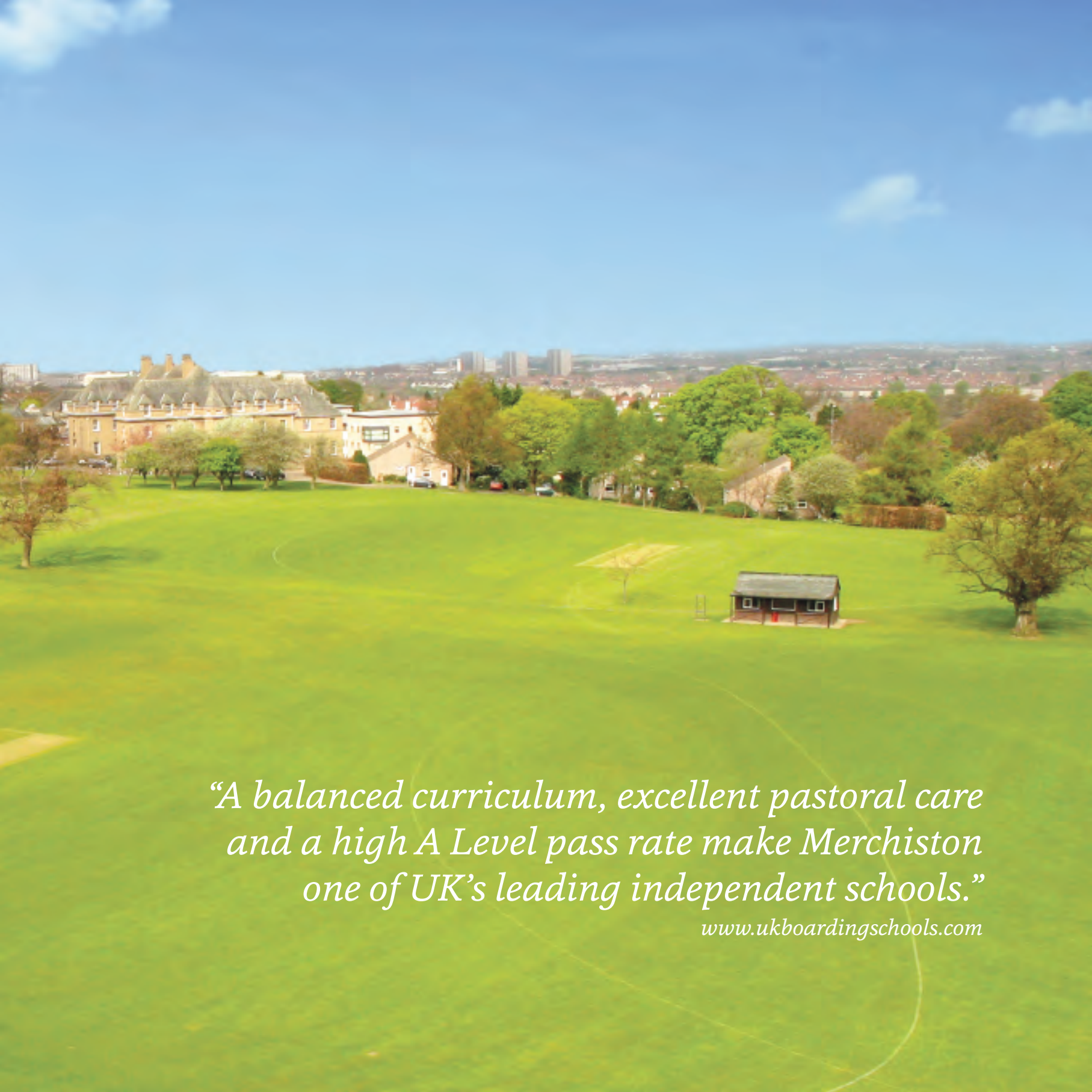




MERCHISTON





*“A balanced curriculum, excellent pastoral care
and a high A Level pass rate make Merchiston
one of UK’s leading independent schools.”*

www.ukboardingschools.com



A warm welcome awaits you

What is it that sets Merchiston apart?

Merchiston is one of the United Kingdom's leading independent schools, one of a very few schools still specializing in providing a high quality boarding school education for boys.

Think about a world in which boys can be boys, but where in time, they will grow to become ambitious, aspirational, and sensitive, yet gentle-men! Think about a wonderfully caring and nurturing family environment, where they will learn to like learning more. Then, think about igniting their interest in such diverse things as ... cooking ... cricket ... and Chemistry!

