



# BEECHWOOD

## *Sacred Heart School*



## Pre-Examination Programmes

### **About Beechwood**

Beechwood is a day and boarding school with around 430 pupils aged from 3 to 18. Located in the South-East of England, it is only one hour from the centre of London and 90 minutes from Heathrow Airport. The school is centred around a beautiful Victorian mansion in the historic town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, surrounded by playing fields, tennis courts and woods, yet lying just a short walk from the town centre.

In terms of living and learning, Beechwood offers the advantage of girls-only boarding for approximately 50 students, combined with co-educational classes in the day-school. Girls can focus on study at weekends and in the evenings within the boarding environment, whilst being taught alongside boys in the day-school prepares them for life at university and beyond.

We have students with a wide ability range, from Oxbridge students to middle-range abilities. Our mission is to ensure that *all* students achieve their maximum potential. We do this through small classes - our target class size is 18, and classes can be much smaller in specialised subjects at A-level. Subject teachers are guided by our outstanding Learning Development Department who advise on strategies for teaching gifted and talented students and those with mild learning difficulties.

## **Who should apply for these programmes?**

The programmes are designed for those who would like to enrol on a two-year GCSE or A-level programme, but who do not have sufficient language skills to cope with the demands of the course. Normally, to join in Year 10 or Year 12, all overseas girls need to demonstrate a good understanding of English and Maths through our entry assessment tests, so that they may begin examination courses straight away. Pre-Examination Programmes allow overseas girls to gain entry without having to pass these demanding tests.

## **Why come to Beechwood?**

Beechwood has a tradition of welcoming students from many different backgrounds and it thrives on cultural diversity.

Approximately two thirds of boarders are overseas students, coming from countries such as China, Hong Kong, Mexico, Germany, Nigeria and Russia. The English as an Additional Language Department has had outstanding success in preparing students for IGCSE and IELTS examinations over many years.

After school on weekdays and at the weekends, boarders can take advantage of the varied programme of activities and outings, which helps them to make friends, have fun and learn about our country.



## **When do the programmes start?**

Students may enrol on a pre-examination programme at the beginning of any of the terms during the school year in September, January or April. The length of time required on these programmes before students may graduate will vary according to need: those with weaker English ability should enrol in September or January, while those who simply need an induction to British education and to refresh their language skills might enrol in April.

## **How do I apply?**

Students applying to Beechwood will submit their school reports and sit entrance tests in Mathematics and English. If their English is too weak for entry to the GCSE or A-level course, they will be recommended to apply for the pre-examination programme. On arrival at Beechwood, all students will take further language and diagnostic tests so that teachers can identify their specific needs.

Students will then be given a tailor-made timetable focusing on intensive language preparation, but also including elements from the Senior School curriculum. This will allow them to participate in school life without the pressure of examinations at the end of the year. After one, two or three terms, they will be ready to integrate fully into academic life at Beechwood.

## **What is the Pre-Examination Programme?**

It is an intensive preparation programme which aims to increase students' English skills to a level in which they can follow subject lessons successfully and begin their GCSE or A-level courses. Students may come for one, two or three terms. Our programmes consist of three elements:

- Intensive EAL
- Study Skills
- Subject Induction

In addition, students will prepare for GCSE or A-level by studying some other subjects, such as Maths, Sciences, ICT or Art and Design. This experience inside the classroom, will help students to build their confidence and their language skills in order to ensure a smooth transfer to examination courses.

## **What is Intensive EAL?**

Beechwood has an excellent reputation for teaching EAL – English as an Additional Language. Taught in small groups; typically between two and six students, the main focus is spoken communication through guided activities and discussion groups. Students are given a foundation of basic grammatical structures and relevant vocabulary so that they can quickly begin to participate in school life. All timetabled EAL classes are included within the fees. However, if students require additional 1-1 lessons, these will be charged.

## **What are Study Skills?**

Study skills are designed to prepare students for examinations. Students are taught how to use their own learning styles to study effectively. Areas covered will include time management, memorisation, note-taking, essay writing techniques and revision skills.

## **What is Subject Induction?**

Students will join lessons in a limited range of subjects taught by specialist teachers at a level appropriate to their English skills. This will help them to extend their range of subject-specific vocabulary. By the end of the programme, they will not only have a good knowledge of basic English but will also have a foundation of scientific, mathematical or business-type language which will assist their studies at GCSE or A level.

# Learning English at Beechwood

## What do our students say?

Sammi, from China: “I’d say ‘Come here’. Beechwood is a really friendly and welcoming school. The teachers are very kind and supportive – they’ll even stay to explain things at the end of the lesson if you don’t understand. I’ve made some great friends here. It’s become my second home.”

Francesco, from Italy: “The support from teachers is very good and there is lots of outdoor space.”

Beatriz, from Spain: “EAL lessons are fantastic! We improve our English by talking about lots of topics.”

Top, from Thailand: “I really like the fresh air. There’s lots of space to play and enjoy ourselves.”

Amy, from Hong Kong: “EAL lessons are interesting. The teacher explains things clearly, we have a lot of fun during the lessons and I learn lots of new grammar and vocabulary.”

