



Solefield School

A fresh perspective on boys'
preparatory education



*Value yourself, value others,
value our world*

Welcome to Solefield School.

I am proud to be the Head of an academically successful, happy, caring school where kindness is paramount.

Our school values "Value yourself, value others, value our world" run through everything that we do.

It is our aim to exercise and stretch all of our boys' minds so they acquire a love for learning. Working in small classes, with dedicated teachers, our pupils receive the support and challenge they need. You will not be surprised to learn that all our boys gain places at their first choice of senior school, whether that is at 11+ or 13+.

A golden rule runs through our school community; treat other people as you would like to be treated. I am always very proud of the well-rounded, courteous, confident, thoroughly decent young men that move on from Solefield, ready for the next stage of their lives.

Our website is filled with information and the details you need as a prospective parent. My hope is that this prospectus gives you a good feel for Solefield's fresh perspective on boys' preparatory education.

Helen McClure

Helen McClure
Headmistress

Experts in boys

Boys are fun, forgiving, funny and full of energy.

At Solefield we offer a safe place for boys to take chances, express their emotions and discover subjects such as the arts, classic literature and drama. Understanding the key differences in the way that boys learn and develop is an essential part of delivering an effective and stimulating education and contributes to our considerable academic success.

We cater to boys' learning preferences and teach in ways that boys learn and respond to best, with a strong competitive and active component. We also focus in deploying approaches that lift achievement in reading and writing.

Our regular and focussed pastoral sessions make a comfortable environment in which pupils can talk about their emotions, shielded from the pressures of gender.

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“I have happy boys and I think that stems from the dedication of the teachers and the culture throughout the school.”

- Parent

Contemporary education

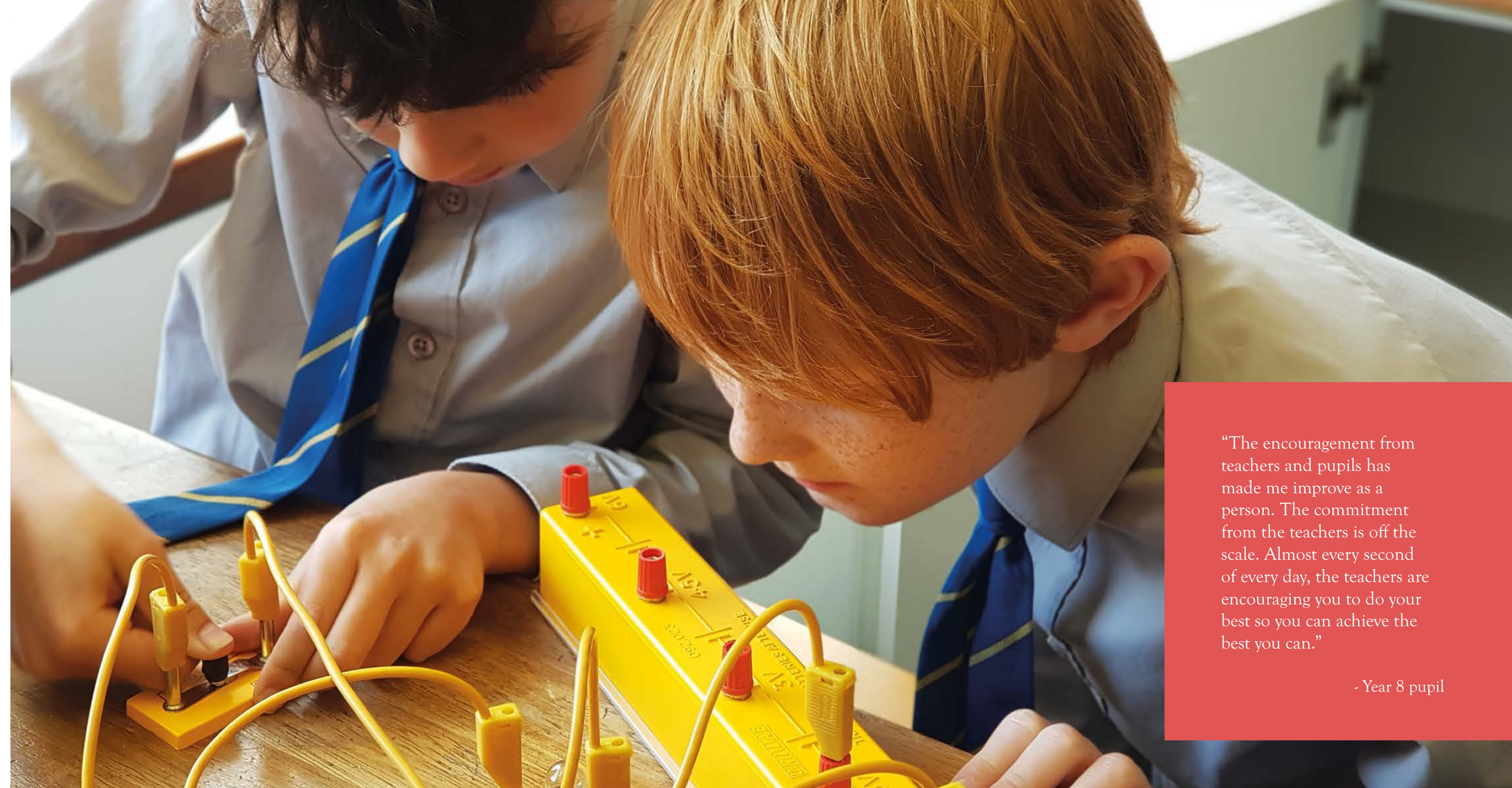
Solefield offers a contemporary, fresh perspective on all aspects of boys' preparatory education.