Merchiston is a school of contrasts: located just five minutes from a village; in a parkland setting, but with views towards and easy access into the wonderful, cosmopolitan capital city that is Edinburgh. Nearly everything boys could imagine by way of co-curricular activity is here on campus, but the School is only a short drive from the nearest beach, ski-slope, sailing school or golf course. We congratulate our leaving pupils on achieving their first class academic performance, but what is also interesting, is that girls from our sister schools say that 'Merchi' boys make the best Scottish country dance partners!

We are a Scottish school, offering the English curriculum, but with a global, outward-looking dimension, based just 15 minutes from an International Airport and a 1-hour flight from London, Paris or Amsterdam.

As a school, we promote independence of thought, respect for others, creativity, and a strong sense of care and compassion for those in need. We provide a stimulating, challenging, yet supportive and encouraging environment where your son can grow up surrounded by his friends within our unique House structure. We endeavour to offer, above all, a love of life, and a zest for living life to the full.

We hope you enjoy reading our prospectus. We look forward to welcoming you, sharing this very special place with you, and showing you what we mean!

Andrew Hunter
Headmaster







Beautifully located on the edge of a remarkable city

Merchiston stands on the edge of the picturesque riverside village of Colinton, some four miles south west of the centre of Edinburgh, in about 100 acres (c. 40 hectares) of exceptionally beautiful and spacious, part-wooded grounds shadowed by the stunning Pentland Hills.

Within the School grounds, bordered by the Water of Leith, boys can be free to enjoy the parkland, woodland, sports fields, and facilities. The location of the School offers the setting and safety of a country location with the added advantage of being only a few miles from one of the world's most beautiful and atmospheric capital cities, offering an exciting range of cultural opportunities. Concert, theatre, and art trips form a regular part of the boys' lives, together with the many sporting and outdoor activities Edinburgh and the Lothians have to offer.

Edinburgh is easily accessible by road, rail, and international air links, and the School is situated close to the City Bypass and only a fifteen minute drive from Edinburgh International Airport.

Many boys at Merchiston are, of course, Scottish, living either in Scotland, elsewhere in the British Isles, or abroad. But the appeal is by no means purely Scottish; pupils come to us from many parts of the world, some by virtue of a Scottish connection, but others have no such link. All form part of our community.

“Excellent location and a unique Scottish culture which appeals to all the boys, regardless of national roots.”

Parent



Boys learn differently from girls

Research strongly indicates that most boys have different learning styles and needs when compared to girls. Most boys develop mentally, physically, and emotionally at a different rate from girls.

It is our experience that boys' interests, hobbies, and inclination to physical activity respond best to a male focused framework to learning. We believe that boys who learn in such an environment tend to become more comfortable and confident, enabling them to develop a diverse range of interests and talents.

The fact that boys in boys' schools academically out-perform boys in co-educational schools is reaffirmed by a glance at league tables. However, at Merchiston we try not to read too much into this. It is a simplistic view that Merchiston is academically strong because it is single-sex, but boys thrive under the outstanding pastoral care provided by staff.

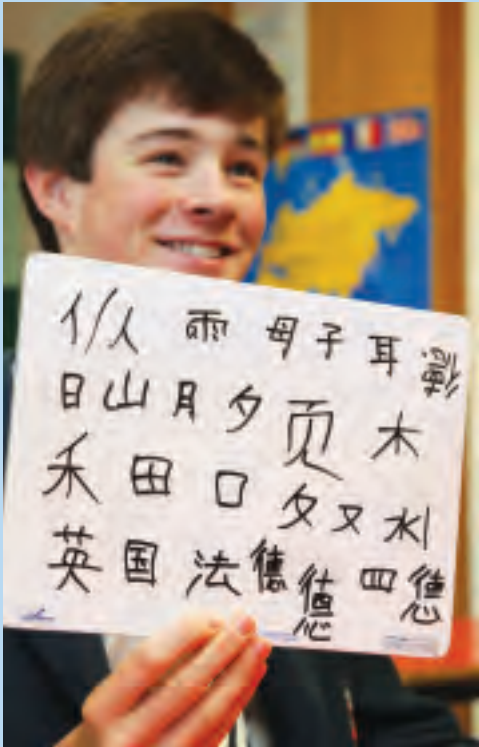
Another aspect of the boys-only policy is that time is regularly set aside to meet girls from our sister schools. This allows the boys to focus on study in school time, but also to have plenty of opportunities to socialise and make friends through curricular, co-curricular, and social links.

