

Education 2003

A guide to Education from Pre-School to 16+



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Learning is fun: While Sunflowers' younger children enjoy the many and varied facilities of the special baby unit (right), some of the nursery's older children hone their computer skills in preparation for starting school (below)



Get to grips with pre-school care

WITH so many mums now working there has been a huge growth in the number of pre-school nurseries, although many people would say there are still not enough. Certainly, anyone who thinks they can simply pop down to a nursery and start their child there immediately could be in for a nasty shock. Most have waiting lists so you should get your child's name down as soon as possible.

One of the boom areas in recent years has been the growth of private nursery schools catering for parents who are willing to pay for the extra flexibility they may offer. These are often used by working mums who find their fees worth paying to maintain a wage.

Pre-school providers vary enormously, both in the facilities they offer and the cost to the parent.

The most widespread are play groups which may take the children for so many mornings or afternoons per week.

These are inexpensive and perform a useful role, not only in giving hard-pressed mums a break, but also in introducing children to the sort of social and group play situations they will certainly encounter in schools. Most local authorities also offer nursery school places, in many cases attached to existing primary schools, which again introduce the children to school routine.

The most important thing for a parent is to find out as much as possible about a nursery or play group before making a decision. Speak to other parents about the services on offer and don't be afraid to drop in unexpectedly on the staff and children – in most instances you should be made welcome. Here are some of the types of day care services and facilities available for children.

DAY NURSERIES look after under-fives for the length of the adult working day. These may be run by social services departments, voluntary organisations, private

companies or individuals, community groups or employers. Children can attend either part-time or full-time depending on their and their parents' needs. **PLAYGROUPS** provide sessional care for children aged between three and five, though some may take children at two-and-a-half. They aim to provide learning experiences through structured play opportunities in routine.

Most playgroups are run on a self-help basis by groups of parents with one or two paid staff, but a few are run by local authorities. Some are called opportunity groups and cater specifically for children with special needs. Playgroup sessions last for no longer than four hours.

EXTENDED PLAYGROUPS provide care for children for more than four hours a day. Many will be used by working parents on the same basis as a day nursery.

CRECHE is a term commonly used to describe two different facilities: a day nursery

managed by or on behalf of an employer for the children of his employees or a facility attached to a shopping centre, shop or leisure centre where children are left by their parents for short spells of time.

PRIVATE DAY NURSERIES vary considerably in character but all offer educational and day-care facilities.

MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS AND CLASSES are establishments with their own identity. Nursery classes or units are integral parts of primary schools. Both kinds of provision are open during the normal school day, but the great majority of children attend part-time – usually five mornings or five afternoons a week.

RECEPTION CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS – A large number of primary schools admit children to reception classes before they are five. Most are four-year-olds admitted at the start of the school year or term in which they reach five. The great majority attend full-time.

A nursery where children blossom

SUNFLOWERS Day Nursery at Mount View, Northallerton, only opened its doors in September, but it already has a waiting list of more than a year for some age groups. The 60-place nursery takes children from three months up to pre-school age and also runs an out-of-school club with a pick-up and drop-off service at local schools.

Purpose-designed and built from the ground up as a nursery, Sunflowers has a total of nine dedicated childcare rooms to help ensure the very particular needs of young children are met. Its baby unit, for example, has a messy play and eating area, a large playroom for older babies, a smaller play room for non-mobile babies and a sleeping room – not to mention its own outside play space.

Bruce Warnes, who runs the company behind Sunflowers, explained: "Purpose building our nursery has given us the perfect opportunity to get things right and the positive response from local parents has been overwhelming. "Demand for baby places has been so high that we are even taking bookings from people whose children haven't

SUNFLOWERS DAY NURSERY

been born yet!" It's not just the nursery's baby unit that has been well thought out. Children from the age of two move up into a bright and spacious unit where they benefit from four separate rooms that provide a whole range of learning and playing environments. Pre-school children aged three and above, who qualify for free childcare places at Sunflowers, have their own separate room where they can spend a little more time brushing up on some of the skills they'll need for school.

Joanna Smith, who manages the nursery, commented: "Having the perfect nursery building is only a part of our success. What really makes Sunflowers a special place to bring your child is the warm and friendly outlook of my team of staff. "We work for a company that respects us as childcare professionals and, in turn, we respect and value every child and their parents or carers who come through our doors." Further information about Sunflowers Day Nursery, including details of free places, is available on (01609) 781755 or 781756



Looking for great quality childcare?

Our sixty place, purpose built children's day nursery is open at Mount View, Northallerton

Sunflowers Day Nursery provides an exceptional standard of early years care and education, delivered by the highest calibre staff in an environment designed, fitted out and equipped to the best possible standards.

We are taking registrations for children from 3 months to 5 years and for our Out of School Club. For a parent's information pack, contact us on

01609 781755

or visit our website at www.sunflowersdaynursery.com



Asquith Court Nurseries

Providing excellence in early years learning and childcare

Open Day

Saturday 10th May
10am - 2pm

Asquith Court Nursery
Teesside



c/o David Lloyd Leisure
Tees Barrage Way,
Navigation Way,
Tees Barrage, Thornaby,
Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6QA
Telephone 01642 670676
www.asquithcourt.co.uk

Asquith built on quality

ASQUITH SCHOOL LTD

ASQUITH School Ltd has a nationwide reputation for delivering the highest standard of child care. The Teesside nursery is an outstanding example of this. First-time visitors are impressed by the bright and welcoming atmosphere, wide range of play equipment and teaching facilities and the friendly and professional approach of the dedicated staff. Asquith School employs a team of qualified nursery nurses who all work to the guidelines laid out within Asquith's unique curriculum document, which covers detailed aspects of childcare from three months to five years. Asquith Nursery is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. Full and part-time sessions are available.

Many happy returns to the Little Learners

THE Little Learners Nursery Centre is the first purpose-built day nursery in the Richmondshire area and celebrates its fifth birthday this summer. The centre, in Stags Way, Scorton, near Richmond, currently has a few limited places left in its self-sufficient, spacious baby unit for any babies aged between six weeks and 12 months. The baby unit is one of five units catering for individual age groups, each containing play and educational equipment to let each child explore and develop to reach the next stage of development. Alongside each unit are other excellent facilities, including a large indoor play area, soft-play centre, messy playroom, safe outdoor play area and several IT systems for daily access. The nursery is open 51 weeks of

LITTLE LEARNERS NURSERY CENTRE

the year, from 7.30am-6pm, catering for children from six weeks up to 14 years of age. The Crazy Kids Klub has a before and after-school delivery and collection service, as well as full day-care during all school holidays. Little Learners is registered to receive the three and four-year-old funding, as well as the working families tax credit, which can give great savings on childcare fees. Little Learners aims to provide children with the best possible start in life within a happy, safe and stimulating environment, allowing them to flourish during the vital early years of discovery. For details on the limited baby unit places or information about any other part of the nursery, please telephone 01748 812559.



Happy times: From l-r Andrew Miller, Holly Tyler, Eleanoir Shannon and Ethan Madronal playing safely at the Little Learners Nursery Centre

Future firefighters:

Children from House Of Eden learn all about the Fire Service



Join in fun and games at welcoming House Of Eden

HOUSE of Eden is an Ofsted-registered pre-school nursery, out-of-school club and holiday club.

Jan Hopper, the nursery manager, has over 20 years experience in childcare and manages a team of NNEB-qualified nursery staff and a qualified cook. Jan and her team provide a warm, happy and safe environment for all pre-school children in their care and a broad balance of activities that enhance children's knowledge,

HOUSE OF EDEN

development and education. Each age group at the nursery has separate rooms. A separate after-school club and holiday club have been added with the help of TARKA, an organisation developing and supporting services for school-aged children. For a brochure or to arrange a visit to House of Eden children's nursery, please call Jan on (01388) 722152.

Family values count for everyone at William House

WILLIAM House private day nursery, situated on the outskirts of Darlington, has been established since August 1990. The nursery is set in the old presbytery and offers a high standard of childcare and education for 84 children, aged birth to eight years, with three to five-year-olds receiving funding for the foundation stage. Under the guidance of Mary Boulton, who has over 30 years experience in all aspects of childcare and education for the under-eights, the nursery serves the

ADVERTISING FEATURE

town, rural and urban community. William House recognises the demands of modern life and encourages the nursery team to help and support the family, providing a stimulating, warm and safe environment. This offers peace of mind for parents and guardians. The nursery aims to promote good family values and respects individual beliefs and special needs, through working with the Equal Opportunity Policy. The nursery has developed over the last 13 years by

recommendation and word of mouth, maintaining a high standard of childcare and education. William House Nursery first opened on the ground floor for children aged two to five years then a purpose-designed baby unit was built for children aged from birth to two years. The first floor was then opened for children aged two to five years, followed by a further purpose-built unit, The Hall, offering dance, drama, music and movement, musical instruments and small and large apparatus, promoting spacial

awareness and citizenship education. At the request of parents, The Comic Club (before, after-school and holiday club) evolved for children up to the age of eight. William House recognises the importance of promoting good self-image and self-esteem, using the foundation stage curriculum, with Stepping Stones working towards six desirable learning goals. The nursery has many extra activities to offer in and out of class and the children are encouraged to take part in all aspects of nursery

life. Children aged three-four years receive nursery funding towards their nursery education. Parents or guardians may also apply for family tax credits. Annual inspections show that William House Nursery offers its children very high standards. The team has also worked very hard towards the Darlington Quality Assurance Kite Mark and Investors In Children. Any parent or guardian wanting to forward plan for childcare and education, please contact the school direct for a prospectus, or arrange a look around, on 01325 489997.

WILLIAM HOUSE CHILDREN'S DAY NURSERY

Fully Qualified Staff with Nursery Nurses and Teachers

Open Monday - Friday 8.00am - 6.00pm

Full and part-time places

Ages from birth to 8 years

Enclosed walled garden

After school/holiday club

Tax Credits are also available

The Old Presbytery, Barton Street
Tel. 01325 489997

LITTLE LEARNERS NURSERY CENTRE
Scorton, nr Richmond

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SELF CONTAINED **SPACIOUS & MODERN**

PURPOSE BUILT **FULLY EQUIPPED** **QUALIFIED STAFF** **EXCELLENT FACILITIES**

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7.30am START **01748 812559** 6pm FINISH

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House of Eden Children's Nursery

1 The Cottages, Rushyford, Co Durham DL17 0LN

Ofsted Registered

Pre-School Nursery, Out of School Club and Holiday Club

Ring now for a brochure and to book your child's **FREE** morning or afternoon visit, including lunch or tea

Contact: Jan Hooper, Nursery Manager Tel: 01388 722152

Top-quality nursery education

THERE are a number of council-run nurseries in Darlington, providing what the council believes is the very best in nursery education. These nurseries are:

Borough Road Nursery School

Situated in the centre of Darlington, Borough Road Nursery School occupies a spacious Victorian school building that has been transformed into a wonderful early-years education environment. The nursery school admits 130 children from all over the town on a part-time basis from the age of three until they go to primary school. The school has an impressively large garden that has been developed by parents and the community for the benefit of the children.

The school is in partnership with Kids and Co day care facility which provides full day care on the premises for children attending the school.

All parents are welcome to visit Borough Road Nursery School and look around the school for admission purposes. Names can be put on a waiting list from the time children are two years old.

Albert Hill Nursery School

This school provides a friendly atmosphere of security and happiness within a stimulating environment where all children can develop their full potential. Albert Hill Nursery School has provision for 104 part-time places. A successful and well-organised carer/toddler group is held twice a week within term-time for young children and babies.

