Schools Guide

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Reigate Grammar School goes through to top awards

Reigate Grammar has been shortlisted in the UK Social Mobility Awards, which recognise organisations that have created initiatives to advance social mobility within their establishments. RGS sets out to provide world-class education to children from all backgrounds. Its Changing Lives fundraising campaign is an award-winning initiative that provides bursaries to talented children whose families may not be able to pay RGS fees. The school raises and spends millions on fee reduction every year, through events, philanthropy clubs, will bequests and personal donations. The Nightingale Fund was also established in 2020 to provide bursaries to talented children of essential, lower-paid key workers.

New head at Ewell Castle School

Mrs Loren Macallister starts in her role of Head of Preparatory School this September. Mrs Macallister brings a wealth of teaching knowledge and experience including familiarity of ISI Inspections from her time as an ISI Team and Compliance Inspector. The values of Ewell Castle inspired her to join. The school runs a thriving Forest School, Young Enterprise Programme and has extensive co-curricular activities. It also uses the Building Power framework and bespoke pupil tracking and setting to ensure all its pupils achieve their potential.

VIP audience at Banstead Prep School’s production of Oliver Jr

Banstead Prep School was honoured by the presence of special guests including Councillor Jill Bray - the Mayor of Reigate and Banstead, local headteachers from Reigate Grammar School, Caterham School, Box Hill School and Harris Academy Sutton at a recent production of Oliver Jr. For Jon Chesworth, Banstead Prep’s headteacher, it was particularly rewarding to see the children get the opportunity to share their hard work with an external audience. He said: “This experience will go with them to their senior schools next academic year, not just a special and happy memory, but in the personal growth in confidence and all that they’ve gained from pulling together as a team, a great foundation for their future success.”

Holy Cross Prep Launches New ‘Little Sparks’ Pre-school

Holy Cross in Kingston has announced the launch of a new pre-school. Called ‘Little Sparks’, the school’s ethos is to ignite a flame that will define the arc of their pupils’ futures. Opening in September, the pre-school will benefit from the extensive facilities at Holy Cross and its specialist teachers. Open events take place on 18 September and 6 October.

Kingston Grammar’s Hockey Success

Kingston Grammar School students, Daniel Roberts and Tula Knowles have been selected to represent the U16 England Hockey teams, after many months of extensive training and dedication to their sport. Meanwhile, Kingston Grammar School alumni Zach Wallace, Jack Waller and Sarah Evans represented Great Britain in field hockey at Tokyo 2020. The school has a strong sporting legacy which includes 29 appearances by alumni across 14 Olympic Games with seven gold medals and one bronze medal. Recent gold medallist alumni include James Cracknell OBE and Sophie Hosking MBE.
Providing a first-class education is not enough for most schools - they are also striving to make the world a better place. From creating wildflower meadows to helping disadvantaged students catch up after Covid, schools and pupils are engaging with the community through outreach programmes that offer benefits to everyone involved.

Outreach comes in many different forms. Almost every school expects its students to volunteer at some point. The pandemic made face-to-face visits to elderly people impossible, but undeterred the pupils at St Hilary’s Prep School - one of the first dementia-friendly schools in the UK (a programme which aims to raise awareness and help those with the condition) sent paintings to elderly residents at a care home, and held online ‘Knit and Knatter’ sessions to handcraft woollen muffs with items attached inside and out to keep dementia patients’ hands busy, providing stimulation to ease the anxiety and restlessness experienced with the disease.

At Gordon’s School, a unique state boarding school near Woking, design teacher Tom Webb led the production of thousands of clear Covid visors for use at Frimley Park maternity unit and GP and vet surgeries across the area.

Pupils and staff at Reigate Grammar School rose brilliantly to the Covid challenge, finding ways to relieve the financial and emotional hardships in society caused by the pandemic. “Charity work exploded,” says Michelle Morgan, a spokesperson for RGS, which was named 2021 Independent School of the Year for Community Outreach and has been shortlisted in the 2021 Social Mobility Awards, the first national awards introduced to acknowledge organisations making a difference within their community. “We collected nappies, stationery, uniform and clothing for Stripey Stork, a charity that helps vulnerable families and babies; we raised money and awareness for Mind; our Combined Cadet Force completed the Poppy run for the Armed-Forces charities, and many more. We operated drive-through food banks with Loveworks Charity. Donations were received from over 200 RGS families which filled three RGS mini-buses.”

