

WIRRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A Foundation Business & Enterprise School for Boys

The benefits of an 'all boys' education

Many parents choose single-sex schools for their sons and daughters in their teenage years. There is considerable evidence to indicate that boys perform better in an all boys' school environment than in a coeducational environment and the trend for coeducational schools to teach boys and girls in separate classes adds weight to this evidence.

- It is well established that boys and girls are less self-conscious if educated in single-sex schools. They are more likely to engage in activities which might otherwise embarrass them. Boys, for example, are happier to sing in choirs and girls are more willing to do outdoor sports. In fact sport is much stronger in both the boys and girls-only schools. In an all boy's school, boys are able to flourish and enjoy their childhood.
- Some teenage boys feel that they cannot outperform girls in some subjects and this fear of perceived failure has a negative effect on their self esteem
- In co-educational schools boys are much less likely to opt for subjects which are traditional strengths of girls, such as English and Languages, and girls are less likely to opt for Physics or Chemistry. In other words, gender stereotypes are reinforced in co-educational schools whereas in single-sex schools pupils follow their instincts without the gender created peer pressure
- The 'laddish' or 'macho' culture, now promoted through teenage magazines and other sources, has become an increasingly adverse influence on boys. Central to this culture is a rebellious, anti-learning attitude which means it is simply 'not cool' to show a real interest in academic work. This 'macho culture' seems to be more in evidence in co-educational schools: without the girls, the boys seem far less likely to succumb.
- These days teenage boys and girls live very active social lives. There is no question of "not knowing what the opposite sex is like". Many parents feel it is a good thing for their son or daughter to be away from the opposite sex for one part of their lives.
- All single-sex schools arrange plenty of joint activities with other schools. At Wirral Grammar for Boys we have joint musicals, shared school drama productions and shared subject based visits with the adjoining Girls' Grammar School. In short, our pupils (girls and boys) have the best of both worlds
- All the evidence tells us that boys and girls learn differently and are therefore best taught separately. Not only do girls mature earlier and take a more systematic approach to work, but boys and girls react quite differently to classroom discipline, long-term coursework assignments and examinations.
- Fundamental research into patterns of brain activity confirms what we all know: boys and girls learn in different ways. In an all boys environment, teachers are able to apply teaching strategies that suit the way in which boys learn. Boys are often short on self-confidence during teenage years and worry about their ability to cope with conflicting pressures. They respond well to direct teaching to work on short-term objectives and explicit guidelines
- Boys and girls are especially aware of their appearance when they are adolescents. The pressure of this self-absorption is reduced if they are educated in single-sex schools.

Evidence for the advantages of a boys-only education is reflected in the schools most recent Ofsted inspection report:

- Wirral Grammar School for Boys is a forward looking school that provides an outstanding education for its students. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and provided many comments on how well the school has prepared their child to succeed and flourish in adult life. Wirral Grammar is an excellent school', one parent wrote, 'The boys are not only given an excellent academic grounding, but they gain independence and responsibility'.
- Students are happy, reach high standards and make good progress. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the excellent support they receive. Students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is a substantial strength of the school and contributes strongly to its distinctive ethos.
- Boys speak very highly of the relationship they have with teachers. 'They really care about us', one said, 'if you need help, teachers will give up hours of their spare time to help you.'
- The proportion of students attaining A* or A grades in the GCSE examinations has risen steadily and was at an all time high of 50% in 2008. The very good provision in modern foreign languages ensures that a significantly higher proportion of students attain a good grade in at least one modern foreign language than do so nationally. Students make excellent progress in biology,
- Students' personal development is outstanding. Students have a passion for learning; their behaviour is exemplary and their attendance, already well above national averages, continues to rise. Students feel safe, secure and valued. Consequently, they develop in confidence, maturity and self-esteem. They are well integrated with consultative processes that evaluate provision and contribute to the school's decision making. Students themselves have taken on the responsibility of stamping out bullying and intimidating behaviour. For this they have reaped rich rewards: the school climate is one of harmony and fellowship. Relationships and attitudes are characterised by mutual respect and sensitivity. Sixth form students' outstanding contribution to peer support has been recognised by the 'Princess Diana Award'. The significant sums of money students raise for charitable causes is testimony to their acute awareness of moral and social issues, as well as their empathy for people living in less fortunate circumstances than themselves.
- Sports and cultural activities are central to school life and take-up is high. As a result, students grow as healthy and well rounded individuals. Their entrepreneurial flair, demonstrable leadership qualities and team working skills bode well for their future economic well-being.
- The curriculum is outstanding because managers keep it under regular review, respond to students' comments, and have worked hard to integrate and extend the business and enterprise specialism. Students in Year 8 study the three sciences separately. The introduction of a second foreign language, an accredited citizenship course and 'fast track' mathematics and modern language GCSE courses further strengthen what is on offer at Key Stage 3. Carefully balanced options and a wide range of extension courses give students in Years 10 and 11 excellent scope to prepare for GCSE. Physical education and vocational ICT examination courses have been welcomed by students. Opportunities to study astronomy, language and business, and critical thinking further widen the offer. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) course has been amended to enable students to sample a range of activities: from archery to cookery; from rock climbing to street-dance. This complements the school's desire to extend and balance students' academic achievement and personal development. All Year 9

students experience an outdoor pursuits residential. An outstanding range of activities, trips and visitors has a significant impact. A typical student comment was, 'If there's enough interest, teachers will always try to put something on to meet it.' The high level of participation is a testimony to the commitment of teachers and students alike.

- Over a third of students play a musical instrument and an unusually high proportion represent the school at sport. The regularity and extent of Saturday sporting fixtures is a strong feature.