

My Time at Beths

By Kavern Batchelor (KJ) who is currently in Year 11.



Year 7



Years 10 & 11



When I first stepped through the gates of this school 5 years ago, I didn't know what to expect. The tour from the induction day had helped me to gain a rough understanding of this maze but I was still anxious about manoeuvring through large seas of senior students. Luckily, most people were really friendly and directed me to classrooms whenever I asked. To add, I had already made friends with my entire form from induction day as well as other students that travelled to school with me at the time, so the pressures of secondary school were already fairly manageable. I know at many schools, the transition between primary and secondary school can be a daunting time, however, at Beths, there is an air of invitation at all times which helped ease the pressure.

I was eager to take on various roles and responsibilities at my new school as I had enjoyed rising to the roles of sports captain, house captain, form captain and student council representative at my primary school. Straight away, I was voted in by my form mates for the role of student council representative for Wickham house in year 7 and remained in this position until year 9. Furthermore, another student and I observed the vast amounts of litter in the school throughout year 7 and launched our own anti-littering campaign. This proved to be a success as not only did we greatly reduce the amount of litter around the site, but we got large groups of students to actively work on posters and art work to promote recycling and bettering our environment. As I worked my way through the school, I was awarded captaincy roles in Volleyball and Athletics for the school which allowed me to better my leadership skills and improve relations with fellow students. In key stage 4, I was honoured to be hand-selected by members of staff to mentor younger students - sitting and talking with them at lunch time to make their transition to secondary school easier. I felt as though it was my responsibility to ensure others felt comfortable at the school and the pressures that I once felt were reduced for them too. In year 10, I observed a large step up for me and my cohort; specific members of each form were selected by teachers to be junior prefects. I feel as though we took to this role in a mature and appropriate manner - assisting other students with GCSE catch-up and teachers in various departments. I am proud to be a part of this cohort as we had seemed to have grown up from little 11 year olds to respectable young adults in no time.

At Beths, I've always been astounded by the numerous subjects on offer in the curriculum. Of course the core subjects but others like physical education, music, art, drama, business education, design and technology, the social sciences and over five modern foreign languages. Every lesson stretches and engages you here and you have the opportunity to work with teachers and other students who are like-minded and push you to your limits. Sometimes the work load seems overwhelming but it all pays off in the end, I promise. At Beths, I find there is a balance between enjoyment and intense focus which is reflected within the classrooms and integrated within Beths culture.

Although Beths strives to produce academically rigorous individuals, a lot of the curriculum contains hands-on projects and physical activities that engage every student and enhance learning capabilities.

For example, a key part of the key stage 3 experience is the motte and bailey castle project in year 7 history. Each student is expected to go out and purchase materials to make a model of the castles and bring them to school. These gave us a chance to visualise the lives of particular members of Norman society, as well as grasp the key concepts of William the Conqueror's infrastructural ideologies from a young age. I feel as though this project was a key stepping stone in each of our paths to independence as we were expected to carry out



specific tasks before a particular deadline. Another example, and one of my personal favourites, was the infamous coral reef project in year 8. Each year 8 geography student is expected to go out and model their own coral reef ecosystem with the hope to grasp a better understanding of key aspects such as colours and specific organism characteristics. Many other projects such as the fruit bowl project for year 7 art and the Greek theatre project in drama year 7 allowed us to engage more with particular topics but also eased the transition from primary school, where we were more used to hands-on learning.

Sometimes, we are lucky enough to continue learning outside of the classroom on educational visits and events. In Year 7, our year group took a visit to Mountfitchet Castle to widen our knowledge on motte and bailey castles, in year 9, we took a trip to the Bank of England for deeper knowledge on the gold stores there for Economics. In year 10, top set science was selected to go to science live in the Apollo Theatre which deepened our knowledge on complex topics. In year 11, I was selected for the Elite English Programme in which I was able to take part in Macbeth workshops and talks about Jekyll and Hyde and an Inspector Calls (our GCSE English Literature texts at Beths).

One highlight of life as a Beths boy for me was definitely Year 8 camp. Before that week of outdoor adventure, I hadn't really had the best opportunities to socialise with other students but it gave me a chance to finally make some new friends and get to know my cohort better. Whilst on Year 8 camp, we went on the Lyndhurst hike, a day of cycling, night lining, canoeing and kayaking. These activities required great communication, resilience and team work. I took one key concept from year 8 camp, and that was the best leaders don't always necessarily travel at the front but will travel behind the pack, to help and support the weaker ones. This message helped me with my leadership skills as I learned to sit back and observe other people's ideas more than I would before. Fortunately, our team work and week-long progress paid off as my team, the Pumas won the first week of year 8 camp. As a bonus, I was honoured to have been awarded 'Camper of the Week' for leading and supporting my team throughout the week.



Another highlight for me was the Bronze DofE award I completed in year 10. I submitted various documents in regards to improving my skills, physical abilities and helping with volunteering in the LRC before embarking upon the expedition. Although it seemed tedious at the time, looking back, both the practice and the real thing were some of the best experiences of my life. I enjoyed hiking with my team, boosting the morale as we went along and supporting each other at various check points. We also had the liberties of pitching tents in our own time and preparing our own meals

which consisted simply of oats for breakfast and indomie. The views were breath-taking and I was glad to be enjoying the outdoors with some of my closest friends.

