

Sandbach School



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Sarah Burns, Headteacher

There has been a school for boys in Sandbach since 1677. It moved to the current site in 1853 when Sir Gilbert Scott designed the façade of, what is now known as, School House. Our school oozes tradition and heritage and whilst we retain all the very best of these, the governors and I are very determined that current and future students will experience an education that equips them to take their place confidently in an ever changing world.

There are currently 1260 students at the school. Historically an independent school, changes to its status took place in the 1950s and again in the 1970s when it became a comprehensive school for boys. 2011 saw another conversion to a Free School. It was at this time, coinciding with a year of turbulence in the exam system, that the school experienced a dip in outcomes. Subsequent deep self-examination ultimately gave rise to year on year improvement: an Ofsted rating of 'Good', in all areas, followed in 2014 and our best ever results at GCSE in 2016.

Our motto 'Ut Severis Seges' or 'as you sow so shall you reap', underpins our philosophy of 'work hard, play hard'. We encourage students to take an active part in school life, providing for them as many extra-curricular activities as is possible. As boys engage with us, developing their passions and talents, we have found that they are much more likely to engage with other aspects of their learning. We questioned, back in 2012, whether it was possible to put our energies into both extra-curricular provision and raising standards of academic achievement but we quickly concluded that this philosophy cuts to the core of who we are. So, we set about strengthening our resolve and commitment to every aspect of the experience that students have with us, from primary school transition to the Sixth Form.

REPORT CARD

- » Headteacher: Sarah Burns
- » Location: Sandbach, Cheshire
- » Motto: Ut Severis Seges
- » A Free School (2011)
- » 11–16 Boys; Co-Educational Sixth Form
- » Number of Students: 1260
- » Ofsted: Good (November 2014)
- » 72% achieving En & Ma at GCSE 2016
- » Part of the Chimney House Alliance
- » A Member of the International Boys' School Coalition (IBSC)

“Our mission is to provide an education that enables boys to thrive because it caters for their specific needs”

Staff are firmly committed to our ethos. We consider that being a school for boys still has a relevance in today's society; particularly when national and international data on the large gender achievement gap between boys and girls is considered. Our mission is to provide an education that enables boys to thrive because it caters for their specific needs.

As specialists in teaching boys, our teachers take into consideration the interests and attributes unique to boys when they prepare their lessons. The physical environment and active engagement with their learning are key attributes of lessons. To furnish this, we spent time and energy developing a professional learning community for staff to build expertise, share ideas and collectively learn from each other. Teaching staff all keep a teaching and learning log which charts their professional development throughout the year. Opportunities for further development exist via our membership of the local Chimney House Alliance of Schools. With a teaching school at the heart, the Alliance trains the next generation

Building lasting friendships



of teachers in addition to offering professional development for teachers at every stage of their career.

In 2015, we also joined the International Boys' School Coalition to become part of a worldwide group of schools that are committed to the education of boys. We believe that we can learn much from the research and best practice that we have access to through this network.

In changing to a two year Transition and Induction phase on entry to the school, we have taken cognisance of the research into boys' responsiveness to shorter term targets. During these crucial years we are providing a curriculum that develops the skills and knowledge that students require in preparation for the more challenging qualifications phase.

A thriving House system lies at the heart of the school. Placed into houses on entry to the school, pupils get opportunities to represent their house within a month of the start of term. It is a student-led system, with house captains in every year group, under the leadership of the student head of house. Well established sporting competitions like the swimming gala,



The School Senate
2016-17

tug-o-war and road relay have more recently been joined by the Spelling Bee, Music Competition, Mathlete and chess, to name but a few. Rivalry is high and competition fierce, as students strive to give their best for their House.

In educating the whole person, we place great emphasis upon developing character through sport, music, performing arts, the Combined Cadet Force and a huge number of other activities that enhance the classroom experience. Regionally, we are known for our success in an array of sports and exceptional performances in the performing arts and music. In addition, international visits and charity support at home and abroad, help to give students a global perspective. In 2015/16 we were awarded National Citizen Service champion status award and we also were 'Highly Commended' in the Speakers' School Council Award for the work of our Senate in giving all students a voice.

A 'diamond' approach to education sees boys benefit from a co-educational primary phase and

then again at post-16 within our co-educational Sixth Form. Our emphasis at a sixth form level is to develop 'outstanding people', ready to take the next steps on their career pathways. We expect and nurture leadership at all levels, providing numerous opportunities for students to develop. Whether by being part of the Head Boy/Girl team, a senior cadet in the CCF, as a student curriculum leader, a member of the Senate, a House leader, a club leader or via community service and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme we actively engage students to co-lead school life with us.

All of the above have meant funding challenges for the school. The success of the school and the housing boom within the local area have put significant pressure upon school places. These, coupled with the added pressure of being one of the lowest funded authorities, are considerations for the governing board. Expansion plans and discussions about multi-academy trusts are well underway heralding exciting times ahead for the school.

“The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. These contribute very well to students becoming well-rounded individuals”

Ofsted 2014