

Working at Solefield School by Emma Snow, Head of English and Year 6 Form Teacher

From the moment I entered the old school building on my first visit, I felt the warmth and care that is such an integral part of Solefield School. Not only was I greeted with welcoming smiles, my visit had been planned with great thought and consideration (including a sign with my name on placed in my temporary parking space). Consequently, my impression of the school was that it is an institution that cares about people, staff and pupils alike. As is often the case with first impressions, this has proven to be true and it is the administration's emphasis on caring for people that is the reason I have ended up being so happy to work in the school.

On the school website the words: '*Academic Success - Small Class Sizes – Happy Boys*' are used to summarise the school's goals and ethos. Although (due to the nature of a preparatory school) academic success is one of the main areas of focus, and small class sizes enable us to achieve our goal, I think it is the part about 'Happy Boys' that is actually paramount at the school. Whether it be through drama, sport, music or participation in one of the many clubs, each student has reason to enjoy school and form memories that will stay with them forever. The pastoral care system is exemplary and, as a result, each boy is supported and nurtured; making the school a 'home away from home'.

If you are looking for a job where you can purely focus on your subject and not have time taken up nurturing the students in your form, then this is not the job for you. However, if you enjoy playing a role in your students' lives and ensuring they are supported and encouraged, then you can find nowhere better to work. The positive relationships between students and teachers is one of the many reasons I have found it such a rewarding experience to work at Solefield School. The boys not only like their teachers, but respect them, and thank them at the end of each lesson. With kindness and respect being core values, there are very few behaviour issues at the school, which makes teaching a pleasure.

The emphasis on being 'happy' is not only applied to the students; the well-being of teachers is also given great importance. Solefield School is a supportive environment where teachers are not stressed or overloaded with lessons, chores or responsibilities. It is an environment full of self-motivated professionals who are committed to their job and are friendly and supportive to all the other colleagues. Any extra effort given is mentioned by the headmaster in the weekly staff meeting and it is partly due to this acknowledgment, encouragement and praise that the school also has 'Happy Teachers'.