



Clifton Lodge

Head's Welcome (Ethos)

Our Head, Mrs Beth Friel is currently on maternity leave. We are delighted that Mr Graeme Smith has joined us as Acting Head during this period and shares the same ethos and educational philosophy.

Welcome to Clifton Lodge School

What makes Clifton Lodge special? People.

Every school has people, but our job is first and foremost about developing people. At Clifton, our philosophy is driven by putting people first and particularly being pupil-centred. Many prep schools will talk of providing a broad range of opportunities and whether they are academic or strong pastorally. At Clifton, the academic and pastoral are completely interdependent and thus we do not just provide a broad range of opportunities, but we mentor and support the pupils to make the most of these opportunities.

Whilst our pupils learn subjects through our rigorous core-knowledge curriculum, they are also using real-life skills to apply this knowledge. This is an active and engaged process which taps into different senses and styles of learning. We include all children in all aspects of their learning. This is easy to say but in practice means individualising the learning and empowering the children. They do not need to fit a mould, they do not have to be extroverts, they do not have to have great short-term memory, but they do need to learn how they tick and take ownership and responsibility.

Teaching can often focus upon developing IQ and 'scores on the doors' but educators must not neglect developing EQ (Emotional Intelligence). Not only will an emotionally intelligent child learn better, but they will also know how to learn better, they will be more secure in themselves (and know why) and be able to empathise with others. Being more secure means they will be better equipped to cope (and indeed thrive) with the life ahead of them, not just in senior school but beyond. At Clifton Lodge, our pupils' 'scores on the doors' improve beyond expectations and are sustained far beyond the next test or exam.

So, at Clifton Lodge, it is not one size fits all. Each child, each member of staff and each family are respected for who they are and what they bring to the community. Such individualisation of learning is a challenge for all, but it is mighty rewarding. In teaching the children we also mentor them, so that each child knows how best they learn best. Our school virtues of Love, Integrity, Self-Control, Wisdom, Fortitude and Justice do not just happen. They drive all that we do and are cultural. We want to help our children to make their own decisions, learn from mistakes, be independent, use their initiative, be ambitious, collaborate, respect diversity, be safe, be happy, lead and thrive on challenge.

The school motto is “Optime” – Try always to do your best. The tricky part is that none of us knows where our best is until we test our comfort zones and find our zone of flow where the level of challenge, skill and knowledge lead to something really special. We make this process fun and it does develop a happy, confident, friendly environment for all, of which we are proud.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Clifton Lodge community so that you can experience this people-centred approach for yourselves.

Graeme Smith
Acting Head

Aims

- We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children and expect all staff, volunteers and other third parties to share this commitment. We want children to feel safe, happy and enjoy coming to school.
- To produce scholarly pupils who love learning and are curious about what they do not *yet* know.
- To nurture children’s talent while enabling them to tackle difficulties with a growth mindset. ‘Optime’ is our motto but we know that our ‘best’ is always changing and improving as we learn.
- To develop character through understanding strengths and areas for development and learning how to put the school virtues into practice.

Virtues

Arguably, virtue has become an unfashionable word and we aim to change that view at Clifton Lodge. We are proud to hold to, display and be working on the following: Love, Integrity, Self-control, Wisdom, Justice and Fortitude.

Love – putting others first, being kind, caring and loyal.

Integrity – doing the right thing (even when it is hard), being truthful and following our conscience, keeping our promises to others.

Self-control – understanding that fulfilling our desires or impulses is not always what is best for us or others; learning that the best things are worth waiting and working hard for.

Wisdom – pausing before we react; weighing up situations and deciding what is best to do, knowing the difference between what we can and cannot control; asking for advice from others when needed

Justice – treating everyone equally, standing up for others when we see injustice, fulfilling responsible roles, owning up when we have made mistakes.

Fortitude – enduring through difficult times, sometimes with the help of others; demonstrating resilience and perseverance mentally, emotionally and sometimes physically.