Students from Putney High turned their attention to the environment, clearing scrub on Wimbledon Common to maintain different wildlife habitats. “Bushwhacking was so much fun! It was great to see our progress,” says Ella, a Year 12 biology student. Peter Haldane of Wimbledon and Putney Common Conservators commented that the girls did an excellent job. Meanwhile Year 7 and 8 boys from Rokeby School, a preparatory school near Kingston, also cared for the environment by picking litter in public spaces, as well as helping elderly neighbours and volunteering in soup kitchens.

Most independent schools were already partnered with nearby state schools when Covid hit, partnerships that could involve anything from providing specialist teaching to joint careers evenings. Students from
Queen Anne’s School in Caversham led Mandarin lessons, helped with English reading and comprehension and provided Oxbridge interview mentoring in other schools - activities that have proved to benefit the tutors as much as the tutees. Queen Anne’s music department shares its facilities, and the computer science department helps upskill teachers across the Reading area.

Some school pupils had their learning interrupted particularly badly during the Covid lockdowns. Rising to the challenge of helping these pupils to catch up was Emanuel School, which consulted its partner schools to identify ways to help close the gap. Emanuel’s Saturday morning sessions during the Summer Term for 30 Year 5 pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have generated very positive feedback, with a session dissecting owl pellets in the science labs proving a particular hit.

Emanuel is one of the 14 independent schools partnering with 48 Wandsworth state schools in the borough-wide Ascent initiative which started last month, to share teaching and learning in local clusters. Around 1,000 children are expected to benefit from projects to provide enrichment and mentoring and to raise aspirations through access to science, arts and sports facilities.

The initiative will also provide professional development for teachers. Says Richard Byrne-Smith, head of Hotham School in Putney: “It has been a pleasure to work with our colleagues in the independent sector to explore what we can do to bring our communities closer together as this demanding year comes to a close.”

At Putney High School, which is in Ascent’s Roehampton cluster, Year 7 & 8 pupils fundraised to provide 120 holiday activity boxes for local children this summer, working in pairs to raise the £12 cost of each box. Putney is also creating a pipeline of future innovators, working with six local schools to build an autonomous robot to compete in the ‘The Ultimate Goal’ game - a challenge that hones students’ skills in design, project management and software engineering. Suzi Longstaff, head of Putney High, adds that Ascent is the embodiment of Putney’s drive for personal responsibility under the banner ‘It Starts With Me’. “We’re seeing more and more how our students are actively wanting to find ways that they can make a tangible difference and our involvement in [Ascent] provides an opportunity to do just that,” she says.

Scholarships and means-tested bursaries are a traditional way for private schools to share their privileged status. In one of the more unusual examples, Gordon’s School has partnered with Harlequins Rugby Club to offer full scholarships and a pathway into sport to talented young rugby players aged 16-18. Inspired by the sacrifice and dedication of workers in the NHS and beyond during Covid, Reigate Grammar School - which already has 170 pupils on means-tested support - has set up 10 new Nightingale bursaries for the children of key workers, paid for by hundreds of community donations. “They are a thank-you to our key worker community,” says RGS head, Shaun Fenton.

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The enrichment that comes from outreach works both ways. The community benefits - but so too do the students who carry out caring tasks. Giving is very good for the soul. Carrina Tunnicliffe, a spokesperson for Rokeby School, notes: “The feedback from the boys’ Reflection Journals show that they have thoroughly enjoyed helping in their communities, and that helping other people has given them a sense of satisfaction whilst increasing self-confidence as well as making other people’s lives better.”
Choosing a school for your child is, somewhat bizarrely, rather like buying a house! On paper, you may have a few choices that all look good and “tick the boxes” but somehow you are drawn to one rather than the others.