A key aspect of life at Beths Grammar School is preparation for life after sixth form and university. Firstly, from a young age, I have always had a passion for academia and I was truly blessed to go on a trip to Oxford University in year 8 with the rest of my year group. Attending an Oxbridge university has always been a dream of mine but seeing Oxford live, and in the flesh was a real deal breaker for me. That trip was a part of our university experience week which aimed to familiarise us with university life and expectations.



I was also proud to have been selected to attend the Oxbridge conference at Townley Grammar in Year 10 which gave me more of an insight into the university application process, the interview stages and life once accepted. I also got to know two year 13 students at Townley, Sawen and Tolu, who are now coming to the end of their first years at Keble College and Jesus College at Oxford and Cambridge. I talked to them about their GCSE grades, their application processes and any obstacles they faced on their way. To add, every year 10 was expected to go on two weeks' work experience in different fields in the real world and I did mine at Barclays through LifeSkills where I learned a lot about customer service and the key aspects of banking.



From around the age of 4, I have had a passion for performing and the arts. With experience in films like 'Pan' and 'The Man Inside', various commercials and working with the BBC on CBBC's 'So Awkward' throughout year 7, I was eager to share my passion and experience in the field. In year 7, I played a role in the inter-house drama competition, run by Miss Rogers (the previous Drama teacher at the school), and this was an amazing experience as I got to work with fellow students on a passion of mine as well as using teamwork to produce two great performances - leading us to be placed 2nd overall. In year 8, I was excited to welcome our new Drama teacher, Miss Grady who would act as my mentor in the arts and school production director in the years to come. I was grateful to be a part of the production put on in P3 by Miss Grady, called 'The Murder of Mr Normanton', in which I played the butler; a suspect in the gentleman's murder. This was the first time I really got to observe the sheer talent of students in the school and I felt honoured to be a part of it. Year 9 sprang upon us, and I auditioned for lead role in the school production that year; 'Lord of The Flies'. I was ecstatic when I found out I was given the role of Ralph - beating several GCSE students at the time to the role. With such a major role I felt a huge sense of responsibility in regards to line learning and supporting other cast members. We put on 3 outstanding performances with positive reviews from parents and members of staff. I felt honoured to have played the main role in such an amazing play and also to have worked with some amazing cast mates who came together to put on a great display of our hard work.



Year 10 came and the cast size almost tripled from the year before! We put on our first ever musical- 'Oliver!' in which I played the Artful Dodger. This particular experience simply blew me away as the musicians, led by Mrs Marriott joined forces with the actors, led by Ms Grady and the art and tech crew led by Mr Metcalfe and Mr Hayman to produce 4 shows of dramatic excellence. I was honoured to have been awarded gold colours in performing arts as a result. Moreover, I was so proud of Beths for showcasing such professionalism and team work.



In Year 11, I was given the role of the Wizard of Oz in 'The Wizard of Oz' but unfortunately, due to coronavirus, we weren't able to put on any shows this year. Hopefully we can show the school how good the performance is later in the summer term.

One thing worth mentioning, is the culture of sport at Beths. I am proud to be attending a school where a wide range of sports are appreciated, including: Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Rugby, Tennis, Table Tennis, Badminton, Athletics and Cricket. Here at Beths, we take pride in our inter-house competitions, and these were great fun to be a part of. More particularly, friendly matches of basketball and football that would take place over various lunchtimes against rival forms to compete for the house cup. Furthermore, sports day is an annual event that all students look forward to participating in and last year, we were able to have sports day at the Erith track for the first time ever! As usual, students and staff came together effectively to produce a successful day of sporting excellence. Over the years, I have observed various successes in sport such as participating in national finals as well as performing tremendously well in regional competitions and tournaments. At this school, we have academy footballers - playing for premier league teams like Chelsea and Watford, we have county hockey players, footballers, cricketers and volleyball players as well as some students representing England, Northern Ireland and Nigeria in Football.

Whilst studying here, I have been a committed member of the Athletics and Volleyball teams since I started 5 years ago. I was also proud to be captain of the Volleyball team - leading them to victories in the London Youth Games and winning the Bexley School Games. From this, I have also been selected as a player in the Bexley Volleyball team since year 7, and I hope to remain in the squad in the future. In athletics, I did the Triple Jump, 100m and 4x100m relay every year for Wickham at Sports day, winning triple jump every year and going on to qualify for Bexley Champs - representing Beths in the triple jump. I am proud to have qualified from Bexley Champs for the Kent School Finals to represent Bexley in Triple jump at the Julie Rose Stadium, Ashford. Although I didn't win, I was proud to have been part of such a great experience. In addition, I was honoured to have had the opportunity to train with younger students once or twice a week and help them to better their abilities in each of their chosen sports - helping with setting drills, spiking and springing drills. Ultimately, I loved providing younger students with moral support and helping them to continue the sporting successes here at Beths.

