



PHOTO: BRAMBLETYE SCHOOL

encouraging 'cheating', this access to answers means they receive instant feedback and reassurance that what they are doing is correct rather than working their way through a sheet only to discover, at the end of the lesson, that everything was wrong.'

And for those students that find maths straightforward, Tia introduces complex challenges to stretch their thinking so they know there will be something to get their teeth into once they've mastered a skill, because, she says, 'success most definitely breeds success.'

PLAYING WITH NUMBERS

At Brambletye School, head of maths Robbie Williams likes to present the subject in different ways to enable children to better understand it. 'It's vitally important that pupils have the opportunity to play with how certain mathematical concepts work to allow them to comprehend its abstract representation more clearly,' he says. 'It can be tempting to teach algorithms such as

above: Let pupils play with concepts, says Brambletye's head of maths

below: Mathematicians are not just born but formed through hard work

column addition and long multiplication to quickly allow pupils to get correct answers but this can mean that children do not get to play with the underlying structure of numbers,' he continues.

Robbie admits that the approach 'may not be the most efficient or quickest route to an answer' but says it 'lays foundations to help build and connect future concepts more effectively'. 'There is an emphasis on encouraging pupils to spot opportunities to use mental methods where possible rather than blindly applying algorithms,' he explains. 'This often helps those who are less enthused by the subject see the potential creativity available to them and gives them access to the shortcuts that their peers may have already figured out.'

Rob Bell, head of maths at St Christopher's Prep believes framing maths in a positive way is key to getting children to engage with it. 'Mindset is key. Parents frequently speak of how terrible they were with numbers and how they hated maths. This negative, fixed mindset is inherited by their children and is a major barrier to progress,' he says.

'This can be difficult to reverse, but schools must nurture a growth mindset which emphasises the potential for every pupil to progress, with staff, pupils and parents using positive language that promotes and reinforces that.' He also stresses the

importance of a classroom culture where pupils feel secure in expressing themselves, and, crucially, comfortable with making mistakes. 'This minimises maths anxiety, another major obstacle to progress,' he explains. 'Pupils are motivated to try hard in maths by the feeling of being successful.'

Alexa Higazi head of maths at Farlington School, agrees with the growth mindset approach. 'The reason that students find maths daunting is because it is so clearly and indubitably right or wrong – every mistake is there for you to see in black and white,' she says. 'And that's terrifying – who wants to be presented with all their failures in life laid out in front of them?'

'Maths is Marmite!' she adds. 'For some of us, it's a deliciously complex puzzle, filling us with a warm glow of satisfaction when the pieces fit together. For others, it's a terrifying ordeal, seemingly without rhyme or reason.'

'The key is to change our mindset about getting things wrong. Mistakes are a stepping stone to learning, not a barrier. Overcome fear, confront mistakes head on, and learn from them. And that's a skill that we can apply to all realms of life, and what maths can teach you, if you let it!' ●

FIND OUT MORE:

Lancing Prep Worthing, lancingcollege.co.uk/prep-hove
 Brambletye School, brambletye.co.uk
 Farlington School, farlingtonschool.com
 Seaford College, seaford.org
 Shoreham College, shorehamcollege.co.uk
 St Christophers, stchristophershove.org.uk

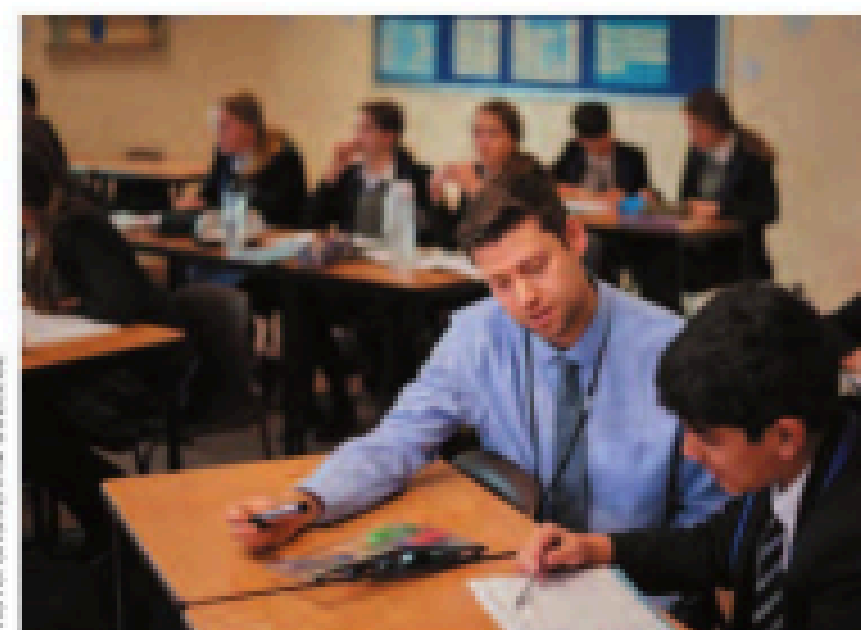


PHOTO: SHOREHAM COLLEGE



GCSE music at fifth form level and A-level music or BTEC music performance at sixth form level. Youngsters have plenty of performance opportunities throughout the school year, too, including a biennial musical event, and a two-night gala concert and dinner, as well as regular student gigs or recitals.

‘Youngsters have plenty of *performance* opportunities’

Many successful young musicians have emerged from Bede’s and gone on to study at top conservatoires or Russell Group universities. Robert says their stories ‘serve as testament to the transformative power of a Bede’s music education’: ‘Whether our pupils pursue professional

above: Music makes a life-long impact on Bede’s students

careers in music or apply the skills they have gained to other fields, the impact of their musical education at Bede’s inspires them in whichever paths they choose,’ he says.

A CULTURE OF MUSIC

Singing is of particular importance at Brambletye School in East Grinstead and is introduced early. ‘Right from Bramble Babies, our parent and baby group for pre-nursery tots, up to Year 8, singing is a core part of what we do,’ says Rachel Selleck, director of music.

Rachel says that many children missed out on singing during the Covid pandemic, and as a result, inhibitions increased, something she has worked hard to turn around. ‘When I decided to start a new boys’ choir earlier in the year, more than 30 in Years 5 to 7 signed up overnight,’ she says. ‘We raise the roof in chapel with our whole school singing, and the children come out buzzing,’ she says. ‘We’re developing a culture of music across the school and I hope that every pupil will leave Brambletye believing they are a musician.’ ●

FIND OUT MORE:

CHRIST’S HOSPITAL SCHOOL,
christs-hospital.org.uk

LANCING COLLEGE,
lancingcollege.co.uk

LANCING COLLEGE PREP,
lancingcollege.co.uk/prep-hove

FARLINGTON SCHOOL,
farlingtonschool.com

SEAFORD COLLEGE,
seaford.org

SHOREHAM COLLEGE,
shorehamcollege.co.uk

ST CHRISTOPHER’S PREP,
stchristophershove.org.uk

BEDE’S,
bedes.org

BRAMBLETYE SCHOOL,
brambletye.co.uk