At Laidlaw Education, we have been advising parents for decades on the best options for their child and most of them, myself included, will look at the factual information and try to decide by comparing schools accordingly. But, like buying houses, don’t be afraid of your gut instinct. Embrace that part of your decision-making, along with your quantitative evaluation. If you, as parents, feel comfortable and at home in a school, it almost always follows that your child will be too.

So where do you start? When you begin to think about a prospective school for your child, try to ignore the advice and opinions of your friends. What is right for one child is not necessarily right for another. Many parents prefer to have all their children in one school but, certainly at Senior level, different schools may suit different siblings far better. The most important fact to bear in mind is to find the right place for each individual child to be happy and to be the best that they can be and, importantly, not better than their own personal best. This may mean putting aside your own aspirations for a child to be at a highly prestigious school if that is not where they are best suited to thrive. The journey through education is a marathon not a sprint, the teenage years can be demanding and a suitable environment is vital.

Do consider factors such as whether you are looking for a mixed or single sex school, is outside space important, how academic is your child – will they thrive in a fast-paced academic environment or will they achieve more if the pace is a little slower and more supportive? The list goes on.

Websites will give you information about staff qualifications, facilities, community programmes as well as SEN support and a sense of their pastoral care. You will read about extra-curricular opportunities and events which the school provide. Every school will have a Safeguarding Policy for you to read.

The round of Open Day events for visiting prospective schools for entry in September 2022 is now being advertised. Happily, and at present, these are now being held in person rather than online. Your visits will either enable you to see the school during a normal working day or after hours. These visits will not only give you a taste of the school but an opportunity to speak to current students and also members of staff. Do be aware that your guide is quite likely to have been handpicked and, indeed, many parents are influenced both positively and negatively by the pupil who showed them round! Whilst this can be a very helpful indication of the type of children who attend, try not to be too influenced by one individual. Look beyond and gather a general view. Do ask questions but also look at the less obvious pointers - the displays on the walls, the classrooms that you are not shown as well as those that you are encouraged to view. How do the pupils respond to the staff? Be objective and observe wisely.

Eventually, you will form a shortlist (although sometimes this can be rather long!). We advise thinking in three tranches - realistic, aspirational and safety net. As a mum and professionally, I have seen many thousands of children and families through this process. As long as you are honest with yourself, truly consider what is best for your child in terms of their academic and personality needs, everything else will fall in to place.

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REACHING OUT
Jenny Booth looks at how schools are making a difference with outreach programmes, and the benefits for both pupils and their communities...

The Schools Guide
Bilingual state primary in the heart of Wandsworth where creativity and individual talents are nourished

Marta Correia explains the importance of bilingual education and how APSol can prepare children for the future

What’s your vision for APSol?
Our vision is to provide all children with an inspirational creative curriculum, with rich language provision, where everyone can learn two languages, developing a global citizenship mindset.

We believe in nurturing individual talents and interests from the start, providing children with a range of wider curricular opportunities to build on these. In every lesson, teachers lay the foundations for pupils to build on their own creativity and confidence. This knowledge then allows pupils to explore their learning further and deeper, through investigation and opportunities that promote critical thinking.

Language is very important, how do you champion this?
At APSol, we believe that bilingualism is for everyone and welcome children of all language abilities and backgrounds. Educational research shows that, early exposure to different languages boosts brain power, improves performance in other academic areas and increases capacity to ‘multitask’. The National Curriculum recognises the importance of learning a foreign language and has implemented this in the curriculum from year 3 onwards. At APSol, we are able to offer daily language teaching and learning experiences from Reception, in both languages. In Reception, the children acquire language in an immersive way. From Year 1, children will have a daily language lesson and additional subjects delivered in the second language. We also see music as a language therefore believe that all children should learn to play an instrument, read and compose music. From Year 1, all children have the opportunity to learn a different instrument every year.