We encourage our pupils to master the basic building blocks for all further learning. Socially, each child must learn to get along with other children, to be considerate of their needs, to listen carefully, and to take turns. We help them to do this in all areas of school-life, be it in the classroom, playground or on the games' field.

Our aim at Solefield is to nurture kind, honest, gentle young men with good manners and a strong sense of integrity. Our "Man of the Class" award, given every term for decency, honesty and reliability, is much coveted.

We are unusual for a boys' prep school in that the ratio of male to female teaching staff is almost 50:50 and we have a female Head and Deputy Head. It is important for boys to have role models who are interested in education, the arts and reading and to see women in leadership roles.

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"The encouragement from teachers and pupils has made me improve as a person. The commitment from the teachers is off the scale. Almost every second of every day, the teachers are encouraging you to do your best so you can achieve the best you can."

- Year 8 pupil



Skills for life

Manners, courtesy and discipline are key life skills that we aim to embed in the boys at an early stage.

From their very first day with us, we insist gently on the small things: pride in our school uniform, the use of “please” and “thank you” and proper table manners. Learning to share and take turns are also vital, as too are the importance of listening to others and respecting their opinions. As they grow older, our boys are all encouraged to speak naturally to grown-ups, make eye contact, use a firm handshake and hold doors open.

We prepare pupils for their future lives, not just to pass exams. Solefield pupils learn to collaborate, listen and speak in public from a very young age. Thinking Skills and Philosophy, Politics and Ethics lessons run throughout our curriculum for children as young as 7.

Our intention is for pupils to become life-long learners and develop the necessary transferable skills that will equip them for the fast-changing world beyond Solefield.

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“It is a place where you can build your confidence and a place where you can learn skills needed for your future. At Solefield it is never important if you win or lose a game for the teacher. It is more important that you learn.”

- Year 8 pupil



Kindness

Solefield is the school where it is cool to be kind.

A golden rule runs through our school community: treat other people as you would like to be treated.

Kindness underpins everything we do at Solefield. Pupils and staff are team players and show each other respect and courtesy without regimentation. Parents also contribute to this intangible quality with their enormous support and input into school life.

Our Kindness Award scheme is a pupil led initiative. The awards are presented every week in assembly by the Chair of School Council with each nominee receiving a round of applause, certificate and small prize. These awards are given to boys from Reception to Year 8, nominated by other pupils.

Many parents report that their sons are truly happy during their time at Solefield and that they leave as a kind, confident, resilient, well-rounded, and caring individual.

“Solefield has always encouraged our son to be more of everything: more inquisitive, more thorough and always to be kind. This will stay with him always.”

- Parent



Nurture and well-being

As a small school and tight-knit community, the onus for looking after the wellbeing of the pupils is on all staff, not just their class teacher. All Solefield staff are quick with a smile, a chat and follow up any issues, no matter how small.

Our Wellbeing Team looks after the mental health of all pupils and staff. We also have trained counsellors available for the pupils.

Our fiction reading initiative encourages boys to read with their class teachers at the start and end of every school day. This allows boys to disengage from the real world and rest their cognitive capabilities to be able to get back to peak functionality. We teach our boys to value this stillness and relaxation and hope to create a habit that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

As a school, we try to approach problems as calmly and confidently as possible and encourage parents to do the same. Our sense of calm allows pupils to feel secure. Furthermore, we are aware that what we do is keenly observed and copied by pupils.

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“It’s a lovely place to be - it’s an amazing school!”

- Year 5 pupil

Choice and freedom

At Solefield, choice and freedom are evident in many areas of school life.

Pupils have choice and freedom in the way they develop as an individual because we encourage all the boys to seize the many opportunities on offer. Supplementing the boys' class-based learning is a broader programme of enrichment designed to nurture and stimulate their developing intellect. We also offer exhilarating and inclusive programmes for Sport, Drama, Music and Art.

Solefield parents have the choice and freedom to make the right decision relating to the best future school for their son, be that at 11+ or 13+.

Our small class sizes and pastoral care mean that we know each pupil very well and are able to offer valuable guidance regarding the best senior school route for each boy. Parents are able to come to meet with the Headmistress and Deputy Head at any stage in their child's learning journey to discuss future school choices.

This results in our enviable record of our pupils gaining places at their first choice of senior school.

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“Our son had the freedom to try so much and discover himself.”