The school has extensive play facilities and opportunities to support early learning and progression through the early learning goals.

This incorporates an exciting soft play area and ball pool, which also provides extra-sensory experiences.

The outside nursery environment includes three diverse secure garden areas which each promote a different aspect of your child's learning.

Eastbourne Nursery School

Situated near the railway station in the Eastbourne area, this school is adjacent to a park.

The nursery has a large outside area, with soft surfaces and a grassy bank, which offers opportunities for adventurous play.

Eastbourne Nursery follows a foundation state curriculum for children aged three to five years.

A recent Ofsted report praised the high quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Parents are welcome at all times to help or just pay the school a visit. For further information ring Mrs Beavis on (01325) 380825.

Heathfield Nursery School

Situated in the Eastbourne area of Darlington, this school offers 104 part-time places in a happy environment. It has a large enclosed outside play area with safety surface.

The children complete the first year of the Foundation Stage at the nursery school, receiving a broad and balanced curriculum and learning through their play.

Heathfield also hosts a variety of family learning events and welcomes parental involvement. It has close links with the local mother and toddler group and receiving primary schools.

George Dent Nursery School

Established in 1917, George Dent is officially the second oldest nursery school in Britain.

It is situated in a large Victorian house with extensive grounds which include a wildlife garden and bird hide.

The nursery is located in Elms Road, near the Darlington Memorial Hospital, and has 186 children attending part-time.

George Dent Nursery School has a thriving story library and offers high-quality early-years education.



Discovering a whole new world: Children at Albert Hill Nursery discover how much fun it can be to use a computer (above), while youngsters at George Dent Nursery (left) get back to nature as they watch the activities of some ducklings



Darlington Local Authority Nursery Schools

BOROUGH ROAD NURSERY SCHOOL

Borough Road, Darlington DL1 1SG
(01325) 380785

Headteacher Mrs L. Millar
Childcare facilities on premises

ALBERT HILL NURSERY SCHOOL

Prescott Street, Darlington DL1 2ND
(01325) 380818

Headteacher Mrs C. D. Billington
Carer/Parent & Toddler Group on premises, 2 sessions a week

All nursery schools offer:

- Highly qualified, committed and professional staff who work together to give the best possible start to your child's education
- Carefully planned provision with high quality learning resources
- Purposeful play in a caring, safe and exciting environment that builds on learning resources
- A smooth transition from home to school
- Identification of individual learning needs and progression towards the Early learning Goals
- Quality ensured by inspection to the rigorous standards set by Ofsted

EASTBOURNE NURSERY SCHOOL

Belgrave Street, Darlington DL1 4AP
(01325) 380825

Headteacher Mrs L. Beavis

HEATHFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL

The Broadway, Darlington DL1 1EJ
(01325) 380827

Headteacher Mrs S. Horner

GEORGE DENT NURSERY SCHOOL

Elms Road, Darlington DL3 7PY
(01325) 380802

Headteacher Mrs P. Pennington

Abbey's mark of quality

ABBEY Junior School caters for pupils from the age of seven to 11. At present it has 366 pupils on its roll.

The school covers the full range of national curriculum subjects. This year Abbey Junior School has worked successfully on a number of initiatives, namely Active Mark for Sport, Artsmark, Basic Skills Quality Mark for literacy and numeracy and Darlington's Inclusive School Award. The school has a strong musical background and is home to both recorder and string clubs. Abbey Junior School has a purpose-built ICT suite housing 30 computers and hosts an after-school club for adult learning. There are literacy and numeracy sessions for more able children in all year groups. This has been extended to involve links with industry in the form of thinking skills and activities for more able pupils. Annual events at Abbey Junior School include a school garden party, Christmas and summer concerts and a residential weekend in the Lake District for Y6 pupils.



Mark of quality: Pupils at Abbey Junior School celebrate the Quality Mark award to their school. Alan Wells, left, from the Basic Skills Agency, presented the award to headteacher George Ford

Small school with big plans

AT PRESENT Butterfield Pre School is located within Junction Farm School in Eaglescliffe, but in September it will move into its own premises within Junction Farm School grounds. This informal and fun place to learn has been established now for over three years. Butterfield Pre School is Ofsted registered and has places for both sessional and full day care for two to five-year-olds. As you would expect, Butterfield takes great care of its children. With each session averaging around 18 children, the friendly, qualified staff have ample opportunity to bring out the best in your child. Once the school's move into its new premises has become reality, staff intend to implement plans for expansion of the services provided. These will include a welcome addition in the form of the Lunch Time Club. With new and exciting ventures just around the corner, Butterfield Pre School is a progressive, caring environment. At Butterfield Pre School you are assured that you have placed your child in the right hands.

Exciting times ahead

THERE are exciting times ahead for children and parents at Coundon Primary School. The school's headteacher, Ed Mitchell, has only held the post since September but he has big ideas for developing the quality and range of experiences for children and others in the community. Coundon Primary School is a UK Online Centre where local people can develop their ICT skills. The school already runs courses which get adults involved in their child's learning and has more planned for the future. Due for launch after Easter is the school's Breakfast Club which will initially provide up to 50 children with a healthy, nutritious breakfast.

Also soon to be launched are activities which will support literacy skills. Sporting opportunities at Coundon Primary School are on the increase with the school now running four football coaching sessions a week for children between the ages of eight and 11. The future will see a wider range of sports being developed by staff at the school. These will be supported by experienced coaches. Central to the school's approach is opportunity for all. Coundon Primary School has revised its aims with contributions from staff, governors, parents and children and all are working towards making it a happy place to work and play.

A personal choice

ONE OF the most important things to think about when choosing a school is your child's needs and personality. Ask yourself which school she or he will like best and which school will be best for him or her? These are not necessarily the same thing. When you're making your decision bear in mind the following factors:

- Your child's preferred school, if any, and the reasons for it;
- Where your child's friends are going. Is it best to stay with those friends or make new ones?
- If your child is particularly bright, or needs special help or attention, which schools will handle that best?
- If your child has particular interests or you want him or her to

learn a particular subject or subjects, is the school strong in those areas? On the other hand, does it have weak areas that worry you?

- What do other parents say about their experience of local schools and how well did their children do at the schools? Remember, though, that schools can change quite quickly and that past experience isn't always a good guide to the future. Also, other children may not be like yours and may have completely different needs.
- How will your child get to school? Having to make a long trip to and from school can be tiring for your child – and it may be difficult to arrange. Check out whether or not the school takes part in a "safer routes to school" scheme.

ABBEY JUNIOR SCHOOL



Abbey Road, Darlington,
Co. Durham DL3 8NN
Tel. (01325) 380748
Fax (01325) 363082
Vid.Con: 01325 462139
email: admin@abbeyjun.darlington.sch.uk



ABBEY INFANT SCHOOL

Cleveland Terrace, Darlington
DL3 9JA
Tel. (01325) 380803

BUTTERFIELD PRE SCHOOL



Butterfield Pre-School Group

Located within Junction Farm Primary School, Eaglescliffe
OFSTED REGISTERED

Sessional or full day care for 2-8 year olds
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07814 582693 or 07957 687456

Tailored Childcare to suit your working needs!

Coundon Primary School

Victoria Lane, Coundon
01388 603588

We are here to give your child the best

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Our **vision** is to be the most improved Primary School in the country!

Come and see what we can do for you and your child

Headteacher: Mr E. Mitchell

WEST CORNFORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Headteacher: Mrs J Sarsfield

- Girls and boys aged 3-11
- Broad and full curriculum
- Excellent sporting results / facilities
- Before and after school club
- Private day care 0-3 as from September 2003

Brochure and further details available

West Cornforth Primary School
High Street, West Cornforth,
Co. Durham DL17 9HP
Telephone (01740) 654315

Circus skills top extra activities

ST MARY'S RC aided primary school at Newton Aycliffe is a small, friendly, single-age-range school which has achieved the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark in recognition of its promotion of literacy and numeracy throughout the age groups. High standards of attainment and behaviour are achieved in a Christian, caring atmosphere with dedicated staff and enthusiastic pupils. A variety of out-of-school activities encourage children to develop skills in areas such as sport, ICT and even circus skills.

ST MARY'S RC

Parental involvement is high and valued, with an active and successful PTA. Several parents assist in classes throughout the school. This partnership is a strong feature of St Mary's and is essential to the children's educational experience and development. The welcoming environment promotes positive attitudes, with pupils demonstrating responsibility for their own learning and awareness of what they need to achieve to attain their potential.



Sunny days: St Mary's RC promotes positive attitudes, with pupils demonstrating responsibility for their own learning

Quality, not time, is the key to homework

IT IS more important that homework helps your child to learn than whether it takes a certain amount of time.

The Government's guidelines (see panel) encourage schools to plan homework carefully alongside the work children do at school, and to make sure that all activities are appropriate for individual children.

The guidelines for schools, entitled *Homework: Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools*, can be read in full on the DfES Standards website. There are a number of key points for parents to note.

How much homework?

Children should not be expected to spend significantly longer on homework than the guide times set out in the panel.

Activities may not take as long as the guide times: that does not matter at all so long as they are useful.

Schools and teachers are expected to organise homework carefully so that children are not expected to do too much on any one day.

What sort of activities should children be doing?

All homework activities should be related to work children are doing at school. However, homework should not always be written work. For young children it will largely be reading with parents or carers and informal games to practice mathematical skills. For older children, including those at sec-

GOVERNMENT HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Primary school – Years 1 and 2: 1 hour per week; **Years 3 and 4:** 1.5 hours per week; **Years 5 and 6:** 30 minutes per day. **Secondary school – Years 7 and 8:** 45-90 minutes per day; **Year 9:** 1-2 hours per day; **Years 10 and 11:** 1.5 - 2.5 hours per day.

ondary school, homework may include reading, preparing a presentation to the class, finding out information, making something, trying out a simple scientific experiment and cooking.

Should parents help with homework?

Generally, schools are very keen for parents to support and help children with their homework.

But there may be times when schools will want to see what your children can do on their own.

It is also important, particularly as they get older, for your children to become increasingly independent in their learning.

However, schools generally take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents get involved – as long as they do not take over too much.

If you are unsure about what your role should be you should discuss it with your child's school.

They will be very pleased that you are interested and will want to help you get the balance right.

Doing homework somewhere other than at home

Over the next few years, many schools will be given funding so that they can provide opportunities for older children to do homework either at school or somewhere else where there is supervision.

For example, a study support centre, such as at a library, or in some places a football club. Some schools already offer this opportunity; contact your child's school for information.

Feedback on your child's homework

Schools are expected to make sure that children are given feedback on their homework. It should be given in a way that lets your child know how well they have done and how they could do better.

This may not always be through written comments from the teacher. Sometimes, work will be discussed in lessons, or teachers may give written comments on just one or two aspects of a piece of work.

If you are concerned about the feedback given to your child, you should discuss this with the school.

Children with special needs

The Government's guidelines include broad recommendations on homework for children with special needs.

Schools are expected to consider carefully the needs of individual children and think about how they can best work with parents and carers to support their learning, including their personal and social development.

Teachers are asked to be careful to ensure that children with special needs in mainstream schools are given good-quality homework tasks, rather than just finishing off class work. They should also work with school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to make sure the level is right. As a parent, you have tremendous power to strengthen your child's confidence – and confidence is vital to learning.

To help your child learn outside (and at) school, improve confidence by giving lots of praise and encouragement. Specific praise focusing on a particular aspect of their work ("I like the way you have...") is more effective than bland, blanket praise. Read to, and with, your child as much as possible.

