths exam. A half century can improve an English essay. It is, of course, all about confidence. Confidence to say, 'I can'. 'I can have a go at that.' This belief in yourself, and others' belief in you, is what forms the whole. It is what shapes the trajectory of an entire life.

After all, that is what education is all about. And that is what Cheltenham College is all about. Cheltenham College. Beyond & Above.



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