What do parents need to know about the school?
APSol occupies part of the South Thames College site, comprising of a tremendous amount of space over three floors, including excellent existing facilities: a spacious gymnasium, a large hall, a theatre/drama workshop room and state-of-the-art play decks for all the key stages being created this summer. Due to being a new school and only having opened with Reception in 2020, our children have small class sizes and experienced teachers. As APSol is a state school, children have the same expectations in relation to performance as with any other school: EYFS profile, Year 1 phonics screening, KS1 and KS2 SATs. We have a proactive parent teacher organisation and very good links with local teaching alliances to ensure we embed current pedagogical approaches in our practice.

TESTIMONIAL:
“APSol has changed my daughter’s life. The teachers are lovely and want to make a difference in your child’s life. The headteacher is kind and understanding and is always looking out for what is best for your child.” Maria Powell, Parent

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EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT SEAHORSE NURSERY

National Nursery Award Finalist, Mary Rose, appointed in new role as Education Officer at the award-winning Seahorse Nursery

When the first Seahorse Nursery opened its doors in Southfields in 1997, founder Julia Wolfe defined her nursery setting with just 3 key words: ‘loving, educational and fun’. In the 24 years since, the Seahorse team has continued to provide their children with a specialised curriculum which ensures educational excellence for every pupil. A key player in the design and delivery of this pedagogy will be Mary Rose.

Mary has been with Seahorse Nursery since September 2018 and is an integral and much loved member of the team who is well known across all Seahorse locations. Mary started as Deputy at the original Ofsted Outstanding Seahorse Nursery in Southfields. She starts her new position as Education Officer in September 2021, which is a role that will see her supporting practitioners across the 3 Seahorse locations in Southfields and Wimbledon Park.

When asked what excites her most about her new role Mary answered, “I’m eager to spend more time at the other settings to work alongside both long standing and experienced members of the team and support the development of our newly qualified practitioners and apprentices.” She is also looking forward to working on the implementation of the updated Early Years curriculum (September 2021) and new projects which will support specific areas of children’s learning, especially at our recently opened Wimbledon Park 2 location.

The role of Education Officer is focused on upholding educational excellence, and there is no one better suited for this role than Mary. She fully embodies the Seahorse ethos of ‘loving, educational and fun’ and understands our vision to ensure every child has the best start to their educational journey. She is an inspirational leader who is keen to share her passion for teaching and the wealth of experience gained since achieving her Education Degree in 1998. “Children love to know things that other people might not” Mary explains. “When I was at school, I was really inspired by my History Teacher. He gave us lots of interesting facts and stories, something that really stood out; we would be able to remember much more about a topic because of these amazing facts. I do the same when I am preparing a circle time for the children, I find a fact that I’ve never heard before about a topic and teach something I think will really wow the children. I know I’ve done a good job when I hear the children relaying this excitedly to their parents”.

Mary’s years of experience in Early Years means that she has an abundance of knowledge to share with practitioners across the Seahorse settings. This ranges from captivating the children through quizzes, which preschool aged children particularly love, to the best ways to keep children’s attention and always looking at activities through their eyes. Mary makes sure that all her circle time sessions and adult guided learning is interactive; she will often dress up and create special hats to wear that link to the topic too! “I put as much effort into my preparation as my teaching because I want the children to get as much as possible out of the session.” said Mary.

Both Julia [founder] and Harriet [Principal] are keen that the Education Officer role supports continued professional development for the whole team – this will include partner teaching and bespoke twilight learning sessions. There are many facets to this special role and Seahorse Nursery is incredibly excited to see what Mary will achieve in her new position.

Seahorse Nursery
Wimbledon Park 020 8944 5919
Southfields on 020 8789 1194
www.seahorsenursery.co.uk

“I have not encountered such a dedicated, intuitive teacher during the 25 years of running my Nursery. Mary adds an extra dimension to every encounter and inspires both her colleagues and children daily. She is a thoughtful, dedicated teacher who always puts the child at the centre of her thinking and considers the impact of every activity upon them.” Julia Wolfe, Founder of Seahorse Nursery

Learn more about Seahorse Nursery or book a visit at www.seahorsenursery.co.uk
Alternatively, you can contact the team at Wimbledon Park on 020 8944 5919 or Southfields on 020 8789 1194
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Thursday, 30 September 2021, 6.30pm
Sixth Form Open evening

Thursday, 14 October 2021, 2.30pm
Early Years Open Afternoon (ages 3–5)

Thursday, 11 November 2021, 2.30pm
Middle and Upper Years Open Afternoon (ages 9–16)

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Ewell Castle head, Mrs Loren Macallister.