Encourage children to observe and talk about their surroundings.

Even young children can be helped to read notices and signs, for example, and understand what they mean.

Make use of your local library and look out for special events and services for children. Visit museums and places you think your child might find interesting.

Dene Valley Primary School



...committed to raising standards

At Dene Valley Primary School we try to:

- to create consistently high standards of learning experiences for all children
- to develop the whole child
- to create a caring, secure environment so that all in school feel a sense of worth
- to create a lively and stimulating learning environment
- to create a partnership with parents, governors, and the wider community
- to develop a care for the physical environment

semi-rural location

small class sizes

breakfast club

positive ethos

large play area

morning and afternoon nursery

Gurney Valley, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 8RP
Tel/Fax: 01388 603947

Headteacher: Mr R. J. Hill
Email: Dene.Valley@durhamlea.org.uk



ST. MARY'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC
VOLUNTARY AIDED
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Central Avenue, Newton Aycliffe
Co. Durham DL5 5NP

TELEPHONE: 01325 300339

HEADTEACHER: Mrs A. Dockray

NOR: 168

- Education for pupils aged 4 - 11
- Committed to excellence and continued improvement
- A most civilised and welcoming community with good relationships and well implemented aims - Ofsted 1999
- High standards of behaviour
- Active and successful P.T.A.
- Visits to school welcomed by appointment with the Headteacher

From the Horse's mouth!

GIFT HORSE CATALOGUE

WHEN the Gift Horse Catalogue first appeared in 1992 it was an instant success with pony-mad children and adults alike.

The catalogue is a great source of horsey gifts, with ideas for birthdays presents and goody bags as well as prizes for gymkhanas and shows. With over 200 items to choose from, each clearly and competitively priced, the current catalogue includes an instructional manual on horse care and riding, educational and entertaining videos, novels, stationery and items for school, including notebooks, pencil cases, pencils and rubbers, book-ends, puzzles and puzzle books, colouring books, jigsaw puzzles, toys, things to do and make, chinaware, clothing and hat covers –all based on a horsey theme. A discount is given to riding schools and clubs who order in bulk and a personal service is always assured.

At the Gift Horse Catalogue we are always open to suggestions as to what our customers would like to see in the catalogue, and if there is an item which you are particularly looking for and it isn't in the catalogue, we will do our best to find it. You can obtain a free copy of the Gift Horse Catalogue by phoning (01963) 371371 and leaving your name and address clearly on the 24-hour answering service, or by writing to The Gift Horse Trading Company, PO Box 3046, Wincanton, BA8 0TR.

Kids are safe and sound in a quality learning environment



Picnic time: Children keeping busy at The Safe Play Club

THE Safe Play Club began operating at Mowden Infant School in January 1997, after Valerie Moss discovered there was no childcare available for her son in the Mowden/Hummersknott area of Darlington and decided to do something about it.

This was the first school-based out-of-hours kids' club in Darlington, and was followed in June 1999 by a club at Heighington Primary School, another at Alderman Leach Infant School in September 1999 and a fourth at All Saints Millennium Centre in November 2000.

The Safe Play Club aims to provide regular and reliable before and after-school care for children aged four to 14 years of age and holiday care for children aged four to 16. It offers high-quality, affordable and secure child care at Mowden and Heighington both before and after school term time.

At Alderman Leach, only after-school care is offered at present, while after-school and full day-care during the school holidays are available at All Saints Millennium Centre in Blackwell, thus enabling parents to maintain employment, return to work or training knowing

THE SAFE PLAY CLUB

their children are being cared for in a safe, stimulating and caring environment.

All staff have a child-care qualification and are fully police and health checked, while references are undertaken prior to their employment within the kids' clubs. Most also hold first aid, food hygiene and health and safety certificates.

Children learn through play with educational toys and games in a secure home-from-home atmosphere, providing opportunities for creative, challenging and worthwhile learning, all supervised by qualified staff.

The Safe Play Club works in partnership with the Education Department and is registered with OFSTED and the Kids' Clubs Network. It was awarded a Kids' Club Network Quality Assurance Award for its high standards in April 1998.

For further information on The Safe Play Club, call in at any of the clubs or contact Valerie Moss on 01325 288911 or 07710 487730.

Time your school application to perfection

YOU will usually need to apply for a primary school place well before your child reaches five – many schools admit children at four. You will usually need to apply for a secondary place before Christmas in the year before your child is due to start at secondary school.

Admissions are handled in one of two ways, either by the local authority or by the school itself.

If the school you choose for your child deals with its own admissions (sometimes it will be described as being "its own admission authority") you may have to apply directly to the school.

If you want your child to go to a school for which the LEA has responsibility – even if it is your second-choice school – you must fill in a local authority admissions form,

stating your preferred school. If you do not fill in a local authority admissions form, your child may not be allocated a school place until all those who did state a preference have been offered a place, and it is then possible that your local school may be too full to take your child. Never assume that your child will get a place at a new school without you having to apply.

Even if your child is at a nursery which is linked to an infant school, or at an infant school which is linked to a junior school, you still need to make an application to move them on to the next stage.

Even then, if a school is very popular there is no guarantee that your child will get a place.

Look in the booklet produced by the LEA, or in the school prospectus, to

see if there have been more applications than places in previous years.

A school's "admission authority" will deal with your application for a school place for your child.

The admission authority will be either the governing body of the school for foundation and voluntary aided schools or the LEA for other state schools.

The admission authority will give you the information you need and make sure you receive an application form. In some areas, all the state schools are included on the same form, or work to a common applications timetable.

Most admission authorities set a deadline for receiving applications, so make sure you send your form back to the right address in good time.

Also, find out whether you are

expected to provide any extra information to support your application.

Sometimes, if you are applying to a voluntary-aided church school, you may need a letter from your parish priest or minister.

Denominational schools and boarding schools are also permitted to interview, but only to assess religious/denominational commitment or suitability for a boarding place.

If you are applying to a school which is not a comprehensive school, your child may have to sit an entrance test. It is important to read the admission authority's instructions very carefully, to make sure that you are doing everything you can to try to get the school place that you want for your child.

Aycliffe Village Primary School

Newton Aycliffe



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Guiding the way: Pupils from Staindrop School who have created a CD on a guide to the area l-r: Sam Kibbler, Sam Moore, Mark Thompson, James Alderson, Martyn Jones and Martin Scott



Switched on to success: Steph Parry, left, and Deborah Shackleton from Staindrop School team with the innovative light switch covers with which the school has won a series of awards

Excellence for all at Staindrop

STAINDROP Comprehensive School is situated on the outskirts of Staindrop village, overlooking rolling fields and farms. This small, award-winning school provides a caring and safe environment where pupils are treated as individuals. Staindrop is a popular school and has been over-subscribed for the last two years. A recent survey of parents identified that 'school discipline, the community spirit and developing confidence in pupils' were some of the factors which ensured the school performed very well. The success of Staindrop Comprehensive School has also been recognised with two national awards. The school has received the ArtsMark Award for the development of pupils' creativity and the Schools Curriculum Award for its work with the community and the range of activities offered.

STAINDROP COMPREHENSIVE

The pupils enjoyed great success last year in examinations, with every Year 11 pupil leaving with four or more GCSE certificates. At key stage three, the school was in the top three Durham schools for its mathematics and science results. The school is equally proud of its sporting and dramatic achievements. This year the students' lively performance of Guys and Dolls played to packed houses of pupils, parents, friends and members of the local community. The school is also proud of its Young Enterprise team who represented the whole of the North-East in the national finals. A remark from an inspector in the Ofsted report states: "Staindrop Comprehensive School supports pupils and prepares them well for life after they leave."

Rules to follow when choosing a secondary school

BEFORE you decide where to apply, you should collect as much information as you can about the schools in which you are interested.

There are many different places to get this information, including school brochures and government performance tables. Perhaps the most important one of all is the school itself.

1 Visit the school

It is very helpful to get first-hand information. You can learn a lot from touring the school and seeing the children, the teachers and the way they work together. Check out the school's resources and the children's work. Ask how the school involves parents – does it seem to be a happy school where

everyone is serious about learning? Would it suit your child?

Many schools hold open days and evenings where you can meet the staff and see children's work. Or you could make an appointment to visit the school at another time, and ask to talk to the headteacher. Many schools have Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). They may be able to give you extra information about the school and offer advice on the admissions process. Ask at the school for more details.

2 Local authority booklets

Your local authority produces a booklet listing all the schools in your area. The booklet will tell you how many pupils are admitted, their admission arrangements,

how popular the school is with parents and where to get more information

3 The school brochure (prospectus)

Every school publishes a brochure (called a prospectus) each year. This will tell you a lot more about a school than the local authority booklet can, so get one for each of the schools you might be interested in. Prospectuses have a lot of useful information and will help you to understand what different schools are like. A prospectus will also explain the school's admissions policy in detail. You can get a copy from the school.

4 Performance tables

You will probably want to know about a schools' performance. Every year the

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) publishes performance tables for primary and secondary schools.

The secondary school tables tell you: key facts about each school; information about GCSEs, GNVQs and other exam results and the pupils' absence record. Separate tables for 16-18 year-olds cover all schools with sixth forms and colleges of further education. These tell you the key facts about schools and colleges and also supply details of exam results

5 Government inspectors' reports

You may also want to ask about reports produced by the Government's school inspectors (Ofsted). A report is available for every school in the country. You can get these from the Ofsted website.

Staindrop Comprehensive School

Situated on the outskirts of Staindrop village, the school overlooks rolling fields and farms. This small award winning school provides a caring and safe environment, where pupils are treated as individuals.

Staindrop is a popular school and has been oversubscribed for the last two years. A recent survey of parents identified 'School discipline, the community spirit and developing confidence in pupils' as some of the factors which the school does very well.

Enquiries are welcomed from parents looking for: **Excellence For All**

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Telephone (01833) 660285 Fax (01833) 660833



Parkside proud of caring reputation

It may be one of the most well-equipped schools in County Durham, but the emphasis at Parkside Comprehensive is not on bricks and mortar but on the 900 pupils who make up the school community.

The Willington school has some of the most modern facilities in the county – including some superb sports infrastructure – and is set in extensive grounds on the side of the Wear Valley. But staff and pupils are at the top of the agenda at Parkside, as the school's most recent Ofsted report concluded: "Parkside Comprehensive School is a good school which is continuing to improve the quality of education and the standards reached by all its pupils."

"It is a happy school with good relationships between pupils and staff."

Proud of its reputation as a caring school, Parkside may be too big for any single teacher to know every child well, but has organised its care to ensure every pupil gets individual attention. Each year group is divided into seven tutor groups of mixed ability with each looked after by an experienced teacher in the hope that each will develop into a close family unit. Tutors mark attendance and punctuality, monitor progress and consider the well-being of each pupil.

Academically, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage three which delivers the National Curriculum core subjects. In years ten and 11, pupils follow GCSE in English language, English literature, maths and two sciences plus a choice of four others from an extensive list of options.

All pupils also follow a personal skills and

PARKSIDE COMPREHENSIVE

citizenship course and PE.

Around 15 per cent of each year group follow a modified work-related curriculum which is made up of a limited number of GCSEs but enriched with GNVQ work, a link course with Bishop Auckland College and work experience.

Pupils with learning difficulties are integrated into the full life of the school and the full range of subjects, with support in normal lessons by specialist staff.

There is also a wide range of extra-curricular, musical and sporting activities which are well-supported. Staff are firmly convinced of the value and importance of such work and of the stimulus which they give to classroom learning.

