

Dear All,

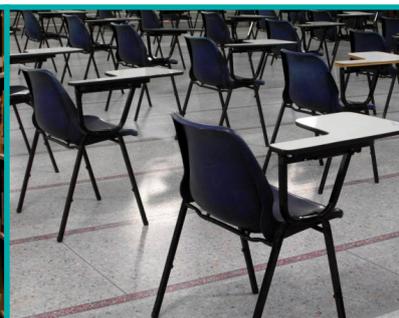
We are now fully in the swing of the public examination season. The press publishes images of hundreds of students in serried ranks sitting their papers in buildings that resemble aircraft hangers, almost giving the impression that schools are little more than factories. The teachers are the “operatives”, the students the “product” and the “outcome” a bag of top grades. Some commentators have even gone so far as to take the image a step further and view schools as akin to “exam factories”. It’s an uncomfortable image. Education should be about the student not merely the crude result.

On one level, the quest for high standards for all is, of course, extremely laudable. No student at the 6th form should be in any doubt as the importance of results in opening doors and opportunities. However young people are not items on a conveyor belt; mechanistic approaches to education may eventually hammer out “good” academic results, but the very best education lies in cultivating genuine creativity, in helping young people to think a little more outside the box and develop the skills, attitude and confidence which will prepare them more effectively for the journey ahead.

When one sees so many students armed with revision notes, lovingly colour-coded, or increasingly an array of curated, integrated digital resources, one is struck by their depth of knowledge and if an exam beckons within the hour, that may superficially be a source of relief as much as joy...yet such scenes inevitably lead one to reflect on the interplay of both knowledge and skill. When one digs deeper beyond the notes, whatever their form, one begins to appreciate the creativity behind these resources. It’s this creativity which so often reflects the student’s thoughts. In short, whilst the arena for the sitting of examinations may very much resemble a factory, one size certainly does not fit all in terms of the sophistication of their thinking. The metaphor of factories totally breaks down when we consider what education is fundamentally about. It’s not simply about the final product, but the journey towards knowledge and skills delivering a deeper understanding.

Next week’s university event, serves to emphasise the importance of personalised guidance and support. The examination season will soon be over and students in the Lower 6th will be turning their attention towards university open days, writing personal statements and preparing for our interview day. One understands that this can all seem rather daunting, but teachers and tutors are very much here, not simply to guide students through the process, but to explore what different paths will work for them as individuals. Here, it is so often the little conversations that matter, conversations which may encourage students to think a little more about their talents and develop the confidence to perhaps read more widely or ask new questions. In short, whilst the knowledge must necessarily be there, it’s about moving towards a deeper level of understanding.

With best wishes,
Stuart Jack
Head of 6th Form



Coming up...



SPF University Question Time

Open to all in Year 9 to U6

Wednesday 15 June, 7.30pm - 8.45pm

Senior School Hall

Paul Teulon, Director of Admissions at King's College, London; *Helen Waters-Marsh*, Head of Schools' Liaison at Nottingham University; *Dr Sam Lucy*, Director of Admissions for Cambridge Colleges; *Brendan Tighe*, International Affairs Manager at SciencesPo, France.

[Sign up here.](#)

Not an SPF event but may be beneficial to attend

Looking for an employment opportunity?

Want to know more about what Cambridge has to offer?

Unsure about your next steps?

Opportunities Ahead
A careers fair for Cambridge

Fear not, Opportunities Ahead is Form the Future's first careers fair in central Cambridge. Designed to help young people find apprenticeships, employment, connections & much more.

So if you are doing your GCSE'S or A-LEVELS, applying for UNIVERSITY, looking for an APPRENTICESHIP or seeking EMPLOYMENT, this is the event for you!

TUESDAY 28TH JUNE 12:30 - 18:00
@ THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE

Search 'Opportunities Ahead Student' on Eventbrite & register today!

TED-Ed Club

Breaking news!

We are looking forward to launching this enrichment club for Year 10 to Upper 6th from September for one term. It will be a great chance to connect students in conversation around the world; provide an online platform where students ideas can be featured; to support students in developing presentation and public speaking skills; and to work with a generation of problem solvers, critical thinkers and innovators to make the world a better place, plus much more!

There will be 20 - 30 places available.