



## WOODBIDGE SCHOOL

Woodbridge School is a leading HMC coeducational school for pupils between the ages of 4 and 18. There are about 930 pupils at the School, including 200 in the Sixth Form and 250 at the prep school, The Abbey, which caters for those aged 4 to 11.

The School was originally founded in 1577; lapsed probably some time during the Civil Wars, and was refounded in 1662 by Dorothy Seckford, Robert Marryott and Francis Burwell. It occupied premises in Seckford Street until its removal in 1864 to its present beautiful site overlooking the town and the River Deben. At about this time it was joined with the Seckford Trust and has since been part beneficiary of an endowment left to the town of Woodbridge in 1587 by Thomas Seckford, Master of the Court of Requests to Queen Elizabeth I.

From its origins as a free grammar school for the education of the “sons of the meaner inhabitants of Woodbridge” it continued to develop and is now one of the leading coeducational day schools in East Anglia. There is a Boarding House for 40 sixth form boarders. The School first admitted girls in September 1974 and now has almost equal numbers of each gender. During the last ten years numbers have grown from 550 to 930.

Woodbridge is a community which is proud of its coeducational background, and the success of its pupils. The success is founded on a belief in the importance of building up the confidence of each pupil by encouraging a commitment outside class and from that comes academic success.

The geographical position of the School makes it an attractive place in which to teach. It is situated in over 45 acres of wooded and undulating grounds within five minutes walking distance of the town centre and is well served by direct trains to and from London, with a journey of approximately 70 minutes. The A12 and A14 are easily accessible, with Stansted an hour away, making travel to and from Europe extremely convenient.

Woodbridge has a Christian foundation and the DfES (now DfE) has designated it as a School with a Religious character, with an order made under the Religious Character of Schools (designated procedure regulations 2003).

The staff, most of whom have been appointed during the last five years, are an even cross-section of age and of experience and thoroughly enjoy the various opportunities that the School and town communities provide, an involvement characteristic of a boarding school, yet without the inherent routine duties that would involve. It is a declared commitment that departments and the Common Room overall should reflect a balance of those with fresh ideas and those with experience and that members of Common Room will share the contribution made to the pupils' extra-curricular life

Teaching at Woodbridge provides an opportunity to teach one's academic subject to a high level and at the same time to involve oneself in any aspect of School life. It is a very busy school, but as a day school teachers have time and space to have private lives in the evenings. Many staff play sport at local hockey, rugby, cricket and netball clubs.

The Sixth Form Sports Leaders coach sport in local primary schools and the school's extensive sport, music and drama facilities are widely used by local state schools. Primary school pupils attend Woodbridge School Chess and Art clubs and the School Charity Committee has raised around £0.4 m in the last eight years.

There is a sharp focus on the needs of the staff. There is a working and fruitful staff appraisal process, and spending on in-service training is higher than average. The teaching staff enjoy up to date IT facilities in the mezzanine of a newly refurbished common room and most departments have access to their own computing facilities.

The quality of support given to those who are new to the profession is extremely high. There is a strong induction programme for both new and experienced teachers and over the last three years over a dozen teachers have successfully completed PGCEs or NQT induction with many graded excellent and one exceptional.

During the last twelve years, five members of the whole School community have moved on to headships. Over 25 others have become Heads of Department, Housemasters or Housemistresses either here or at other schools. All staff are encouraged to undertake exchanges and sabbaticals and to take part in a series of shorter cultural partnerships with our exchange schools in South Africa, India, Oman and China.

### **The Community**

Woodbridge School holds its fourth successive British Council International Schools' Award, reflecting a commitment to the place of the School in the local and wider community. The British Council Award was the only one given to an independent school in 2010, recognising five European Union funded projects, exchanges to six countries including India, South Africa and Australia, and the opportunities given to staff to travel and study abroad.

These projects are the tip of a larger iceberg. Woodbridge is a five day week school, with the usual mixture of fixtures and concerts etc at weekends. Academic teaching finishes at lunchtime on a Friday and pupils and staff spend the afternoon taking part in either CCF, Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, Sports Leadership or Seckford Scheme activities.

### **The Buildings**

Since the buildings were erected on the present site in 1864, there has been a continuous programme of development and expansion so that, today, the School has exceptionally good facilities. It is the policy of the Governors that these facilities should continue to be improved in keeping with the changing needs of education.

A new Sixth Form Centre and teaching block for the whole School (The Belstead Centre) was opened in September 2009 and a new technology building was completed at Easter. There is a teaching block housing new language facilities, including two laboratories, a modern library and IT centre. The School's purpose-built Seckford Theatre opened in 2006 and the Dining Hall, Britten-Pears Music School and School Hall have all been refurbished in the last three years. There is an all-weather pitch and new changing rooms.

There are now over 250 computers throughout the Senior School, all with internet access. Marryott House, the administration building, has been modernised and the Common Room facilities and House Rooms refurbished.

### **The Preparatory School**

The Abbey is the preparatory school for Woodbridge School. It is a coeducational day school for children between the ages of 4 and 11 and currently has 250 children on the roll. Boys and girls are accepted by interview at 4, 5 and 6 and at 7, 8, 9 and 10 on the results of an entrance examination. There is a well-qualified staff of 25 as well as a large number of additional music teachers.

The original Abbey building is a Tudor manor house built for the Seckford family. A new ICT suite and new art, science and technology facilities were completed in January 2008 and two new classroom blocks have been built over the last few years. There is a new Abbey Music School, comprising practice rooms, a recital hall, and the Ambrose Room, named after Prior Ambrose who initiated the market in Woodbridge over 900 years ago. There are extensive grounds of over 30 acres which provide ample facilities for team games, athletics, tennis and other recreational purposes

The Abbey Language Scheme has been cited for its innovation and has influenced much prep school language work. There are also strong European links, particularly with Italy, Finland and Spain.

### **The Pre-Preparatory School**

One of the most popular pre-preparatory schools in the region, Queen's House is sited in the grounds on the edge of Woodbridge School. The 90 or so pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are fully involved in the life of the wider School.

### **The inspection report**

The outstanding 2009 ISI inspection report is available on [www.inspect.org.uk](http://www.inspect.org.uk). Highlights were:

- Pupils performing beyond expectation academically
- Excellent learning attitudes
- A significant proportion of excellent teaching
- Excellent pastoral care
- Exceptional spiritual, moral, cultural, social development
- Exceptional music, drama and sport
- Outstanding community links

**Headmaster's Office**  
**January 2011**