

Meet the Head

Find out what it's like to be head of a school from our exclusive interviews with three of the county's head teachers

WORDS: ALANA HEBENTON



Anne Sweeney
Coworth-Flexlands School

Whether Anne Sweeney was playing 'schools' with her mini-blackboard or throwing her dolls out of the pram to replace them with books, she has always loved learning. So it was only natural that when choosing a career, Anne would become a teacher, and in September 2010 she joined Coworth-Flexlands School.

Working at Coworth-Flexlands School, Anne has enjoyed many aspects, but particularly the school's close relationship with the parents.

"We are somewhat unique in that our governing body is comprised mainly of current parents, past parents and staff along with a local senior school Headmistress. This means that there is honesty, openness and a genuine family feel about the school. All our parents take an active interest in their children's education which, combined with the huge enthusiasm of the Parents' Society has been very refreshing. We are also a Christian school that welcomes children of all faiths and have links to several

churches in the local community."

Along with the school's family feel and Christian values, Anne believes that it is the high educational results that make Coworth-Flexlands stand out from other schools.

"We are non-selective, yet consistently achieve high academic standards through creating a fun learning environment where there is lots going on beyond the confines of the standard curriculum. Much of this is made possible by our 13 acres of grounds that we use for sport, outdoor learning and recreation. For example, our still-life drawing class last week took the children out into the woodland to draw real trees, complete with gnarled branches and sun-induced shadows."

Coworth-Flexlands is also proud to be one of the few schools with a Gold Artsmark Award, integrating arts and academics to enable deeper learning across all the age groups.

"Although we only go up to age 11 years, as our children move up through the school they are increasingly taught in purpose-built accommodation by specialist teachers. As a result, even while still relatively young, they have the best of what a secondary school can offer, such as a fully equipped Science Laboratory and ICT Suite, whilst still having all the pastoral support provided by a small school where everyone is interested in them as individuals."

"The school has a lovely gentle feel as you walk around and even the oldest girls can be seen running in to meet their friends. Firm friendships are also formed between the oldest and youngest children resulting in 'informal mentors'."

However, at the heart of Coworth-

Flexlands is the school's ethos, to encourage children to enjoy their childhood and gain satisfaction and confidence through their achievements.

And it is this strong confidence-building ethos, Anne Sweeney credits for ensuring that every student achieves their full potential at Coworth-Flexlands.

"We believe that children deserve a childhood where they can explore what they want to be without fear of ridicule or failure. We therefore are inclusive and provide opportunities for every child to try out all we have on offer."

"The opportunities that Coworth-Flexlands provides are borne out in the wide selection of senior schools onto which our girls move. Over the past few years girls have moved onto some 34 different schools - many with scholarships and awards and many to leading independent day and boarding schools. This year an impressive third secured scholarships and awards to their chosen schools. Our ideal size allows us to get to know the girls individually so that we can help them select a school in which they will thrive."

In the future Anne hopes to increase the amount of opportunities Coworth-Flexlands offers its students by continuing to improve the school's environmental science facilities.

"We are developing our woodland walk and have plans for putting in a pond and outdoor classroom."

Coworth-Flexlands, Chobham, Mid Surrey GU24 8TE
01276 855 707

www.coworthflexlands.co.uk