“Merchiston is a member of the International Boys' Schools Coalition and recognises that there are cognitive differences between boys and girls which are brain based; understanding those differences enables the school to provide a positive and encouraging learning environment.”

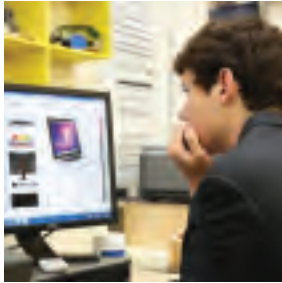
Abigail Norfleet James, Teacher and Author of 'Teaching the Male Brain'

“Science is a great strength.”

Tatler Schools Guide, 2015







Traditional values, modern resources

Merchiston's curriculum is broad, encompassing Arts and Humanities as well as Mathematics, Sciences, and Technology. From the Second Form onwards, teaching takes place in specialist facilities around the School, supported by the latest audio-visual, interactive, and computer based technology. The Spawforth Library boasts an impressive collection of books and periodicals and fosters a 'library culture' in the School. It also offers a quiet atmosphere in which to study.

The more general Arts curriculum also plays a major part through the development of public speaking skills, film clubs, historical and cultural trips and outings, and the promotion of an interest in world affairs.

We believe passionately that Mathematics and the Sciences can be fun as well as formative. Over 75% of pupils continue to study Mathematics and/or Science in the Sixth Form and many then take these subjects at university. Economics is also available to Sixth Form pupils.

Design & Technology is taught in a specialist and thriving department from First Form upwards; this is a popular choice at AS and A Level. Merchiston also offers Electronics and ICT, and we continue to invest in technology to support the curriculum in these areas.

Many pupils achieve success in a number of external national competitions for Mathematics, Science, Technology and Design, public speaking and writing.

Further details of the specific curriculum and timetable in each academic year can be found in the School's Information Booklet.

"We couldn't be happier with the start our son has had. The facilities are excellent, and our son has made full use of them, especially the extensive and modern Spawforth Library."

Parent









The Merchiston Journey

Your son's time at Merchiston will see him develop from a child into a young adult. In these vital years, our relatively small size, the contact between staff and pupils both inside and outside the classroom and, in particular, Merchiston's House system, mean that we get to know your son very well indeed.

As a boarder or day pupil, your son will join a House comprising boys of the same age group. The House structure enables boys to develop a wide circle of friends, and learn how to cope with the highs and lows of life in a supportive community with a peer group sharing similar experiences. The pupils also build up good working relationships with academic staff, which pays dividends academically throughout their school careers.

Many of our boarders come from Edinburgh's immediate area, as boys choose to enjoy all of the facilities the School has to offer during weekday evenings and at weekends. A number of pupils join Merchiston as day pupils and opt to board at a later date. Our international boarders form, in most years, around 20% of our school population, and come from all over the world.

Our accommodation has a warm and stimulating atmosphere, reflecting a real sense of community. Boys feel safe and well cared for, whether they are studying or having fun.

"We want pupils to grow up strong and independent; we want them to care about truth and trust and be happy, responsible members of a School which respects and develops their individual gifts. Friendships made here will last forever."

Housemaster



The start of a passion for learning

Boys entering the School between the ages of 8 and 12 become members of Merchiston Juniors. This is home to all pupils in the Junior 4 and Junior 5 classes, and the First to Third Forms.

Pringle, the House to which they belong, is set within a walled garden and the House is supervised by the Head of Merchiston Juniors, who is the Housemaster, resident Tutors, a Housemother, and a team of prefects chosen, as in the other Houses, from Upper Sixth Form students.

The House has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Boys spend their free time in a variety of welcoming rooms including games and model-making areas. A spacious kitchen and comfortably-furnished dayrooms provide further focal points for relaxation and, if a boy chooses to board, accommodation is in homely dormitories. There are also ample opportunities to sample boarding, either on a flexible basis or through a step-up boarding package.