At Parkside, there is a particular emphasis on sporting and athletic opportunities and over the years the school has built up a formidable reputation and a full trophy cabinet.

All pupils are encouraged to use the school's spacious playing fields including soccer, rugby and hockey pitches, an athletics track, a full cross-country course and an all-weather hockey pitch alongside outdoor basketball and netball facilities.

The school is particularly proud of its state-of-the-art sports hall with indoor cricket nets, badminton, basketball, netball, tennis and five-side football courts.

The hall, which has tiered seating for 280 people, also has a lighting and sound system for theatrical performances. The school also boasts a fully-equipped gymnasium with climbing wall.



Cooking up a treat: Melissa Carr and Megan Hutchinson, from Parkside School, Willington, who were in the final of the Grab 5 menu challenge in November



Sporting spirit: Parkside places a special emphasis on sporting and athletic opportunities and over the years the school has built up a formidable reputation and a full trophy cabinet

Addressing the subject of school uniform

SCHOOL governing bodies are responsible for deciding whether their school should have a uniform policy, and if so, what it should consist of.

The headteacher's role is to ensure pupils comply with the uniform policy agreed by the governing body. Parents should raise any complaints about school uniform/dress codes with the governing body of their school.

COST OF SCHOOL UNIFORM
In deciding the format of their school uniform, the Government Department expects school governing bodies to give high priority to cost considerations. No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or

their families feeling socially excluded. This applies both to existing and prospective pupils. It is not acceptable for parents of prospective pupils to be deterred from applying to the school of their choice because they are unable to meet the cost of its school uniform. This situation cuts across the Government's aims of supporting parental preference and preventing social exclusion. Existing school uniform policies may require families to purchase 'designer' items, particularly high cost garments such as blazers that are only available from one supplier. It is much better practice, and just

as effective, to have a policy that incorporates items that are readily available 'off the peg' from a number of retail outlets. When setting a uniform policy the Department expects school governing bodies to behave reasonably, considering the impact of their policies on parents and pupils. Governing bodies should consult parents for their views and concerns before deciding on the introduction of a new uniform policy/dress code, or amending an existing one. The Department particularly expects governors to be receptive to parents' complaints, and handle them respectfully, considering fully the issues they raise.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
School uniform often includes clothing required for physical education. Schools should adopt a sensitive, flexible approach to this issue. There is some evidence to suggest that participation and enjoyment of sport is enhanced where pupils feel comfortable about their PE uniform. This is particularly true for girls. Schools should choose a PE uniform, which is practical, comfortable and appropriate to the activity involved. Sex and race discrimination issues must also be considered. The cost of clothing for physical education activities can prove expensive and schools should be mindful of this in setting policy.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH A SCHOOL'S UNIFORM POLICY
Headteachers can discipline pupils for breach of uniform policy. However, the Department does not consider exclusion to be an appropriate response to breaches of school uniform policy, except where it is part of a pattern of defiant behaviour generally. Schools should be considerate and discreetly try to establish why a pupil is not adhering to their uniform policy. If it is because parents are in financial difficulties, schools should be sensitive to the needs of the pupil and give their parents time to purchase the required items.



Welcome to PARKSIDE SCHOOL

a successful, caring and hardworking school

- We want all students
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 - to respect others
 - enjoy their education

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Please contact us to arrange a visit or come to our Open Evening on Wednesday, 8th October, 2003 between 6.00pm and 8.00pm

Hall Lane, Willington, Crook, Co. Durham

telephone 01388 746396

fax 01388 746782



Community spirit at St John's

A SECONDARY school will open its doors to the whole community after a multi-million pound revamp to bring it into the 21st century.

St John's RC Comprehensive School, in Bishop Auckland, is celebrating a windfall of £4.1m from the Department for Education and Skills.

The cash will pay for improvements to the 1960s building in a vision to develop 'whole life learning' for the school and surrounding community.

The project will see some major improvements to the fabric of the school and the creation of an Open Learning Centre which can be accessed by pupils and the wider community.

It is hoped that work on site will start at the end of this year and be completed between September and Christmas, 2004.

Headteacher Gerard Moran said: "It is a very exciting time. Teachers and pupils are the main influences on learning but the right environment is essential.

"We will be able to provide the best possible resources, ICT facilities that can be used for learning and make pupils more employable and an environment that is stimulating and vibrant.

"We also have a strong, extended

ST JOHN'S RC COMPREHENSIVE

community which includes local residents and families from Spennymoor, Crook and Barnard Castle. As a Roman Catholic school we have pupils from outside the town.

"Our concept is for 'whole life learning', making each suite of classrooms as good as possible, with 24-7 learning available for the school and wider community through our Open Learning Centre."

A new science block will be built, which will provide space inside the school for a state of the art technology suite and expressive arts base.

A Sixth Form Centre will also be developed to boost the existing post-16 education department, with art study facilities, a cyber café, study rooms and video conferencing and conference rooms.

All the developments will provide disabled access to all areas of the curriculum.

Fred Wilson, chairman of the school's governors, said: "We, and the Friends of St John's, were delighted to support the application and thrilled it has come to fruition.

"It will benefit St John's, other schools in the area and the community which we feel is part of the school's role."



Jumping for joy: Left to right Matthew Barnish, Emma Hare, Kate Pounder, Rebecca Collinson, Michael Condron, headteacher Gerard Moran, Niamh Redmond, Andrew Shields and David Howe celebrate the cash windfall for St John's School



Safety first: Middlesbrough Football Club mascot Rory The Lion discusses road safety with pupils at St Therese School in Stockton

'Feet on the street'

PARENTS and children across Stockton Borough are being encouraged to get their feet on the street and walk to school.

The borough is leading the way in pioneering the introduction of walking buses – parents organising themselves into a rota to walk to school on a regular route, collecting children as they go.

The first walking bus in the area was launched at Yarm Primary School in January 2000 and more than three years later it is still going strong.

Research shows that one in five cars on the road in the minutes leading up to the start of the school day are taking children to class – leading to congestion on



Awarded for excellence



the roads in general and, perhaps more importantly for parents worried about their child's safety, outside the school gates.

But walking to school has a variety of other benefits, both in the short and long term.

Growing problems of childhood obesity and asthma can be reduced by

a healthier lifestyle and mums and dads can enjoy the exercise along with their children.

Research also proves that today's children have spent so long as passengers in cars that road sense is less advanced than their parents' generation, leaving the UK with the highest childhood road casualty rates in Northern Europe.

Any responsible parent these days has to worry about pollution and the effect of greenhouse gases as their cars stand idling in a rush-hour traffic jam.

For more information on setting up a walking bus scheme – or other advice on walking to school – ring Stockton's roads programme officers on (01642) 387712 or (01642) 397713.

Ten reasons why it's cool to walk your child to school

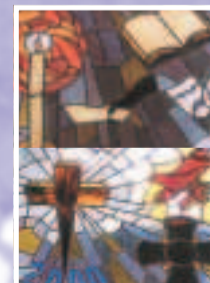
- 1 It's fun!
- 2 It's healthy
- 3 It's friendly and a chance to meet other parents
- 4 It's a chance to teach road skills
- 5 It's a reminder to the powers that be that streets could be safer
- 6 It's environmentally friendly
- 7 It's less stressful than rush-hour driving.
- 8 It's considerate – one less car on the roads means it's safer for other children.
- 9 Its educational – children see and learn more on the way to school
- 10 It's economical – add up how much you save each week

St. John's Sixth Form

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We offer:

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- | excellent ICT facilities
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- | an excellent record for university placements



'a learning
community
guided by
Gospel values'





Route to safety

Sporting success: Members of the Bishop Barrington School Year 7 football squad were just one of last season's sporting winners

THE car is becoming used more and more on the school run, with estimates that at peak hours it contributes to approximately 25 per cent of all traffic on the roads at this time. To address this problem, the government is encouraging schools to work in partnership with their local authority to develop travel plans and Safer Routes to School projects. Safer Routes is a practical project aimed at improving safety for all concerned on the journey to and from school by reducing the dependency on the car in favour of safer and healthier forms of travel, such as cycling and walking. Traffic-calming measures and road safety education training will be implemented to make walking, cycling and using public transport safer and more attractive for parents and pupils. All schools in Hartlepool will be targeted over the next three years with physical engineering measures and education initiatives. In addition, those schools that are developing travel plans will have the added incentive of additional cycle storage/lockers and cycle-training schemes. As road-safety education is developed and linked to the national curriculum, car trips are expected to be reduced and walking and cycling to school will become the norm. The success of these projects depends on the whole school being involved and taking ownership of any schemes. For more information on road safety issues please contact Paul Watson on 01429 523590.

A flourishing future generation

CHILDREN are our future. They flourish when they know they are safe, cared for and wanted. At Bishop Barrington School, Bishop Auckland, we work constantly with families to ensure that a real partnership exists to look after the interests of every child, because every child is special. Bishop Barrington School is well organised to care for and value each student individually. The school aims to provide each student with the opportunity to:

- appreciate learning and to reach her or his full academic potential;
- gain the highest level of accreditation/examination success of

which she or he is capable;

- Reach the best standards of personal and social behaviour;
- Experience trust, respect and responsibility, leading to self-reliance and discipline;
- Be a caring member of the community.

The school meets the needs of the most recent National Curriculum orders. These are viewed, however, as a mechanism to ensure a minimum entitlement for all students. Bishop Barrington School offers much more than a national minimum. Our children need and deserve more. Every opportunity is taken to enrich the curriculum in a

BISHOP BARRINGTON SCHOOL

variety of ways. The school believes in, and plans to keep, small classes to allow for as much individual attention as possible. All schools have lessons but we provide a great deal more. Other activities the school arranges for its students are almost too many to mention – we aim to be a centre of excellence in all that we do. The school is justifiably proud of its many local, regional and national successes. Students have won many cups, trophies, awards and prizes. Bishop Barrington School was the first

school in the county, and one of the first in the country, to be awarded the prestigious Investor In People status in recognition of its commitment to the training and development of its staff. The school is organised to ensure that each child is happy and successful. There is a simple, but very important, philosophy which is the foundation for the work of the school. We expect the highest standards of discipline, academic endeavour and examination success for all the children entrusted into our care. We expect our children to be proud to be part of our school.

all schools have lessons, but we provide a great deal more...

At Bishop Barrington School your child will be encouraged to consider that learning is something we do all our lives.

We can offer a future for your children, that will be bright, challenging and successful.

The School is in the Community and is for the Community.

We engage the School at all levels to ensure that it continually looks forward and relishes the challenges of the future. Our School takes on a new life at the end of formal lessons, we are always looking to provide quality experiences for all in the Community.

We are all particularly proud of the fact that we were recently commended to Parliament, by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, as one of the most improved schools in the country.

This praise does not mean that we are in any way complacent. In all respects this is just the start of what will be an incredible journey.

The selection of the right school is an important decision. We are confident that Bishop Barrington can provide an excellent education for your child's future.

Bishop Barrington
SCHOOL

Headteacher: Keith B. Cotgrave M.Sc.

Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6LA
Telephone 01388 603307 Fax 01388 609990



Toddlers in control

WHEN it comes to road safety, they believe in starting them young in Redcar and Cleveland. The borough received national media attention last year when it became home to the world's first police-approved driving school for toddlers. Potential boy-racers aged just four and five-years-old were put through their paces in toy cars. Police and safety officers introduced the one-hour driving lessons because of the proliferation of model cars – which can cost up to £500 – and reports they were being taken out on the roads by daredevil youngsters. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council mascot Spike the Hedgehog joined police and council road safety officers to get the message across. The driving lessons are only one of

the innovative campaigns introduced by the authority to keep youngsters safe. The council employs Safer Journeys To School Co-ordinator Janet Easley to work in partnership with schools in the borough and encourage them to produce School Travel plans. The aims of the plans can be individually tailored to suit the needs of each school, but all will have themes centred around reducing the number of car journeys to and from school, encouraging the use of sustainable transport, such as walking or cycling, and educating pupils to recognise and use their safest route to school. Wilton Primary in Lazenby, Park Lane Infants in Guisborough, St Mary's RC Primary in South Bank, Skelton Juniors in Skelton and Coatham Primary in Redcar have



Driving lessons: Robby Allday and Johnny Whiteside at the world's first police-approved driving school for toddlers

produced School Travel Plans. Janet has also worked on two major Safer Routes to School projects at Ravensworth Junior School and Bankfields Primary School. The authority also provides cycle-training courses, including

pedestrian training – a week's playground-based course on basic cycling skills, culminating in a test which carries a certificate and badge if successful. For more information on road safety, contact Mike Hall or Ron Gomer on (01642) 444753.

Practical experience

TWENTY primary schools in Middlesborough are now taking part in an exciting new Child Pedestrian Training Scheme. After twice successfully bidding for government funding, Middlesborough council has appointed two Child Pedestrian Training Scheme Co-ordinators, who work with five and six-year-old children, taking them out of school for practical roadside training sessions. They are helped at each school by specially-trained parent volunteers. The training is based on the 'Kerbcraft' model designed by a team of psychologists at the University of Strathclyde and first trialed in Drumchapel, an area of Glasgow with some of the highest child-pedestrian casualty figures in Europe. The trial lasted two years and produced a significant reduction in those figures. The children are taught, over 12 weeks, how to find somewhere safe to cross and how to cross both between parked cars and at junctions when they have to. Five Middlesborough primary schools have already completed the training with approximately 200 children receiving certificates. Ten further schools are currently participating in the scheme. The training does not mean that the children are safe to cross the road by themselves and they should still be accompanied by an adult when they cross, however it is hoped that 'Kerbcraft' training will provide the children with the necessary skills to become safe pedestrians in the future. For more information on the 'Kerbcraft' scheme please contact Middlesborough Council Road Safety Section on 01642 728284 or 728232.

Learning is poetry in motion

DARLINGTON'S school children over the past two years have been actively writing poetry, watching plays, performing in workshops and designing posters, leaflets, (even parking tickets!) all in an effort to learn the rules of the road. Road safety can be integrated in all aspects of the curriculum and a special resources centre has been set up to help any grown up (teacher, childminder, Guider,

Scouter, parent) help get messages across to young children in their care. Road safety shouldn't be just the annual reminder from the Tufty or Green Cross Code Man. For road safety to have a lasting, living impression, it needs to be done every day, if possible in a fun or interesting way. Most children 'learn what they live'. Most learn by imitating grown-ups. What will your child learn today?

Chantelle Harrison and Janine Crawford wrote the following poem during a poetry day held in Dodmire School after hearing the poet Bernard Young read his poems to them. *When you get out of bed, Always use your head. Use your brains, use your brains. On Monday morning I went to school, I also acted like a fool. On Tuesday morning I crossed the*

road, And just missed a heavy load. Use your brains, use your brains. On Wednesday morning I said ta-ra And just missed a speeding car. On Thursday I was hit by a lorry, Then I was really, really sorry. Use your brain, use your brain. On Friday I learned my lesson, In future I won't be messin'. Stop Look. Listen Live. That's the rule. Yeah! Yeah!

calling all young poets

who is your hero?

SCHOOL pupils across the region are being asked to put pen to paper to celebrate their own North-East Hero – and win a prize for their school.

It's all part of this year's Great North Poetry Competition now in its second year and supported by the Orange Writing initiative, Poetry Emotion and The Northern Echo.

Part of the competition is dedicated to young poets and celebrates the depth of talent among young would-be poets.

This year's theme is North-East Heroes, people who have made a lasting impression on the writer.

"We wanted to keep a regional focus on the subject for the poems," explained Ian Brown of Poetry Emotion. "However, a hero doesn't have to be someone famous, it can be someone known to the writer who has made a lasting positive

impression on their life or who has influenced them in some way. But, for the purposes of the competition, the hero does have to come from the North-East."

Last year's competition drew a fantastic response from the region's youngsters and this year it promises to be better than ever.

The project is being supported by Orange Writing, an initiative that aims to increase awareness of, and participation in, all forms of popular literature and creative writing.

"The North-East has a strong identity rich in culture and heritage," explained Maureen Dixon, Regional PR Manager at Orange. "A strong part of this is its people, famous and not so famous, who have made the North-East the great place it is."

"Often it can be daunting if you're asked to write a short story or a novel. However, many more people are prepared to try writing a poem



Winner of last year's under 18's competition, Mohammad Niknafs, age 10, from Gosforth Middle School

Poetry Emotion
emotional poetry to
stimulate mind & soul

and find this easier to try than other forms of writing."

Some fantastic prizes are up for grabs for the winner and their school. Local published poets Pauline Hughes and Valerie Laws, who also teach at the University of Northumbria, have agreed to judge the competition.

They will hold poetry workshop sessions for the winner's school. The winner will also receive £100 worth of book vouchers.

All entries will be posted on the Orange Writing, Poetry Emotion and Northern Echo websites.

In addition, the winning poems, plus a selection of some of the best entries, will also be published in The Northern Echo.

Orange Writing...

The competition runs from September 22 until October 31, 2003. Poems can be submitted in a number of ways. Online via the Orange Writing website www.OrangeWriting.com or at Poetryemotion@ntlworld.com or by post to Nick Morrison at The Northern Echo, PO Box 14, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF.

Rules of Entry for Under 18 Category

Your poem must be about a North-East Hero

Poems may be a maximum of 20 lines long

Poems must be typed

Poems must be the original work of the entrant

Poems must be unpublished work

Judging will be carried out by poets Pauline Hughes and Valerie Laws

Written manuscripts cannot be returned

Correspondence cannot be entered into concerning the decisions of the judges

Closing date is Friday October 31, 2003



Winning team: Just two years ago the staff of Lifelong Learning numbered two. Today it has 13 members of staff who undertake a comprehensive programme of adult learning events and courses

Lifelong Learning a runaway success!

LIFELONG Learning is made up of two teams – Adult and Community Learning (including school governor training) and Family Learning. It is a fairly new provider of adult education, having been established in April 2001 when funding for adult education became the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council. Lifelong Learning has recently joined forces with the library to become one service and is now based at Darlington's Crown Street Library. Lifelong Learning started with just

LIFELONG LEARNING

two members of staff and now has 13. This rise in staffing reflects the success of the service in increasing the number of adult learners and drawing in additional funding through a variety of sources. The group has set up adult education classes at Haughton Community School, Longfield School and Hurworth Comprehensive School and is running Family Learning programmes in 14 schools. The main aim of Lifelong Learning

is to increase adult participation in education. This is done by working closely with local communities, listening to their needs and setting up learning programmes. The group also supports local voluntary and community groups through its Community Learning Chest. The team at Lifelong Learning is involved in a number of publicity events. Its next event will be held in May at the Library when it will be celebrating Adult Learners' Week and the achievements of its adult learners.

What to do if you are turned down by your first-choice school

MOST children are offered a place at their parents' preferred school – unless the school is so popular that more people apply than there are places. Parents who are not offered their first preference school will usually be offered their second preference or, sometimes, another school. If you do not get your first choice of school and are unhappy with the school place allocated to your child, you have a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. If you receive a letter telling you that you have not been offered a place at your preferred school, it will also tell you about your right to appeal and give information about what you should do next. The result of your appeal will depend on the strength of your case. In most admission appeals the panel goes through two stages. First it hears the case put by the admission authority, explaining why it did not offer you a place at your preferred school, and will decide if there was a good reason for turning down your application. The phrase sometimes used is: 'whether the admission would be prejudicial to efficient education or efficient use of resources'. An example might be where the school has very small classrooms and couldn't fit your child in without making the space too cramped for good teaching and learning. If the panel does decide there was a good reason for turning down your application, it will hear your case and find out why you are appealing against the decision. You can mention all the reasons why that school would be the best for your child and what special factors justify your child getting in. The panel will then make a 'balancing judgement' and decide whether the benefits to your child of going to the school you are appealing for instead of the school you have been offered outweigh the bad effects on the school and the other children of having one more pupil in the class. If the appeal panel decides that your case is the stronger, it will uphold your appeal and the admission authority will then have

to admit your child to the school. Different rules apply if your admission application has been refused because the school has reached its legal limit of 30 in a class. In this type of appeal the panel are only allowed to look at two things – whether the admission authority stuck to its own rules (published in its admission arrangements) and whether it acted unreasonably. If the admission authority broke its own rules, either deliberately or by mistake, then your appeal can succeed – but only if your child would have got in if the rules had been applied properly. For the decision to be 'unreasonable' it must be completely illogical or not based on the facts of the case. These include the published admission arrangements, the number of applicants, the number of classrooms at the school and other factors to do with the school or the admission authority. They do not include facts particular to your child or any special reason you might have for wanting your child to go to that school (the convenience of the journey from your home to school, for example). You are free to talk about personal factors at the appeal hearing if you want to, but in this type of appeal the panel cannot take them into account unless they are relevant to one or other of the two things they are allowed to look at. If your appeal succeeds, the admission authority must offer your child a place at the school. If your appeal does not succeed, you can ask the school to put your child on their waiting list (if the school has one), as places sometimes become free after the start of the school year. If you are unhappy about the way the appeal hearing was carried out, you could complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, who might recommend a new appeal. If you want to know more about appeals, contact the admission authority for the school, or contact the School Admissions Teams in the Department for Education and Skills.

Adults Learners Week 10-16 May 2003 is the UK's biggest festival of learning. It could be your chance to explore your potential!

Come and join in the fun!!!

SATURDAY 10th MAY
Cultural Diversity Day

A range of activities throughout Darlington

MONDAY 12th MAY
Science Day

Come along to Crown Street Library between 9.30am until 4pm and find out about model aeroplanes. The BBC Learning Bus will be in the Market Square. Board the bus and try out some new technology. Eat a Rainbow – healthy living and food technology at Crown Street

Adult Learners Week 10th - 16th May



Adult Learners' Week is an opportunity to celebrate, promote and advance all form of adult learning and is co-ordinated by NIACE, the national Institute of Adult Continuing Education.