Banstead Prep.
Parents of teenagers can sometimes be identified by their slightly haunted look. One minute everything seems fine and dandy, your children hanging off your every word with adoring eyes full of love and respect and then almost overnight your world implodes. They become teenagers and everything you know – or thought you knew – is turned upside down. Supporting children through the transition to becoming a young adult has never been easy. The last 18 months, however, have amplified the challenges and increased parental anxiety significantly as they try to support their children through the minefield which includes disrupted learning, social isolation through lockdowns and the dominance of social media. The disruption created by the pandemic combined with the heady highs and lows of adolescence have created a perfect storm. Many parents are unsure about when their child’s behaviour is something for them to worry about, or whether it is typical for children of that age. We recognise that parents and carers need all the support that they can get, not only to help them through the joys and challenges of living with their growing teenagers, but also to keep the wider family relationships healthy and strong.

It is perhaps too easy to justify not knowing which way to turn with the attitude that ‘it was very different in my day’. Today’s heightened and fast-moving environment bears little resemblance to what we knew at school, where there was less, if any, exposure to online pornography, no social media and certainly no ‘sexting’. Whilst it can be difficult for adults to relate without having shared this experience, our children still look to us to help protect and guide them – even when they think (and occasionally protest) that they don’t need us to. Educating ourselves is crucial. As parents we cannot afford to ignore or avoid uncomfortable issues. We, and our children, can benefit hugely from both understanding the challenges that teenagers face and accepting that what is normal to them can often feel alien to us. We need to accept that our experience of teenage life is outdated and perhaps not as relevant as we hoped or assumed. As a parent knowing when and how to seek specialist support, whether for mental health issues, destructive behaviours or addictions, is key to maintaining a healthy dialogue.

Over the last two years Kingston Grammar School (KGS) and The Kingston Academy (TKA) have formed a cross-sector partnership called FUTURES. Last year, the collaboration focused on providing high quality inspirational university and careers education events to students in schools across the local community; the principal aim of the joint venture is to enable students to make aspirational choices whilst being made aware of the opportunities available to them. In this post-pandemic era, though, we understand that there is a significant need to support parents and carers too and we are delighted to be launching a new strand of FUTURES which aims to support local parents through a series of parental advice and support webinars.

Deb Sherwood (Director of Partnerships and Outreach at Kingston Grammar School)
In the true sense of partnership between schools, students and their families, we plan to deliver a series of events that will help support parents through the seismic changes that take place during the teenage years. To launch this new initiative, we are absolutely thrilled to have secured Lorraine Candy for the inaugural webinar entitled ‘Top ten tips to make your family life more harmonious’. Lorraine is a mother of four and an award-winning journalist with over a decade of experience writing about parenting in national newspapers including columns in the Sunday Times Magazine and Daily Mail. She is former editor-in-chief of Sunday Times Style, Elle and Cosmopolitan. She is also the co-host of the chart-topping lifestyle podcast Postcards from Midlife. Lorraine’s latest book, Mum, What’s Wrong with You? is currently in the Times top ten bestsellers list. It is a warm and witty memoir in which she offers useful, easy-to-follow, well-researched guidance from experts.

Lorraine will be joined by Kingston Grammar School’s Pastoral Deputy Head, Sarah Humphrey, to talk through her tips on what is required to maintain harmony throughout what can be, potentially, some challenging years.

Please register here to join us for this FREE virtual event at 6.00pm on Tuesday, 21st September 2021

www.trybooking.co.uk/BDSZ

Many parents spent significantly more time with their teenagers during the various lockdowns than pre-Covid life allowed. Navigating changes that adolescence brings against the backdrop of a global pandemic is certainly a challenge. Our Futures collaboration supports not only students but parents too, through sharing the wisdom of experts who can give practical advice and support.