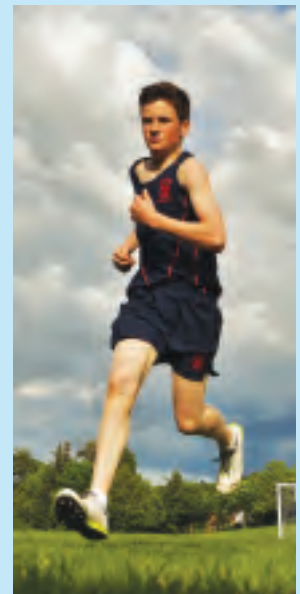
All Junior boys have access to Senior School facilities, including well-equipped IT, Technology, and Music Centres, and the Spawforth Library. Teaching for the youngest boys takes place in the Pringle Centre, adjacent to Pringle House, where small class sizes and dedicated teachers allow attention to the individual. House activities and sport are organised specifically for Pringle pupils.

Careful consideration is given at this level to the length of the school day. Flexible finishing times are operated, dependent on the age and needs of boys, and arrangements are clearly published on a weekly basis for day boy parents.

Members of Merchiston Juniors lead very busy lives and it is partly for this reason that the boys very quickly and happily settle into the life and routine of the School.

“The School aims to help you be the best that you can be, and will push you to achieve your personal goals - even things you never thought you could achieve.”
Junior School pupil







Growing in stature, confidence, and independence

As boys progress through the School they become increasingly responsible for the organisation of their own time. This is reflected in the activities arranged by the Housemasters of respective year groups.

At 13 and 14, boys move into the Chalmers Houses: 'West' then 'East'. During this period a high level of pastoral care is provided as boys grow through adolescence. As pupils continue through the School they enjoy more privacy; Rogerson House provides this for the Fifth Form, with individual or shared bedrooms at an important stage of their school careers as they sit their GCSE examinations.

Whatever a boy's age, a proportion of his day will be spent in the boarding house. In each House there are common rooms where boys meet and relax together, including games rooms and kitchens where snacks can be prepared. Quiet times are provided, but pupils are expected to take responsibility for managing their own time and organising their studies. In all Houses, the Housemaster and a team of Tutors are on hand to deal with any problems that may arise. In addition, each pupil is allocated an Academic Tutor who works closely with the Housemaster to support the pupil's academic progress. As well as spending his leisure hours in and around the House, a pupil does his homework there each evening. Until the end of the Fifth Form this is under close supervision from staff. Day boys are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this provision.

"We have been so impressed by the real care and warmth we have met in all members of the staff at Merchiston. The School has exceeded our expectations in every way. There is something extraordinarily special about Merchiston."

Parent









Transition from schoolboy to student

In the Sixth Form, boys are expected to take on more responsibility and take more control over their own learning, managing their own study and prep, in order to prepare for a gradual progression to University life. They also have increased freedom in terms of social activities, subject choices, and other aspects of their lives.

Spacious individual study bedrooms with en-suite facilities are provided for each boarding pupil in Laidlaw House. The House has modern kitchens; a multi-gym; and open-plan social areas with stunning views of Edinburgh. Sixth Form day boys have their own base in Evans House, offering individual study space. All Sixth Formers can access the facilities in both Evans and Laidlaw. Prefects are resident in Houses throughout the School.

In the Lower Sixth Form, boys' leadership potential is developed through outdoor pursuits and by the Sixth Form Helper Scheme and community service, through which boys have the opportunity to apply, and be considered, for prefect duties in the Upper Sixth Form.

Sixth Form social activities have the added advantage of a Sixth Form Club; a separate social area where pupils can relax and socialise. The School timetable also includes an extensive 'Enlightened Curriculum' for Sixth Formers; the programme includes visiting speakers, social events, cultural trips, societies, and activities that are often organised by the boys themselves.

A wider choice of academic subjects is available in the Sixth Form, together with sport and co-curricular activities. Boys are expected to push themselves to achieve their best; most pupils take four AS Level subjects in the Lower Sixth and three full A Levels (A2s) in the Upper Sixth.

“The impact of this exciting new facility has already resulted in significant changes to the lives of these year groups at the top end of the Merchiston Journey. Laidlaw House offers boarding pupils enhanced independence at a very important stage of their school careers.”

Headmaster



There is a sport for every boy

There is a long and successful tradition of sport at Merchiston. Sports facilities are excellent and include a sports hall; indoor swimming pool; athletics track; rugby, football, and cricket pitches; fives, tennis and squash courts; rifle range, and Sixth Form fitness suite. Our junior boarding house, Pringle, shares the facilities and also has some dedicated to the use of younger pupils.