Please telephone 01325 388864 for further details

TUESDAY 13th MAY
Learn for Life

An event for older learners. 10.30am - 3.00pm Central Hall, Dolphin Centre. Free conference, guest speaker. Taster sessions - watercolour painting, musical keyboard and much more

WEDNESDAY 14th MAY
International Day of Families

A day full of family fun and games at Crown Street Library between 9.30 until 4.00pm. Book a tour to discover the international history of Darlington Civic Theatre

THURSDAY 15th MAY
Learning at Work Day

Join in and gain new skills at your workplace

FRIDAY 16th MAY
Silver Surfers Day

FREE IT/Internet facilities available - Darlington Library Queen Elizabeth 6th Form, Darlington College of Technology and other locations



Outdoor life:
If you yearn for an active career the Army can offer the best equipment, training and opportunities to enable you to reach your full potential in a wide range of jobs and professions



A rewarding Army career



WOULD you like the chance to travel abroad to countries such as Poland, Canada, Jamaica or Cyprus in the first year of your new job? How about the chance to earn an excellent starting salary and receive six-weeks paid holiday every year, all while training in a trade, profession or skill? The career options available in the Army are countless. With over 140 different trades and professions open to recruits – including vehicle mechanics, drivers, technicians, mechanical engineers, doctors, dentists, nurses, joiners, carpenters, plumbers and accountants – there is something to suit everyone. As well as earning a great starting wage, which is often well in advance of that offered to you at this stage of

your career by other employers, you will also receive first-class training. This will enable you to continue to gain great rewards while doing an exciting and worthwhile job where you will need to think and act quickly to make a difference. The Army currently has around 15,000 opportunities available to those with GCSEs and others aged 16–24 years. To find out more about the 140 career options available with excellent training, good rates of pay, generous paid holiday allowance and worldwide travel opportunities, contact your local Armed Forces Careers Offices in Middlesbrough 01642 243413, Bishop Auckland 01388 604110, Catterick 01748 872093, Darlington 01325464530 and Durham 0191 3847682 or visit www.army.mod.uk

“Travel, action, adventure. I joined the 16 to 27 club.”

Earn £213 per week (at 17+).

Get 6 weeks paid holiday, gain valuable qualifications like City & Guilds, Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and BTECs and have a great time doing it.

We're recruiting locally now. Call in at your local Army Careers Office.

Middlesbrough **01642 243413** Bishop Auckland **01388 604110** Catterick **01748 872093**

Darlington **01325 464530** Durham **0191 384 7682**

The Army is committed to Equal Opportunities

www.armyjobs.co.uk



The most important choice for your child

BY DON HUTTON
REGIONAL DIRECTOR ISIS NORTH

One of the hardest things that parents new to independent education have to face up to is the great variety of schools that are on offer in most parts of the country.

This diversity empowers parents to choose the right school for their child – not to be sent to an establishment purely on the basis of a geographical location. Parents however, need to be helped to find the right educational home for their child and this is where the Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS) can help.

This service represents those schools that have been accredited to The Independent Schools Council (ISC). All independent schools in the UK are registered with the appropriate government department, but that simply means that the school has met basic legal requirements, such as the suitability of its buildings and staff.

Accreditation by ISC indicates the quality of a school, not just its basic provision, and this is assessed and confirmed by rigorous inspection. For many parents the first step is to look at the ISIS (North) handbook or visit the 'handbook on line' at www.isis-north.co.uk

This gives information on all the accredited schools in the North.

Remember that in ISIS terms, the North of England stretches from Berwick to Carlisle to North Wales to Hull, and does not include Birmingham or Leicester despite what people south of Watford may think!



Learning curve: At Durham School your son or daughter is assured of the best-quality education delivered by expert staff

Welcome to Durham



Impressive: Durham School enjoys a beautiful setting in one of the country's most charming cities, making it the perfect place to study and live



DURHAM SCHOOL

If you are still wondering where to send your son or daughter to school next September or are just planning ahead for future years, you really ought to pay a visit to Durham School on May 10 – or, if you have a younger son, to Bow School on May 17. At Durham School your son or daughter is assured of the best-quality education delivered by expert and committed staff.

The school's single-sex house system enables pastoral care of the highest quality in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

If, like many parents these days, you are very busy, you might like to consider weekly boarding – great fun for the boys and girls and, from September 2003, much cheaper than full boarding.

Furthermore, from September there will be no more compulsory Saturday lessons.

Durham is noted for its all-round education, with particular excellence in sport and music.

And what better start could you give your boy than to send him to Durham's own preparatory school, Bow, until he is old enough to move to Durham!

DURHAM SCHOOL

An Independent Co-educational
Day & Boarding School 11-18

Confidence for Life...



Saturday 10 May 2003
10.15am - 12.30pm

OPEN MORNINGS

Durham School
0191 386 4783

Bow School
0191 384 8233

BOW SCHOOL

An Independent Day School
for boys aged 3-13

...Where every boy matters



Saturday 17 May 2003
10.00am - 12.00 noon

Seek the right answers to vital questions

WHEN you have decided which schools may be suitable to your particular requirements on grounds of type, age range, locality, etc, you should contact the headmaster or headmistress for prospectuses and for information about vacancies.

When your shortlist is reduced to two or three schools you are strongly advised to telephone or write for an appointment to visit the schools and talk to the Head. You will find that schools are happy to arrange a visit and will do everything possible to assist.

Many parents are nervous about visits and fail to ask the important questions. It may well be helpful to write down the questions to which you want answers. You need to be sure that you know about what the fees include and what are the typical extras.

Ask about rules and the means of enforcing them.

Examination results are not the only way of judging a school and it is important to remember that the academic quality of pupils entering schools may vary greatly. Schools may be justly proud of successes gained through hard work by both staff and pupils with children of modest ability.

Parents sometimes over-estimate the ability of their children and a school prepared to encourage the less bright may be better for your child than a school which achieves strings of A grades at A-level.

Find out about the school's policy on entries for examinations. Some schools enter pupils even if they do not have a good chance of passing, while others enter only pupils who are expected to pass.

In general it will be most helpful to you to ask specific questions: 'What happened to last year's leavers?' is a better question than 'What happens to your leavers?'

Always remember that you are a potential customer, that your decision about the right school for your child is a very important one. Schools will be as anxious as you are that you know fully about them, but only you know what is really important to you.

When you have seen the schools and have made up your mind, the Head will tell you how to apply for a place.

Many schools have a considerable demand for places and so the earlier your application is made the less likely you are to be disappointed.



Hard work pays off: Yarm students (from left) Parlssa Rezan, Paul Peeling, Jess Stanley and Jonathan Lonsdale were among the school's star performers in last summer's A-level examinations

Happy birthday to Yarm

WHEN the original Yarm Grammar School closed and moved to become Conyers Comprehensive, nobody knew what was going to become of its vacated buildings.

In 1978 a group of about 60 parents got together and acquired the site from the council with the intention of opening and running their own grammar school. Yarm School was born. Nobody could have imagined then that it was destined to become the region's biggest and most successful private school.

The 2002/2003 academic year is Yarm School's 25th year of existence. In its short history the school has come a long way.

It now has about 900 pupils – boys and girls – between the ages of four and 18 and has earned a national reputation.

The school is renowned both for its academic excellence and outstanding sporting achievements. GCSE and A-level results are way above the national average and last year 15 per cent of Year 13 were offered places at the prestigious Oxford and Cambridge universities.

In recent years, sports teams have reached national finals in hockey, rugby, tennis, rowing and even croquet! These successes have helped to put Yarm on the map.

Yarm School is now one of the biggest employers in the area and assists greatly with the relocation into Teesside of many key workers in in-

YARM SCHOOL

dustry and hospitals.

The school is proud of its roots and does a tremendous amount for the local community. It has a strong relationship with Yarm Parish Church, Teesside Hospice and several local old people's homes.

All pupils are encouraged, through their school houses, to engage in fund-raising and last year over £20,000 was raised for local charities.

Lots of original ideas emerge every year for charity events which vary from concerts to paintballing, from sponsored events to discos. One house has invited a local group of pensioners to a Christmas meal and party for 20 years now and the occasion has become a firm favourite – for pupils and pensioners!

Over its 25 years the school has developed superb facilities. Every year there are new buildings and improvements, such as a new all-weather sports pitch, a new computer suite in both prep and senior schools, new library and quiet play area in the prep school and a newly-refurbished sixth-form centre.

The school has just announced its intention to open a nursery for three-year-olds. It has also unveiled exciting plans to relocate to a new, purpose-built school about a mile away from its current site.

The new school will be state-of-the-art and will

lead the way in quality educational provision in the area.

But for now the school is concentrating its efforts on celebrating its silver anniversary with a diverse and exciting list of special events, from hosting BBC radio 4's Any Questions?, a special lecture by famous cricketer Ian Botham, and a huge science fair.

The beginning of April saw a packed commemoration service led by the Bishop of Durham and a 25th-anniversary concert featuring former and present pupils and staff in a choral performance.

"Men of God" consists of four poems specially written for the occasion by Head of English, Ewan Craig, and set to music by Director of Music, Ben Wilson.

The poems commemorating the lives of four northern saints – Aidan, Bede, Cuthbert and Oswald – were commissioned as text to set specially for the Jubilee.

Te Deum, by Ben Wilson, was written for the concert and designed to be learned easily from scratch.

Yarm School has achieved a great deal in its first 25 years but remains keenly ambitious for the future.

It is dedicated to providing the highest possible quality of education and being at the forefront of educational provision in the North-East. Happy 25th birthday, Yarm School!



YARM SCHOOL *The Natural Choice*

HMC DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS 4-18



“ We aim to bring out the best in each pupil. By setting high standards, caring for the individual and encouraging their involvement in a wide variety of activities, each child can develop their full potential ”

- ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
- WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES
- FAMILY ENVIRONMENT
- FIRST RATE FACILITIES
- STRENGTH IN ALL MAIN SPORTS
- SMALL CLASS SIZES

Open Morning Saturday 11th October 2003 10.30am - 2.00pm



YARM SCHOOL, THE FRIARAGE, YARM, TS15 9EJ. TELEPHONE: 01642 786023. FAX: (01642) 789216 EMAIL: dmd@yarm.stockton.sch.uk
Registered Charity Number 1093434 www.yarmschool.org

Head start for Thirsk school

QUEEN MARY'S, THIRSK

One of the region's leading independent girls' schools is entering a new era with a new Head at the helm. Robert McKenzie-Johnston takes up the role at Queen Mary's, near Thirsk, in September and is committed to building on the school's reputation for success. He and his wife, Kate, are coming to Queen Mary's from a similar school in Dorset, where they are joint principals. They are looking forward to meeting parents at an open evening at the school on May 9. Queen Mary's provides education for boys and girls from three to seven, and for girls, day and boarding, up to 16 years. As well as providing an excellent academic education, Queen Mary's is a school where each pupil is known and valued. It has a happy, busy environment where music, sport, art and drama are also important elements. Each year scholarships for particularly talented children are awarded, while key dates on the school calendar include the open morning held each September and the entrance examinations in January. If you would like more details please do not hesitate to contact the school administrator, Margaret Atkinson, on 01845 575000 who would be delighted to speak to you and arrange a visit. The school web site address is www.queenmarys.org.uk



Little learners: Boarder Amy Yuen, 11, from Hong Kong, visits an infant class at Polam Hall School in Darlington to prepare a Chinese dish

Making the most of early learning years

THERE is a wide variety of independent preparatory and junior schools for children up to the ages of 11 to 13, either as day or boarding pupils. Some are the junior departments of senior schools, while many are unattached. For the age range three to eight there are several day-schools, usually called pre-preparatory, kindergarten or nursery schools, and mostly linked to a junior school or to a joint junior/secondary school. At the entry age of eight/nine there is a wide choice of preparatory and junior schools, either day or boarding, for both boys and girls. At this age a child is expected to be

able to read and write with reasonable fluency and to have mastered some simple arithmetic. There may be an entrance test, which is designed to make sure the child has the ability to benefit from the curriculum of the school and to help in planning his or her work. Some schools have facilities for special remedial tuition for children who need it. Children may be accepted at a later age (though usually not much beyond 11) particularly at schools which have children up to 13, provided there is a vacancy available. The main aim of these schools is to help each child reach the highest standard of which he or she is capable.

