

WHY GO PRIVATE?

Choosing a School for your Child

WITH independent school pupils three times more likely to achieve the top grades at A-level than state school pupils it's not surprising that, despite the current economic climate, many families opt to send their children to independent schools.

It's not purely for academic reasons that parents choose to turn away from the state sector. Other reasons include the better pupil to teacher ratios with smaller class sizes, the perception of improved standards of behaviour and the potential future career prospects.

Another factor for many parents is the range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that are the norm at most independent schools. With the variety of different sports, such as fencing or cricket, regular musical performances and shows, house competitions and preparation for wider life through schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, there are many opportunities for children to immerse themselves into life at school.

Other important criteria for parents when considering schools are the levels of direct contact with teachers and the communication with home. Most independent schools should take pride in how they communicate with parents and the best will aim for daily contact, albeit when handing over or picking up, and for regular emails, texts, newsletters, Twitter feeds and accessibility through their websites or Apps. An open door policy is crucial and teachers in independent schools will be readily available for discussions about pupils' progress.

The Oak-Tree Group: A privately-owned group of local schools

The size of the school matters. Smaller, nurturing environments offer a more personalised service whilst larger schools often treat children more as a number than an individual. Each Oak-Tree School caters for between 200 and 300 pupils, providing smaller environments in which children can flourish. Collectively the Group educates well over 1000 children and this strength in numbers ensures that resources are readily available to continually enhance the education and provide additional opportunities for academic excellence.

With average class sizes of between 15 and 20, a more personalised education is possible with each child treated as an individual. Teachers know each child well and can provide support and challenge in each lesson. Over 320 teachers, keyworkers, specialists and support staff are employed by the Group, so there is an extremely high level



of expertise, knowledge and shared resources. This is a far cry from the average state school size of 30.

Opportunities are frequently arranged for pupils to get together within the Group for shared learning experiences, extra-curricular activities or inter-school competitions. Popular events include the Oak-Tree Year 3 overnight Camp, the Oak-Tree Art Exhibition, the biennial Oak-Tree Performing Arts Festival and entertainment for families with the Group Fireworks Display and parents with the Group Summer Ball.

Choosing the right school for your child is difficult, and it is important to make the right decision first time. An Oak-Tree education has become the standard to aspire to in the Epping Forest area and the schools will help you to make the right choices.