There is a balanced approach to sport at the School, with equal emphasis on recreation and excellence. All boys up to the Fifth Form take part in Physical Education and Swimming each week as part of the timetable. This is complemented by extensive Junior and Senior Sports Options Programmes, and pupils can try a range of activities including badminton, basketball, curling, golf, hockey, mountain biking, rowing, sailing, squash and sub aqua – we offer around twenty sports in all.

Pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence. Our major sports are athletics, cricket, and rugby and we test the 1XV and 1XI in the UK and around the world on a regular basis. Senior tours have included such destinations as South Africa, South America, Barbados, Canada, and Holland, and pupils at all levels have the opportunity to tour in the UK.

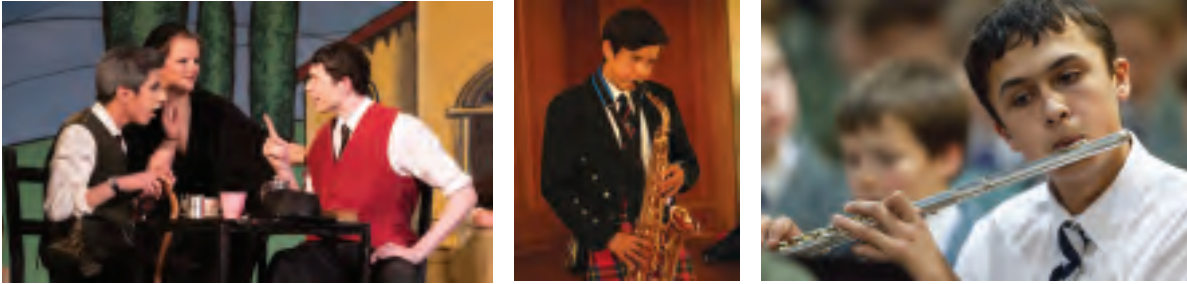
Our Sports Development Programme allows us to identify the best in every boy by monitoring his progress throughout his school career. Our structured coaching programmes allow them to develop their full sporting potential, with those showing particular flair in their chosen sport competing up to national and international levels. Merchiston's golf and tennis academies provide specialist training combined with a high standard of education and specially adapted curriculum. Both academies offer expert coaching and fitness training for talented individuals with the aim of developing successful international players.

“The School offers over twenty different sports; the variety is outstanding. The School's unique Gifted and Talented Programme enables boys to play at both national and international levels.”

Frank Hadden, Former Merchiston Teacher and Scotland Rugby Coach







Making the most of your talents

Music and Drama are major parts of life at Merchiston. These departments collaborate regularly and pupils of all ages have the chance to be involved, either performing on stage or behind the scenes.

Music is celebrated here and an appreciation of musical talent is encouraged. Our lively Music Department is housed in purpose-built facilities and caters for all levels of musical ability and aspiration.

Merchiston is well known for its choral music, in particular the Choral Society, which involves around a third of the School. Annual performances take place in city venues.

The flagship of the Music Department is the Chapel Choir, which contributes regularly to Chapel Services. The Choir also tours widely in the UK and abroad. A sub-group of the Choir, the Close Harmony Group, performs music of a lighter repertoire.

Boys can learn to play a range of musical instruments. Instrumentalists can participate in the School Orchestra and Jazz Band, and for less advanced players there is a Junior Ensemble. Piping and drumming are very popular areas of music at Merchiston. Our pupils perform regularly and School rock groups perform at many School events.

Over the years, Drama has flourished at both senior and junior levels, with a wide range of productions ranging from classical drama to modern-day musicals. Productions are staged in our theatre throughout the year, providing many opportunities for links with our sister schools.

“The School’s size and facilities enable staff to dedicate time to focusing on developing the individual talents of pupils.”

Parent









Every day is an adventure!

At Merchiston, we expect every boy to try his hardest to achieve the highest possible level of academic excellence. However, lessons learnt outside the classroom are also crucial in a boy's development and the skills he learns are transferable into other areas of school life.

Boys are encouraged to experience a wide range of activities and games. Staff help them to tailor individual programmes which develop their skills and talents as far as possible. The more advantage a boy takes of the opportunities available at Merchiston, the more fun he will have and the more he will achieve. We aim to provide support and guidance so that every boy finds the sport or activity that is right for him.

Our co-curricular activities include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and each year a number of pupils achieve success up to Gold Award level.

In the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) boys take part in a range of disciplines, developing their teamwork and personal skills. The CCF is compulsory in one year of the Middle Years and is optional thereafter.