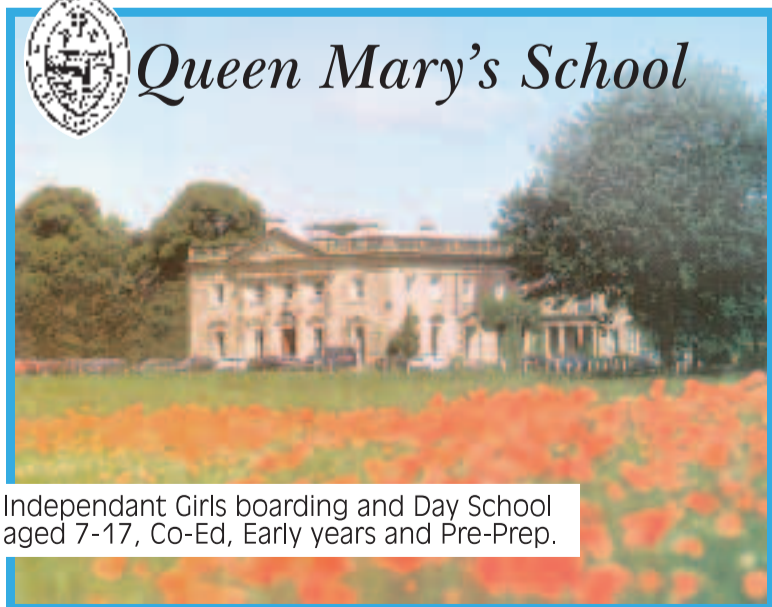
With their small classes and wide curricula, they offer a large measure of individual attention both in and out of school hours. The intelligent use of leisure, the development, from an early age, of a real sense of self-respect and of responsibility for others, the acceptance of challenging situations on the games field and elsewhere, and an enthusiastic approach to music and the creative arts, are all important parts of the tradition of these schools. On the boarding side, great importance is attached to the creation of a friendly, family atmosphere. An increasing number of schools offer before and after-school care.

What about the cost?

GOOD schools cost a lot of money to run and can never be cheap but it is not true to say that independent education is the preserve of the wealthy. Many parents with average incomes make great sacrifices to afford such an education for their children. With expert advice, moreover, much can be done to ease the burden. **Insurance:** There are a number of ways of making provision for school fees by the intelligent use of life assurance and capital. Naturally, the earlier a plan can be started, the greater the benefit. The plan, or plans, can provide cover for fees outstanding in the event of the parents' death. When choosing a school-fees plan it is vital to choose one that suits your individual circumstances and requirements. You should remember that some financial advisers, being independent, are able to give financial advice on all products available and may, therefore, be better able to find plans appropriate to you. Others are not independent and are able to give advice on and make arrangements for investment products provided by themselves or by other companies for which they are "tied agents". You should, therefore, establish the status of the adviser with whom you are dealing and whether he or she is paid by commission or charges a fee. **Help with fees:** Many parents will know that the Labour Government has ended the Assisted Places Scheme. Schools who were in the scheme are anxious to ensure that pupils who wish to join them should be able to do so, whatever their parents' income. It is unlikely that many schools will be able to be as generous in their awards as an Assisted Places Scheme, but parents who would have applied for an assisted place should approach schools in exactly the same way as they would have done in the past. Parents who want information about the level of help available should contact individual schools. Schools may offer **SCHOLARSHIPS** for outstanding merit in some field - these awards are made irrespective of parents' income. They may also offer **BURSARIES** - where the amount offered by the school will depend upon parents' income.



Queen Mary's School



Independent Girls boarding and Day School aged 7-17, Co-Ed, Early years and Pre-Prep.

Academic Arts & Music Scholarships

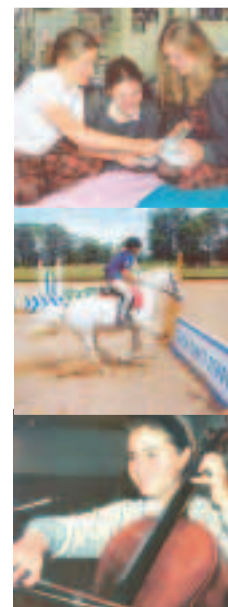
Set in beautiful Baldersby Park in a wonderful grade 1 listed building surrounded by 50 acres of landscaped grounds, sports fields and paddocks.

Family School well founded with excellence in art, drama, music, riding, pastoral care and boarding first class special education needs department.

Open Day for prospective parents - come and have a look around the school and meet the headmaster Mr Robert McKenzie-Johnson on Friday, 9th May
New girls for September lunch to meet the headmaster Mr Robert McKenzie-Johnson on Friday, 20th June at 12 noon.



For more details contact the school secretary:
Queen Mary's School, Baldersby Park, Topcliffe, Thirsk,
North Yorkshire YO7 3BZ
Telephone: 01845 575000 Facsimile: 01845 575001
email: admin@queenmarys.org www.queenmarys.org





Learning in style: Bright, modern and colourful classrooms are a hallmark of Teesside Preparatory and High School

Teesside High – putting girls first

TEESSIDE PREPARATORY & HIGH SCHOOL

TEESSIDE Preparatory & High School is an independent day school offering a caring yet challenging environment for girls age three to 18.

With an impressive record of providing excellent education, the school specialises in fostering the talents of each girl entrusted to its care and will help her to achieve her full potential.

Our success is evident in the regional league tables for GCSE and A-levels which we consistently top.

In 2002, 98 per cent of GCSE students gained five or more A* to C grades, with over half at A* or A. Our A-level candidates attained a 100 per cent pass rate, with 65 per cent of the grades at A or B.

The standard of facilities throughout the school is excellent.

Each student has access to state-of-the-art IT facilities in one of three dedicated ICT suites.

Bright, modern and colourful classrooms are complemented by purpose-built art and music departments and a sports hall.

As well as academic, sports and musical excellence, the school offers an incredible choice of extra-curricular activities, ranging from cake decorating to yoga.

The school programme is backed by our naturally supportive pastoral ethos which ensures the development of positive attitudes and warm personalities.

Beautiful grounds on the banks of the River Tees are an ideal setting for a school where girls do not just have equal opportunities – they have every opportunity.

We would be delighted to show you and your daughter/s around the school.

Please call 01642 782095 at any time to arrange an appointment.

Options open for entry to senior school

INDEPENDENT senior and secondary schools come in several guises - some are single-sex schools, others totally co-educational and some partly so, perhaps admitting girls or boys at sixth form level. Parental choice is, therefore, extensive - between boarding and day, single-sex and co-educational. Many of these schools admit pupils at 11-years-old.

In nearly all the senior day schools (many of which were previously direct-grant grammar schools) and in co-ed schools this is the normal age of entry.

Some boys' boarding schools have an entry from maintained schools or from overseas at 11.

In girls' boarding schools, entry at 11 is usual, either by the Common Entrance Examination for Girls' Schools (which can also be taken at 12 or 13) or by the school's own test.

In general, entry at 11 is by means of a written examination combined with an interview. Details may be obtained direct from schools.

Most senior schools, particularly the boys' boarding schools, also admit pupils at 13, either by the Common Entrance Examination from preparatory schools, or by their own test. Transfers from the state sector can also be made at this age. Details can be obtained direct from the schools.

It is often possible to transfer to an independent secondary school direct into the sixth form after taking GCSEs elsewhere.

Once started in the senior schools, pupils follow a broad curriculum leading to GCSE. Thereafter pupils choose the subjects which they wish to study to A-level.

Sixth form teaching, with its emphasis on preparation for university entrance, is a particular feature of independent schools.

Time is also made available for general and technical studies and independent schools are in the forefront of the movement to link school and industry.

Teaching staff are well-qualified, with the time to

devote much care to pupils of very differing ability. It is common to find teachers with good honours degrees teaching regularly in the lower forms.

Independent schools have taken advantage of their freedom by being alert to new types of teaching and new areas of study.

They have been in the vanguard of the Nuffield science projects, the schools mathematics project, the Cambridge Latin course, and the use of audio-visual methods in the teaching of modern languages.

Full attention is paid to the development of pupils' leisure interests. Music, drama and art flourish and there are facilities for various crafts and hobbies.

Games of all kinds are played, with opportunities for individual pursuits such as riding, fencing, judo, as well as organised team games.

There may be scouts, guides, cadet forces and a variety of clubs and societies catering for special interests.



‘Who would have dreamed that one day our little girl could be reporting the news on national television’



Shiulie Ghosh,
Home Affairs Editor ITN News desk.

it all starts here...



TEESSIDE
PREPARATORY & HIGH SCHOOL

GCSE pass rate
100%
5 Grades A* to C
Summer 2002

A level pass rate
100%
Grades A to E
Summer 2002

Scholarships and bursaries available from age 7
TEESSIDE PREPARATORY & HIGH SCHOOL
The Avenue, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees. TS16 9AT

Tel: 01642 782095

www.teessidehigh.co.uk



Courting success: Queen Margaret's offers pupils the use of numerous sporting facilities – including 17 tennis courts

All-round excellence is the aim at Queen Margaret's

QUEEN MARGARET'S SCHOOL

QUEEN Margaret's is a thoroughly modern independent boarding school for girls.

It is unique in the North of England for its high percentage of boarders and a high staff-pupil ration of 1:7. Situated in 60 acres of parkland six miles south of York, Queen Margaret's occupies a gracious country house surrounded by

attractive purpose-built buildings. Girls live in year groups with resident housemistresses. Over 90 per cent of the girls are full boarders and enjoy a superb range of extra-curricular activities, particularly at weekends. Queen Margaret's encourages excellence in as many areas as possible and while academic standards are high, attention is paid to all levels of ability. A commitment to Christian and

academic values has earned the school a first-class reputation with a high academic rating. Most girls proceed to the sixth form and enter higher education. Qualified staff provide the caring and friendly atmosphere which develops breadth as well as depth of education. The school has excellent facilities for drama, music, computing and science and a magnificent new complex comprising chapel and

separate ultra-modern theatre, built to celebrate the school's centenary in 2001. Physical education is an integral part of the curriculum and Queen Margaret's excels at lacrosse, hockey and tennis. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme (bronze and gold) is popular among pupils. Queen Margaret's has 17 tennis courts, two squash courts, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a

sports hall, an artificial hockey pitch, a large riding school and a nine-hole golf course. The school is run in close partnership with parents who make great personal and financial sacrifices for their daughter's future. Any parent who is looking for the best all-round education for their daughter should take a serious look at independent boarding.