Charlie Venter, Senior Deputy Headteacher, The Kingston Academy

The active partnership between parents and school cannot be underestimated and these seminars have been designed to help parents navigate the tumultuous teenage years and to minimise the inevitable bumps in the road. If school and home are pulling in the same direction then the hope is that all teenagers can make informed decisions about their lives, with both teachers and parents supporting them all the way.”

Sarah Humphrey, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Kingston Grammar School

The Kingston Academy & Kingston Grammar School working in partnership

futures forum

Advice & support for parents of teenagers

‘Top 10 tips to make your family life more harmonious’

Tuesday 21st September 2021

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For more information or for a tour of the school visit www.rowans.org.uk or contact our registrar registrar@rowans.org.uk
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Sutton High School GDST is an independent day school for girls from 3-18 and is part of the Girls Day School Trust.

Our school is vibrant and diverse and our girls are proud to be part of our energetic and forward-thinking community. At the heart of our offer are the core values of courage, truth and joy.

We inspire and nurture individuality - you will not find a particular ‘type’ here. Our girls learn to find their own voice and be confident in who they are. Our size allows us to know and value every girl and we place enormous emphasis on both self-respect and respect for others. We know that girls do better when they feel better, so their wellbeing is our central focus. Every girl will find her own path here and she will forge that path with support from passionate and dedicated staff, committed to her success.

Beyond the classroom, our girls’ experiences are vast and varied. From our many co-curricular clubs to a comprehensive schedule of day-trips and residential visits as far-reaching as the Galapagos Islands, the opportunities are endless. As part of the Girls’ Day School Trust, our girls have access to a much wider network, which offers them trust-wide conferences, competitions and learning opportunities.

Our school strives to be a place that ignites a spark in every girl, so that she finds new interests and develops her individual talents.

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The School is well connected to the local area with a wide range of coach services.

For more information, please call the Registrar, Mrs Fran Clatworthy, on 01932 223593.
www.hallifordschool.co.uk

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Shrewsbury House School is an outstanding Independent Prep School for boys aged 7–13 located in Surbiton, Surrey. With a superb academic record, committed staff, small class sizes and dedicated pastoral care, every boy has the opportunity to fulfil his potential. Shrewsbury House School has a national reputation for success in Scholarships and Awards to top day and boarding Senior Schools at 13+.

Our Annual Open Morning will take place on: Saturday 25th September, 9.30am–11.30am.

Please register your interest by email registrar@shstrust.net
shrewsburyhouse.net

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Choosing a school for your child is, somewhat bizarrely, rather like buying a house! On paper, you may have a few choices that all look good and “tick the boxes” but somehow you are drawn to one rather than the others.

At Laidlaw Education, we have been advising parents for decades on the best options for their child and most of them, myself included, will look at the factual information and try to decide by comparing schools accordingly. But, like buying houses, don’t be afraid of your gut instinct. Embrace that part of your decision-making, along with your quantitative evaluation. If you, as parents, feel comfortable and at home in a school, it almost always follows that your child will be too.

So where do you start? When you begin to think about a prospective school for your child, try to ignore the advice and opinions of your friends. What is right for one child is not necessarily right for another. Many parents prefer to have all their children in one school but, certainly at Senior level, different schools may suit different siblings far better. The most important fact to bear in mind is to find the right place for each individual child to be happy and to be the best that they can be and, importantly, not better than their own personal best. This may mean putting aside your own aspirations for a child to be at a highly prestigious school if that is not where they are best suited to thrive. The journey through education is a marathon not a sprint, the teenage years can be demanding and a suitable environment is vital.

Do consider factors such as whether you are looking for a mixed or single sex school, is outside space important, how academic is your child – will they thrive in a fast-paced academic environment or will they achieve more if the pace is a little slower and more supportive? The list goes on.