“Boys are encouraged to make the most of opportunities in lessons and outside the classroom.”

Parent

“Boys open, friendly and well-mannered.”
The Good Schools Guide, 2014



Looking after each other

A sense of being part of a wider community is an important part of the education of boys at Merchiston. We believe, and teach them to believe, that they can make a difference and help others in School, in Edinburgh, and elsewhere in the world.

Pupils of all ages are encouraged to take part in fundraising activities, from non-uniform days and home baking sales to sponsored walks and major fundraising dinner dances. The funds raised are donated to a variety of nominated charities in the UK and worldwide.

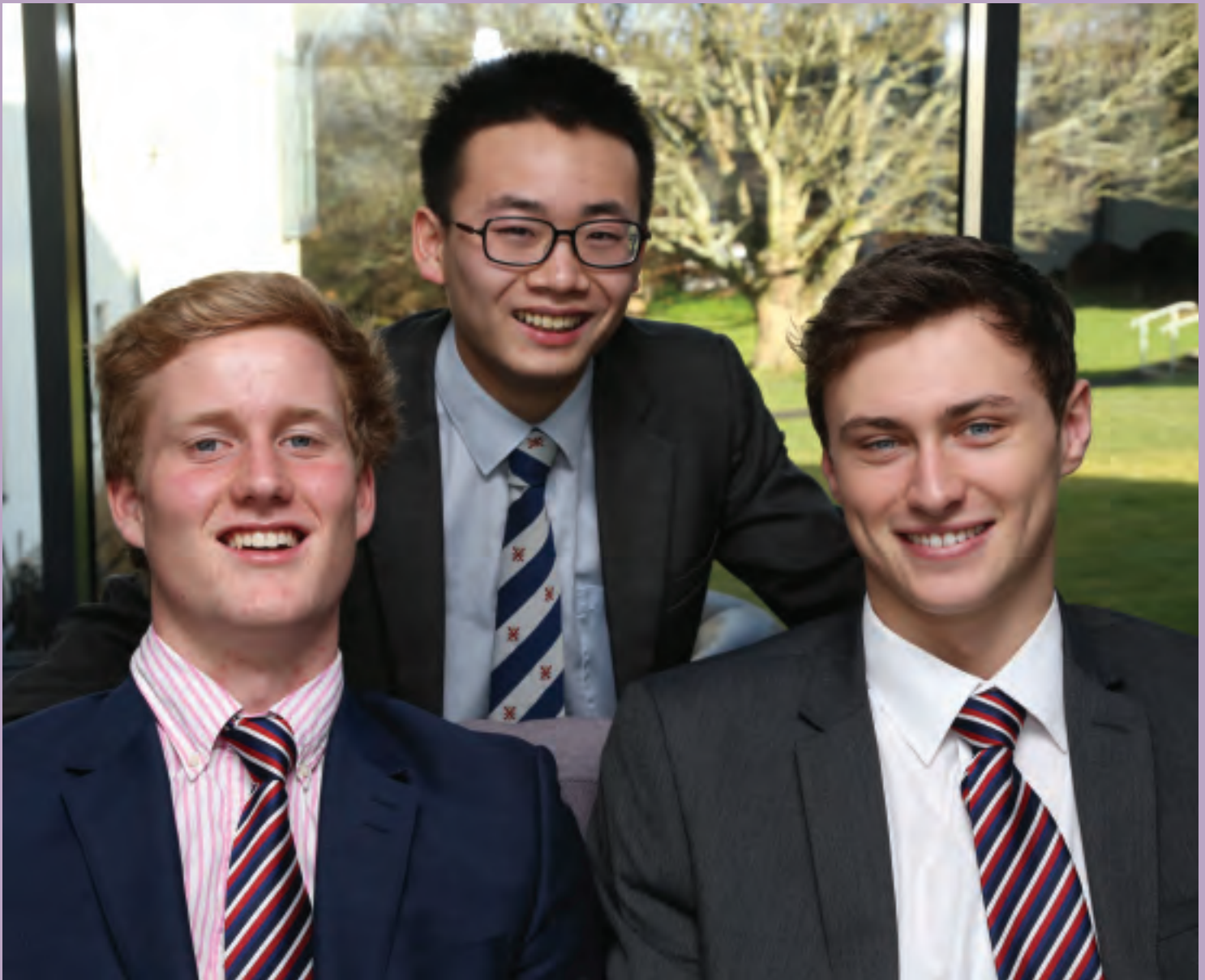
Lower Sixth Form boys take part in a Community Service programme which offers the experience of working within the local community. Activities range from helping elderly or disadvantaged people, or other local community projects, to supporting children with additional needs.