At GCSE, I chose to do Economics in year 9 alongside RE which was compulsory. From here I furthered my passion for monetary and entrepreneurial based learning after running enterprise club for younger students with Mrs Tolhurst when I was in the lower school. I was overjoyed to have achieved a grade 8 in Economics and a grade 9 in RE at the end of year 10. I also selected my last 3 GCSE options in year 9; History, French and Drama. Throughout my GCSEs I managed to balance finding time to study for a minimum of 4 hours every night with commitments in and outside of school. I also found passions for explaining myself through essay writing, political situations and social issues. I continued my passion for French by completing the super curriculum available on the school website. When I found out we weren't able to sit our final exams this summer, I was heartbroken. I was really hoping for our year group to get the chance to prove how dedicated and hardworking we all are. Nevertheless, I was happy to see that my hard work over the years had paid off as I have recently tallied my final achieved and predicted GCSE results to seven 9s (A**s) and four 8s (A*).



I am honoured to have been a part of a year group that took to the pressures of GCSEs so well- dedicating specific times of the day to catch up on coursework and rehearsals for the arts subjects but also balancing social and educational life. You could see the commitment and drive from many students as the numbers of GCSE students in the LRC and designated classrooms continued to multiply over the months. My cohort managed to achieve 52% grades 7-9 in early entry GCSEs and I couldn't have been happier to be a part of it. For the first time ever, languages were no longer a compulsory option with Beths providing students with the freedom to choose any three subjects they wished.

Whilst studying at this school, I am blessed to have achieved so much. In Key stage 3, I obtained 5 silver colours awards in Modern Foreign Languages, Volleyball, Drama, Music and Art. In Key stage 4, I went on to get 3 Gold colours in Performing Arts, Volleyball and Modern Foreign Languages. I was also honoured to be awarded with one of the first honours ties here at the school. I feel as though this particular award gave me a sense of responsibility and set me apart from other students as a role model to inspire and support others. To add, I was awarded the newly founded 'Boy of the Term' award with two of my friends after attaining all grade 1s for attitude to learning and quality of homework on our year 10 reports. I received various General Excellence awards for my reports in other year groups as well. As part of the awards scheme at this school, Commendations are awarded by teachers for acts of excellence within school hours. I was happy to have obtained the most of these for several years in a row. In Year 10, I did long hours of volunteering for the school and later achieved my ECB Young Leader in sport award which I was truly grateful for. At our annual prize givings, I was received the award for French in year 9 and the Outstanding Achievement Award in years 7 and 10. Lastly, I was happy to lead several assemblies and clubs for lower school students in Economics, French and general academics in order to better their Beths experiences. Although I'm proud of myself for working so hard over the years, I haven't listed these achievements to boast or show off, but to show you how much you can achieve if you strive and dedicate yourself in an outstanding school like Beths.



In regards to my future aspirations, I hope to become Head Boy in the sixth form in order to continue to assist younger students with their educational endeavours as they journey through the school, helping to make the GCSE experience easier for younger students, to continue the Beths student traditions in the lower school and further develop the vast number of skills I have obtained whilst studying here. Furthermore, I intend on studying A Level French, Economics and Maths here at Beths and hopefully achieve straight A*s in all of those too. If all goes to plan with my A Level studies, I hope to go to Cambridge University to study pure Economics.

As you all know, due to the current pandemic in session, we have been forced into lockdown but I strongly feel that staying at home 24/7 is no excuse to stop working! We have more time now than ever to stay on top of our game - perhaps even getting a head start on content for the next academic year. Whilst in quarantine, I've been watching 'life in an Oxbridge university' videos as well as doing extra reading into Economics, which I hope to major in in the coming years. I've also decided to work



hard on getting ahead with some A Level content for year 12. Specifically: learning hundreds of advanced French vocab, reading 20th and 21st century French literature, watching and discussing French Netflix with my friends, working through the first year A Level maths textbook, getting my head around first year Economics content and luckily, I finished the maths bridging course in no time! It's also

important to stay fit so I've been trying to drink lots of water, going on occasional bike rides around my area and a few light workouts in my room. I know this time can be tough, especially because you're spending so much time away from friends and other family members, but we'll get through this! Just picture the amazing summer you'll have once this blows over! Make sure you keep social distancing and washing your hands!



If you're reading this article and you are in the lower school, I have a few tips to help you get through the years:

1. Network with other students and develop a community
2. Do as many extra-curricular activities as you can!
3. Be supportive of other students.
4. Put yourself out there as much as you can
5. Keep a level head - don't show off when you succeed and don't kick yourself when you fail.
6. Always give 110%.

Honestly, I love this school. I have learnt so much over the years and have made so many great connections - be that with fellow students or members of staff. I have bettered my leadership skills through sports and lots of extra-curriculars and public speaking skills through various schemes like the Jack Petchey Speak out Challenge. I have also become more driven, confident, hard-working, patient and determined whilst being here and I couldn't be more thankful. I've loved every minute of my experience at this school and I hope the good vibes and Beths successes continue in the sixth form.

