



## SEVENOAKS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Since taking over as Headmaster in September 2005, my aim has been to continue to promote a team effort between the staff, the children and the parents. Parent involvement is of paramount importance in the educating and bringing up of children in the home, the school and in the outside world encouraging them to work hard, play hard and to have a positive approach to each other.

Obviously, academic work is important but so are sport, music, art, design, technology, drama and hobbies. We have, on our staff, people who are able to supplement their teaching expertise by giving their time to the children in order to get to know them well. Through understanding their characters we are able to guide them through their difficulties and enjoy their successes.

Sevenoaks Prep is about seeing the children as individuals. There are very few children who do not want to work and play to the best of their ability, both for their own satisfaction and to please others. In the main if any child is not working or behaving this could stem from a wrong perception of the child's needs and talents either by an adult or by the child him/herself. Parents are asked to make contact with Form Teachers or Subject Teachers immediately if there is an incident involving work or play that needs clarification and resolving. The Deputy Head, Pastoral Heads and Heads of Departments, as well as Mr Pears and I are also available at any time for parents to contact if they feel the incident requires further attention. This leads to plenty of discussion on life and how each individual's needs can be catered for within the team environment fostered between home and school.

We believe that we must give children the opportunity and freedom to "have a go" at anything they wish to try and provide the necessary back up if they make mistakes. We must encourage them, supervise them and guide them, but most important of all we must talk with them and give them our time. We should never compare children, realising that children mature at different times and in different ways and accepting that, as long as they are trying their best, we can ask for no more. Self-competition is what we hope to help them accomplish by the time they leave, with the school and the parents being the role models.

These years are a learning process for all of us and the secret for us as educators is to develop an understanding of the potential of each child. Our perception of what we, as parents and teachers, want for them and what they want and need for themselves has to be the same and this takes time. Children are certainly a part of their parents but the much larger part is their own individuality and we need to help them to develop their personality slowly but surely through their time at the school.

At Sevenoaks Prep, the children are taught to realise their own potential and also to appreciate that we are all different and that one must be tolerant of other people's views and ideas. Children need to be taught and helped to get on with one another from an early age and to help each other

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whenever possible. A child who is finding something easy might be asked to help someone who is having difficulty so that they are brought up to understand that we all have our strengths and our weaknesses. We must teach them to be positive, not negative. We are all so much better if we are confident in the way we are coping with life and our job as teachers and parents is to make sure that all children feel confident in their own abilities.

The school has to make sure that the parents are involved in their child's education so that both parents and teachers are setting the same standards at home and at school. After all it is a learning experience for the parent as much as for the child, and the teachers here always strive to have a good relationship with the parents. We all take a long-term view of the child and encourage their social development as well as their academic progress. It is most important that we set them on the right course to make the most of their next educational environment, wherever that may be, in order to achieve at sixteen or eighteen after which point they have the independence to take on the demands of life for themselves.

Our 'Golden Rules' in the Junior School, 'Way of Life' and the words of our school song not only provide guidance for life in the Prep community, but also are relevant to any community. We are involved in the local community through offering our facilities at weekends and holidays for: the Charlton Athletic Football in the Community Scheme, various local sports clubs putting on coaching in fencing, cricket, rugby and football, a pilates class, a 'Rock School' for budding local musicians and the local primary schools' music festival, to name but a few. Hopefully those that attend these activity schemes in our environment, along with our own pupils, enjoy and benefit from our community ethos.

We also foster an understanding of those in less fortunate positions than ourselves through PSHE lessons, current affairs, assemblies and fund raising for charity. We raise money each year for several charities with "home clothes" days, baking cakes, sponsored spells, etc. We run an annual Young Enterprise Scheme in which Year 8 raise funds for the Hope HIV projects in Sub Saharan Africa. We've skipped for the British Heart Foundation, had an "Africa Day" for the starving flood victims and put together "Love Boxes" at Christmas.

We try to make Sevenoaks Prep a happy family community where the children have space to be themselves, but where they know that if they step out of line, appropriate discipline will be employed. They know that the staff will always have time to talk to them and discuss their achievements and disappointments. The Prep is a school where we, together with the parents, are trying to do the very best for the academic, personal and social development of the individual.



**Philip Oldroyd**  
**Headmaster**