Senior boys may join a mentoring scheme, which we offer to a local state-maintained primary school. Boys are carefully trained in how to befriend and develop relationships with younger children and how to act as positive role models for them.

Merchiston welcomes a number of our local primary schools, charitable bodies, and other organisations to School to use our facilities and grounds throughout the year. Senior pupils and our own staff are often involved in supporting these visits alongside visiting staff. Each year these events include a Science and Technology Day and a concert which Prep and Primary children are invited to and participate in; we also hold an annual Maths Fun Day. Our own Choir and Pipe Band regularly visit churches and residential homes and perform in Edinburgh venues to raise money for a number of causes.

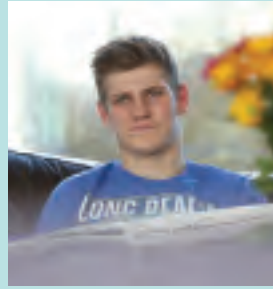
“The Science and Technology Day experience with Merchiston pupils gave our children a sense of aspiration and ambition.”

Local primary teacher











Life after Merchiston

We believe Merchiston prepares boys to embark on their future careers, equipping them not only with the academic results they require to follow their chosen path, but also with essential life skills and a passion for lifelong learning.

Fifth and Sixth Form pupils are offered an extensive careers advice service which includes work experience programmes, interview practice, and advice on courses and institutions. Support is available throughout the UCAS application process. Presentations by guest speakers and visits to professional organisations provide an external perspective to career choices.

The majority of our pupils leave Merchiston to attend universities in Scotland and England (including Oxford and Cambridge) or universities in the United States. Boys choose to study a variety of subjects, with Engineering, Geography, and the Sciences being particularly popular.

Some pupils may choose to take a gap year, prior to university, to experience living and working overseas. We encourage this as an opportunity to develop the skills learned at Merchiston and to encounter the challenges that the world presents. Student teaching opportunities with gap exchange schools are another popular option.

The Merchistonian Club offers a varied social and sporting calendar for past pupils and a chance to keep in touch with friends. The strength of the Club and former pupils' continued involvement with the School highlight the unique bond that boys develop with the School throughout their time here.

“Looking back at my time at Merchiston, I realise the School gave me so much; the academic, sporting, musical, and cultural opportunities, as well as leadership skills and preparation for life - a place where I made friends for life.”
Merchistonian



Seeing is believing

Please come and experience Merchiston. A personal tour around the campus will allow you to experience our unique atmosphere and learn more about our school philosophy. Visitors have the opportunity to meet staff and pupils and gain an insight into the close relationships we create.

Please contact the Admissions Department on +44 (0) 131 312 2201 or email admissions@merchiston.co.uk to arrange a tour.

Designed to be read in conjunction with this Prospectus, our Information Booklet provides more detailed information on admissions procedures, scholarships, fees, the House system, daily routine, academic matters, sports and co-curricular activities, pastoral care, religion, parental communication, School uniform, the Merchistonian Club, and term dates.

SCHOLARSHIPS: The School offers a variety of honorary scholarships (Academic, All-Rounder, Sports, Music, Art, Design) to talented boys. Scholarships do not normally carry fee concessions, but means-tested financial assistance up to the value of 100% of the fees is available.

“Merchiston prides itself on preparing young men to flourish in a complex and rapidly changing world where they will need to have good qualifications alongside belief in their skills, confidence, and independence.”
Headmaster



"I am very happy with my son's Merchiston journey – he has turned into a thoughtful, confident, friendly, ambitious young man, eager to make his way in the world, safe in the knowledge that he has the backing of a group of fellow Merchistonians with whom he has shared his journey. He can stand in any company and speak eloquently with wit and charm and we are extremely proud of him."

Parent

"My son started when he was 12 years old and in one year he went from being shy and reserved to standing up in front of a hall full of adults to give a speech on how much he enjoyed his first year at Merchiston."

Parent





A Boarding and Day School for Boys aged 7-18.

Merchiston Castle School, Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH13 0PU, Scotland

Tel: 0131 312 2200 Web: www.merchiston.co.uk Email: admissions@merchiston.co.uk

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