Websites will give you information about staff qualifications, facilities, community programmes as well as SEN support and a sense of their pastoral care. You will read about extra-curricular opportunities and events which the school provide. Every school will have a Safeguarding Policy for you to read.

The round of Open Day events for visiting prospective schools for entry in September 2022 is now being advertised. Happily, and at present, these are now being held in person rather than online. Your visits will either enable you to see the school during a normal working day or after hours. These visits will not only give you a taste of the school but an opportunity to speak to current students and also members of staff. Do be aware that your guide is quite likely to have been handpicked and, indeed, many parents are influenced both positively and negatively by the pupil who showed them round! Whilst this can be a very helpful indication of the type of children who attend, try not to be too influenced by one individual. Look beyond and gather a general view. Do ask questions but also look at the less obvious pointers - the displays on the walls, the classrooms that you are not shown as well as those that you are encouraged to view. How do the pupils respond to the staff? Be objective and observe wisely.

Eventually, you will form a shortlist (although sometimes this can be rather long!). We advise thinking in three tranches - realistic, aspirational and safety net. As a mum and professionally, I have seen many thousands of children and families through this process. As long as you are honest with yourself, truly consider what is best for your child in terms of their academic and personality needs, everything else will fall in to place.
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Sue Laidlaw is the founder of Laidlaw Education LLP www.laidlaweducation.co.uk
Victoria Renford talks to us about her business

Victoria what is your background, experience and what do you specialise in?
For the past 10 plus years I have worked as an international travel nanny and personal assistant for high net worth families from across the UK. I have experienced first-hand the time and effort it takes parents (especially mothers) to organise, run and streamline a busy household.

When covid hit and everything paused, parents I had worked for previously contacted me to help with their family administration, so that they could look after and home school their children, all while continuing to work themselves. After a lot of research, I found no affordable service for families to outsource these everyday tasks and created Victoria Renford to fill that void.

Victoria Renford specialises in streamlining family administration and easing the mental load for busy parents.

How do you work with each family?
I work closely with every family to personalise my services to meet their individual needs.

At an initial meeting, I focus on getting to know the family and understanding the smaller details, from their favourite foods through to their favourite brand of socks.

The parents I support are in constant contact with me throughout the day by phone or email. I often find that short-fire messages and voice notes are the easiest for busy parents to communicate their wants and needs to me, without adding to their mental load. I have a client who sends messages sporadically throughout the day and another who sends a list each night with what is to be organised, sourced and ordered for the following day or week.

What does Victoria Renford take care of:
- Nutritional weekly food plans with Recipes
- Online Food shopping
- Shopping Online
- All things children related
- Bookings
- Appointments
- House Services
- Payments
- Reminders
- Travel Research

What benefits do you see from a family using your services?
Parents can regain hours of lost time every week and ease the burden of the mental load of running a household.

Whether it is the last minute birthday presents, the pirate costume needed for school on Friday or booking appointments for every member of the family, these child and household-related tasks continue to disproportionately fall onto mothers, creating extra stress and a never ending mental checklist.

I give families, especially mothers, their time back to spend with their children, work on their businesses, further their careers or just have time for themselves. I truly believe that life is too short for things that can be outsourced and Victoria Renford is the service that can be outsourced to.

Where do you see your business in 5 years time?
I want Victoria Renford to become a trusted brand for family coordinating. I see Victoria Renford expanding and evolving as family needs grow and change to ensure my families receive the same high level service they have become accustomed to.

“I have been using Victoria Renford for 8 months and the ability to message ‘I need yellow shorts for Jake’ and have 5 options sent through to me from the brands I like saves me endless amounts of time” Claire

Victoria Renford
07732 412951
victoria@victoriarenford.com
www.victoriarenford.com
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Saturday 25th September
9.30am–11.30am

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Sixth Form Open Evening
Wednesday 6th October
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initiative which started last month, to share state schools in the borough-wide Ascent schools partnering with 48 Wandsworth
Emanuel is one of the 14 independent science labs proving a particular hit.

