

Window to the world

How becoming co-ed 40 years ago was just the start for Alleyn's preparing its pupils for the future

Words DR GARY SAVAGE



Alleyn's has been fully co-educational since 1976, and it is without doubt a fundamental characteristic of our community and our ethos.

It is of course entirely natural for girls and boys to learn and grow together, which can successfully prepare them for entry into a multi-gendered world. That world takes some navigating, perhaps more so than ever these days; and a co-ed school is certainly a great place to begin that process - in a safe and supportive environment - learning how to manage all the ups and downs of real life.

That said, while I was educated at a co-ed school and university, I have also taught and been a governor at single-sex schools; so I know that either model can be a great fit for a particular boy or girl. All good schools know and organise themselves around the fact that learning is a highly individual thing, shaped by a range of factors. At Alleyn's, perhaps the key shaping factor is being able to learn with lots of other talented and highly-motivated girls and boys, absorbing (or rejecting) other styles and approaches, and thereby finding one's own way towards a love of lifelong learning, whether individually or as part of a team.

Academic enrichment has been a key theme of my headship and a core element of our approach at Alleyn's. It's why I introduced the 'Learning about Learning' course at Alleyn's, to enable our boys and girls to discover more about themselves as individual learners so they are equipped to get the most out of their daily experience at school. That



Alleyn's offer a host of co-curricular opportunities, from music to outdoor pursuits



each week - has had benefit outside the taught curriculums of the different age groups, where any pupil at Alleyn's can engage in lunchtime or after school sessions promoting a love of understanding the universe.

Our pupils leave us with excellent examination results and places on demanding courses at some of the world's

experience has in turn been enriched by a significant expansion of our programme of visiting speakers, both at lunchtime and after school, including (in the last year or so) the celebrated physicist Brian Cox, historian and barrister Jonathan Sumption, artist and writer Edmund de Waal, and GB women's hockey captain Kate Richardson-Walsh. My initiative in appointing a Scientist-in-Residence - Dr Adam Rutherford, presenter of Radio 4's *Inside Science* programme, who comes in

top universities, drama, art and music schools. We are rightly very proud of this, but recognise that there is a broader underlying story, that is the personal development of our pupils as they prepare to leave school and find their feet in a complex, challenging and, yes, multi-gendered world.

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