High-quality education at Red House

RED HOUSE SCHOOL

RED House School is one of the North's top independent co-educational day schools. Based in Norton, near Stockton, the school was established in 1929 and has gained a reputation for academic excellence. Red House offers a high-quality education to a wide

range of students from a variety of backgrounds. The school is, and always has been, co-educational, treating girls and boys equally. At Red House students with the ability to tackle a full range of GCSEs are given the opportunity to fulfill their potential. Classroom teaching at Red House is of a consistently high standard and our students are

well-behaved and positive in their conduct. The school also has a very high level of parental support with the School Council, comprising entirely of elected parents, providing committed leadership and effective management of the school. Red House students understand that lessons and homework are an important part of everyday school life. However, students

are encouraged to take part in sports and a wide range of fun extra-curricular activities, which are both enjoyable and instrumental in sealing friendships for life. Red House offers a high-quality education, both in academic subjects and life skills. If this is the kind of education you would like for your child, contact the headmaster.



www.redhouseschool.com

Red House School


All round excellence with the best GCSE results in the Tees Valley*

A few places available in year groups for September

For further details please contact: **The region's leading coeducational independent school**


Red House School, 56 The Green Norton, Stockton on Tees TS20 1BX. Tel: (01642) 533370

* The Times League Table August 2002

Queen Margaret's School

York



(Girls 11 - 18 Boarding and Day)

Academic, Music And Art Scholarship Available At All Levels

The Alison Small Scholarship - open to girls from Primary School at 11+

For details of Entrance Examinations, Scholarships or for an opportunity to visit, please contact

The Admissions Secretary on: 01904 728261

email: enquiries@queenmargaretschool.co.uk
website: www.queenmargaretschool.co.uk

Small is beautiful at Raventhorpe

RAVENTHORPE

RAVENTHORPE is an independent preparatory school in the west end of Darlington for boys and girls aged three-and-a-half to 11 years. With approximately 110 children on its roll, the school's small classes ensure a great deal of individual attention from caring and experienced staff. Raventhorpe is linked with Darlington Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership so that grants for all three and four-year-olds are available in the nursery and transition. Recently an award has been granted by the New Opportunities Fund to benefit further nursery sessions and after-school care. Raventhorpe's traditional high academic standards were recognised by the HMI in May 2002 and these culminated in the awards of seven scholarships being offered by various senior independent schools in the area for the school's Y6 children. Raventhorpe welcomes parents to visit during the term to experience the working environment.



Splash of success: Champion swimmers from Raventhorpe Preparatory School in Darlington show off their winning trophies and medals

Learning is fun:

Maths and English are the foundations of a good education and The Student Support Centre ensures children enjoy their Home Study Course. Youngsters will also have fun learning with the Literacy Word Bank for key stage one and two pupils, right, launched by Franklin Electronic Publishers



Home study course helps pupils achieve full potential

MATHS and English are the building blocks of a good education and any difficulties in these core subjects will stand in the way of your child reaching his full potential. The Student Support Centre's Home Study Course has been developed to help children to do as well as they possibly can in these two key subjects and, as such, lay the foundations for their future success. Designed for both primary and secondary school children, the Home Study Course draws on a well balanced mix of audio-visual lessons, workbooks and learning aids to explain every aspect of the National Curriculum topics in a clear and interesting way. The real benefit of the course is that it is specially tailored to your

THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTRE

children's abilities, however well they may be doing at school. They are never out of their depth and never waiting for others to catch up. The course is structured yet flexible, allowing children to progress at a pace which suits their own particular needs. To keep youngsters interested and enthusiastic each topic is broken up into easy-to-follow short lessons which they can rewind, replay and revise as many times as they wish. Each lesson can then be practised in the workbook until it is understood completely. This allows children to get to grips with topics in the comfort of

their own home, free from the pressures of the classroom, giving them a new confidence when they are back in school. The course comes with a Family Guide with the answers provided for parents. A freephone tutor service is on hand to give professional, qualified and friendly advice whenever it is needed and parents can call as often as they like - it's all part of the service. The course does not replace schooling - rather it consolidates it. Call 0800 132277 for a free, no-obligation assessment. The assessment is necessary for the support team to identify how best the course can be tailored to meet your child's individual needs.



Raventhorpe Preparatory School

Carmel Road North
Darlington

Company Reg No. 3804133 Reg Charity No. 1077388

Boys and Girls from 31/2-11 years.
Small classes ensure individual attention.
Friendly, homely atmosphere.
Traditional values upheld with modern teaching techniques.
In partnership with Darlington Early Years Schemes.
After school care until 5.15pm
For prospectus and details telephone:
Mrs Doreen Procter

(01325) 463373

The Student Support Centre



Maths and English Made Easy

- Help your child achieve their full potential in class
- Excellent results achieved with our Home Study Programme
- Suitable for school aged children aged from primary to GCSE
- Local service from a national company
- Over 80,000 students currently enrolled

For an initial assessment without obligation

FREEPHONE 0800 132277

Check our website: www.student-support.co.uk

Preparing pupils for life itself

POLAM Hall School, established in 1854, has a strong tradition in caring for girls from a variety of backgrounds and provides not only an excellent academic education but also the opportunity to undertake a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Over the years, Polam Hall School has built an excellent reputation for both academic excellence and the development of the individual. By experiencing and enjoying drama, art, sport and music alongside their academic subjects, the girls are prepared not just for exams but for life itself.

This ethos is applied throughout the school from the early years to the sixth form.

Polam Hall prides itself on opening its doors to girls from a wide variety of backgrounds and with varying ability,

POLAM HALL SCHOOL

helping each girl to achieve her own excellent academic results. From joining us in our nursery, Early Steps, from age two-and-a-half, to leaving for university after completion of A-levels at 18, the girls can enjoy learning to the full, both in and out of the classroom. We offer a wide range of scholarships from age seven to 16, covering academia, music and sports. Our external academic scholarship at 11+ is now known as The Simon Bailes Scholarship. Parents and their daughters are welcome to visit the school to meet staff and pupils. If you would like further information, or you would like to visit the school, please contact Jane Craggs on 01325 463383. We look forward to receiving your call.



All stars: Polam Hall School pupils in rehearsal for their performance of the Snow Queen



Hop it: Sport is an important part of everyday life at Hurworth House School

Discovering boys' full range of talents

HURWORTH House School, near Darlington, is an independent, non-selective day school for boys aged three to 18 and girls aged three to five. Founded in 1946, the school currently has 180 pupils in junior and senior departments, with a further 40 in the nursery school. There are no particular skills or talents which are valued above others at Hurworth House. While academic results are obviously important, they are seen as only part of the process of education. Hurworth House aims to provide an environment in which the pupils can explore their potential, learn about their strengths and weaknesses and develop good interpersonal

HURWORTH HOUSE

skills. We believe it is vital to offer positive reinforcement at all times and in all circumstances. The school is committed to the principle of single-sex education in the junior and senior schools, believing that it offers the best environment for the children in our care. We aim to boost not only the boys' chances of examination success, but their self-confidence as well. Most schools, of course, claim that they aim to create a fully-rounded individual. At Hurworth House, that aim is reality. In line with our founder's original objectives, the school continues to place an equal emphasis on high academic achievement and

good manners. This can only be achieved by a firm set of guidelines that all children are expected to adhere to. However, every pupil is encouraged to develop as an individual, with his own unique personality. Within our small community, we have an extremely wide range of children. We welcome and celebrate all of these different types of children and sincerely believe we genuinely aim to help each of them to a full realisation of their true potential. For a copy of Hurworth House's current prospectus or for details of scholarship examinations, which are held annually in February, please contact the headmaster's secretary on 01325 720645.

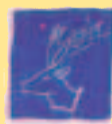
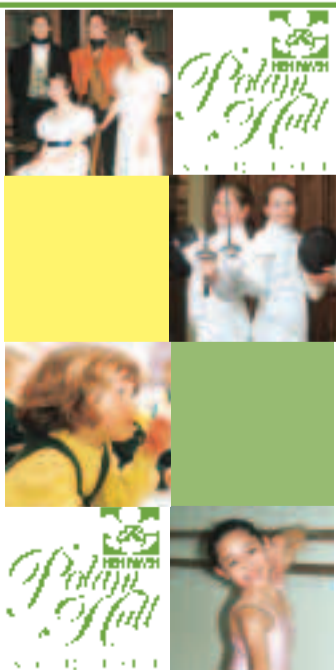
- Early Steps Nursery for boys and girls from age 2½
- For girls aged 4 to 18, boarding from age 8
- Excellent academic achievements
- Friendly, family atmosphere
- Attention given to the individual
- Wide range of extra curricular activities
- Before and after school care available
- FunZone - registered holiday club for 3-14 year olds

Contact the school for more information or an appointment to visit

POLAM HALL SCHOOL

Telephone 01325 463383
Grange Road, Darlington, DL1 5PA

E-mail: information@polamhall.com
www.polamhall.com
Registered charity no (527369)



HURWORTH HOUSE SCHOOL

Offers opportunities for boys aged 4-18 years to learn and develop in a warm family environment.

We cater for a wide range of interests including all major sports, and our record of GCSE results shows consistently high standards of achievement.

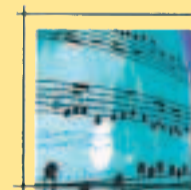
Premium quality pre-school education is provided by our nursery department for both boys and girls from age 3.

Why not come and see what Hurworth House can offer your child by calling our school secretary for an appointment.

(01325) 720645

The Green, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington,
Co. Durham DL2 2AD

(Registered Charity Number 527367)



music



education



sport

Home from home for boarders



Tranquil setting: Sedbergh School is set in the magnificent surroundings of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (above), offering pupils the calm of a more rural lifestyle and giving them the opportunity to get involved in a huge range of sports

SEDBERGH School is first and foremost a boarding school, although it has a small number of day pupils. It is one of the few remaining public schools to retain a true house system whereby all pupils eat, study and sleep in their houses. All houses have a resident housemaster or mistress, academic and pastoral tutors and matron. Typically, a house will number 55 pupils. In 2003 the Good Schools Guide observed: "This is a very happy school where willingness to help others, loyalty and compassion are values universally to the fore". Sedbergh is fully co-educational, with a very broad and flexible sixth form. Ten per cent of its pupils enter Oxbridge. All pupils are encouraged to

SEDBERGH SCHOOL

take an active part in the creative arts and drama and music are prominent areas of school life, with regular performances and productions at Ripon Cathedral, Carlisle Cathedral and the Edinburgh Fringe.

The CCF Band & Corps of Drums is internationally recognised and tours widely, most recently to the Bahamas. There is a huge range of sports on offer at the school, with the major sports encouraged in Y9. Sedbergh has a formidable reputation on the games field, with teams touring regularly: rugby to New Zealand, tennis to South Africa, cricket to the

West Indies and hockey to Spain.

Sedbergh has its own junior school at Low Bentham, North Yorkshire, approximately 30 minutes' drive from the senior school.

The junior school has impressive facilities, is fully co-educational for children aged three to 13 and offers day, weekly, flexi and full boarding. Awards are available to boys and girls who show academic, artistic, musical or sporting excellence at 11+, 13+ and 16+.

Set in the spectacular countryside of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Sedbergh offers an educational environment away from the pressures and temptations of urban life.

DIARY DATE
Sedbergh Junior School is holding an open day on May 3 from 10am to 2pm



Co-Educational 13-18

For further details please contact:
Amanda Bird, Headmaster's Secretary
Sedbergh School, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5HG, UK
Tel: +44 (0)15396 20535 Fax: +44 (0)15396 21301
Web: www.sedbergh.sch.uk
E-mail: hm@sedbergh.sch.uk

Sedbergh School is a Registered Charity No. 1080672

Educational Excellence for Boys and Girls

Set in the Spectacular countryside of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Sedbergh offers an educational environment away from the pressures and temptations of urban life.



Tees Valley Road Safety In Partnership

The Tees Valley Road Safety Officers are committed to reducing casualties, increasing safety and improving the quality of life of all road users.

Through education, training and publicity, casualties in the area are falling as road risk is being reduced.

Your local Road Safety Unit is involved in a number of initiatives to maintain the casualty reduction gains made over the past few years. They include:

- Safer Routes to School
- School Travel Plans
- School Crossing Patrol provision
- Practical Pedestrian Training
- Practical Cycle Training
- Child Seat Advice and Fitting
- Driver Improvement
- Motorcycle Training

If you would like further information on any of the above schemes or would like to speak to a Road Safety Officer, please contact your council on the number below.



Darlington
01325 388717



Middlesbrough
01642 728178



Hartlepool
01429 523590



Stockton
01642 397713



Redcar
01287 612368