with a session dissecting owl pellets in the have generated very positive feedback,
pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds during the Summer Term for 30 Year 5
Emanuel’s Saturday morning sessions
Emanuel School, which consulted its partner
of helping these pupils to catch up was
Covid lockdowns. Rising to the challenge interrupted particularly badly during the
Some school pupils had their learning
the Reading area.
department helps upskill teachers across
its facilities, and the computer science
Queen Anne’s music department shares
benefit the tutors as much as the tutees.
Oxbridge interview mentoring in other
Mandarin lessons, helped with English
Queen Anne’s School in Caversham led
Emanuel School to offer full scholarships and a pathway
has partnered with Harlequins Rugby Club
more unusual examples, Gordon’s School share their privileged status. In one of the
are a traditional way for private schools to
Scholarships and means-tested bursaries
she says.
provides an opportunity to do just that, “
difference and our involvement in [Ascent]
find ways that they can make a tangible
how our students are actively wanting to
embodiment of Putney’s drive for personal
responsibility under the banner ‘It Starts
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Hopetree Clinic provides assessments and treatment programs for children and young people. We have a small, but highly qualified and experienced team, who are at the top of their respective fields. Each practitioner has their own particular focus of expertise.

As the Clinic Director, what is your area of expertise?
Although I have worked with a range of different conditions, my main area of practice is training young people to overcome serious anxiety problems. Anxiety is arguably the most prevalent condition amongst young people today, having been exacerbated by the uncertainty and unsettling period of Covid restrictions over the past 18 months.

How do these serious anxiety problems manifest in young people?
It can come in a range of presentations – verbal and motor tics, self-harming, panic attacks, obsessive and compulsive thoughts and actions, low mood, detachment, and aggression, to name but a few.

Are there any re-occurring symptoms amongst all the cases you have treated?
Yes. The most universal symptom I see with all my anxiety cases is a powerfully negative inner speak. This negative inner speak is an area of anxiety that doesn’t get enough attention, nor do enough practitioners focus on it, in my opinion.

How do you focus on it?
The start of my anxiety program focuses on the universal physical symptoms of anxiety. This helps the young person detect the pre-cursors to an oncoming spike in anxiety, which allows for pre-emptive strategies to be used. Once the physical strategies have been mastered then we move onto the psychological aspects of anxiety. For all these types of cases I work with, there are unhelpful thinking styles that exacerbate their anxiety. For example, the teenagers I work with, regularly ‘label’ themselves and obsessively think such thoughts as ‘I am a failure’, ‘I don’t deserve to be happy’, and ‘I am ugly and fat’.

In addition to labelling, one of the most common unhelpful thinking styles for teenage girls is ‘fortune telling’, in particular, ‘mind reading’. This is when the young person believes they know what others are thinking about them, and it is nearly always negative. This feeds into the labels they have established for themselves, and without any tools to combat these thoughts, the cycles of negative inner speak spiral until it overwhelms them.

How do you treat such an abstract symptom as negative thoughts?
I have developed a unique sequence of training and phases of analysis. One of these phases creates a symbolic representation of their negative inner speak. This is then countered with a representation of the ‘good’ inner speak which is cultivated and trained over time. The combination of understanding the physical symptoms and gaining the tools to address the internalisations, crafts a powerful foundation upon which to build.

You speak of foundations, have you seen any deeper root causes for the surge in anxiety cases?
Yes. The most common fundamental thought that comes up during the training is ‘I don’t know who I am’. This identity crisis leads to young people questioning themselves, comparing themselves to others, and feeling hopeless and alone in the process.

How do you broach such a sensitive subject?
The foundation of my treatment programs is the trust I build in sessions. That trust is built by providing a safe environment in which they can learn about their anxiety and ultimately themselves. I try and bring a lot of humour into my sessions, if the young person is having fun and enjoying their session about high anxiety then we are doing something right. I want the young people I work with to leave my sessions feeling better equipped to face the world, so that they can face their problems with confidence and hope instead of anxiety and trepidation.

How can families contact you?
Parents can email the clinic at info@hopetreeclinic.co.uk, call us on 020 8487 8308, or visit our website at www.hopetreeclinic.co.uk to find about our services.

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