- Parent



Pupil voice

We recognise that Solefield pupils have a lot to say about their life at school.

Representatives from the School Council, Eco Team and the Food Committee from each class meet regularly to discuss new ideas. Feedback from these meetings is shared with the whole school.

Our pupil bodies are vital to the school. They have a budget and meet with SLT and Governors. Their achievements include helping to design the new playground, designing the recycling bins, introducing Storytime and Kindness Awards and running stalls at school fairs.

Our Eco Team is working hard towards our first award. They have written to our local MP to ask about recycling facilities in Sevenoaks and have led a campaign on single-use plastics.

All pupils from Year 1 upwards complete an anonymous online survey about the school every year. School Council looks at the results to best see how the school can be improved.



“Solefield’s greatest strength is to help the children to believe in themselves, helping them to discover what their strengths are.”

- Parent

Charity and community engagement

Solefield has an outstanding history of supporting local, national and international charities.

We place great importance on helping others and we aim to educate our boys to become compassionate, caring individuals. By participating in a variety of fundraising activities and events each year, we hope that our pupils will learn that they can make a difference to the lives of others and that by working together we can help bring about change.

Each year, a Year 8 Charities Prefect is appointed to assist with the organisation and delivery of Solefield fundraising events.

Our whole school sponsored walk recently raised £5,154. This money was donated to the local Mind charity and the International Plastic Oceans charity. Another recent charity event raised money for the National Deaf Children's Society in support of our two pupils who have benefitted from cochlear implants.

We send many resources to a school in Malawi and have sent members of staff there to help with projects and teacher-training.

“We support a variety of different causes locally, nationally and internationally. My favourite charitable activity at Solefield is the sponsored walk in Knole Park. It is a lot of fun for everyone involved and there is a real sense of community.”

- Charities prefect



Family atmosphere

Solefield is renowned for its family atmosphere.

Our small class sizes allow pupils and teachers to get to know each other very well. Teachers work in year group teams, spending lots of pastoral time with boys and taking them for games, clubs, residential and day trips as well as lessons.

We are unashamed of our use of older pupils as role models. The older boys in the school are acutely aware of the influence they have on the younger boys and the responsibility that such influence brings. They work with younger pupils every day as their “class monitors”, listening to them read or helping with their work.

The older boys undertake training to act as “peer mediators” and the younger pupils can seek their help about situations which may make them unhappy or stressed. Year 8 boys don armbands at breaktimes to show the younger children they can go to them for help if necessary.

We help our pupils feel part of a well-established and valued community.

“The best thing about Solefield is that it is so welcoming and like a family... you know everyone in your year and everyone in every other year. Very few schools have that quality and Solefield has it in abundance.”

- Year 8 pupil



What makes a Solefield boy

Solefield School was started in 1948 as a small, boarding school by a Headmaster who lived at the top of the school and flew a Spitfire in the Battle of Britain. The fresh perspective and family values of our founding Head have always been evident in the pupils and are as relevant today as they were then.

Solefield boys are known for their wonderful team spirit and are able to overcome challenges with strength, good humour and open-mindedness. They are determined, expertly-trained by dedicated, skilled staff and encouraged to be noble both in victory and defeat.

One of the things that gives us great pleasure at Solefield is seeing the development of our boys from sometimes shy and uncertain four year olds to confident, talented, kind, world-ready young men. It is wonderful that many of them stay in touch after leaving and alumni often come back to visit, to work as gap year students and to deliver our "Thinking Allowed" talks.

An alumnus from the Class of 1970 came back to visit recently. He really enjoyed his time at Solefield and remembers being made to feel special here. He recognised that building confidence remains a great strength of the school.

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"Solefield had a profoundly good influence upon me, not simply academically but also in terms of the values and spirit of the school. During our recent visit, I sense that the school has entirely retained this aura of goodness"

- Ian, Solefield alumnus 1967-72



LEAVERS 2016

J. HUDDART	TONBRIDGE
J. MILES	•••••
C. THOMAS	•••••
W. THORP	SEVENOAKS
D. NAYLOR	CATERHAM
J. BARTY	HAILEYBURY
H. PYNEHART	KING'S ROCHESTER
M. BURFOOT	•••••
J. LESSNER	SACKVILLE
B. LAKE-AUKETT	SKINNERS ACADEMY
J. BROMELOW	KING'S ROCHESTER
T. GILL	JUDD
A. BISHOP	•••••
D. CHANDLER	•••••
D. GREGSON	•••••
J. PYMAN	SKINNERS
J. AKERMAN	•••••
A. KRIVOSHEEV	TUN-WELLS BOYS GRAMM
E. HOLNESS	BEECHWOOD
A. MAUNDER-TAYLOR	SEVENOAKS
M. BUHL-NIELSEN	•••••
O. CAMPBELL	SUTTON VALENCE
S. BROWN	•••••
H. VEASEY	WORTH
P. MCBRIEN	HAYESBROOK
J. ADAMS	•••••
D. ROBINSON	•••••



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