



Merchant Taylors' Scholars



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Those of us working at Wallingford are well-aware we are lucky to do so. Part of this good fortune is the privilege of working with some very academically talented children. They often challenge us but love learning and so enhance the joy of our vocation. At times, though, it is easy to take for granted the interests of youngsters who progress relatively easily without drawing attention. This strikes us as wrong and we are keen to avoid it at Wallingford. That said, we are also keen to help all young people feel they matter and have a contribution to make. For this reason, it is important to emphasize that we do not consider Scholars to be better than anybody else, just lucky in their gifts.

You will see the programme has had time, money and expertise directed towards it. The aim is for it to be significant, long-standing and comprehensive. Over time it will become a tangible and central element in a Scholar's experience of Wallingford. A large part of the programme is designed to ensure students enjoy their education, feel challenged, and learn to value their gifts. There is also an intention to ensure that when they sit down for an interview in their final year at school they come across as intelligent, confident, interesting and knowledgeable. For this to be the case, their time at Wallingford should be tailored to suit their needs and potential.

An initiative such as this will always prove contentious, most usually with those who do not qualify. We do not seek to cause upset but feel that, now we have begun to look at it, not to offer this support would be wrong. Our hope is that the most academic young people in this part of the world will feel just as lucky that they are at Wallingford as we do.

We strive to provide a range of opportunities for our Scholars across all Key Stages though they all have the same aim – to instil a love of learning and intellectual curiosity, to stretch and challenge our most able students, and to prepare them for life beyond Wallingford.

Enrichment visits and Lectures

Enrichment visits form an important part of our programme as we hope to generate enthusiasm and provoke discussion by arranging for pupils to listen to experts, visit fascinating sites and participate in masterclass workshops. In the past this has included visits to the RAL laboratories, Oxford University and the Houses of Parliament.





Residentials

Residentials allow Scholars to be together in a new environment for an extended period with a focus on a learning activity. From overnight stays to longer residential trips, Scholars will have the chance to immerse themselves in the culture, history and architecture of a different setting, producing independent research projects to develop their academic writing in preparation for competitive university courses and careers.

Support

School, with its academic and social pressures, is a challenging part of growing up. Being a Scholar might make school appear easy but it isn't always straightforward. Although Scholars often find learning relatively easy, they also understand greater amounts and think more deeply.

This difference, and being aware of it, can be testing. Our support programme aims to provide students with role models who can show them how much fun being clever can be and open their eyes to what their intellect could help them achieve.

Lectures and Competitions

Over the course of each academic year, a series of lectures and short courses will be delivered, in school and out, by professionals and academics. This element of the Scholars' programme is designed to ignite the imagination and interest of our academic pupils and give them an insight into life beyond school. Scholars will also be encouraged to take part in competitions, run both inside and outside the school, that will consolidate thinking and develop confidence in crafting and presenting ideas and arguments in a variety of settings and formats. These range from Mathematics Olympiads to debating and mock trials.

The Future

Academically able pupils shouldn't feel they have to aim for Oxbridge, medicine or law. The Scholars' programme is based upon the belief that if pupils have the potential then they should be afforded the broadest options possible when they leave school. It would be a disservice to these pupils if we didn't provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as the qualifications, necessary to make these possibilities become a reality. For these reasons, at appropriate points in their school career, we will meet with the Scholars to review their progress and explore their hopes and plans.





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