

# QUESTION TIME

*The experts at Gabbitas Education have the answers*

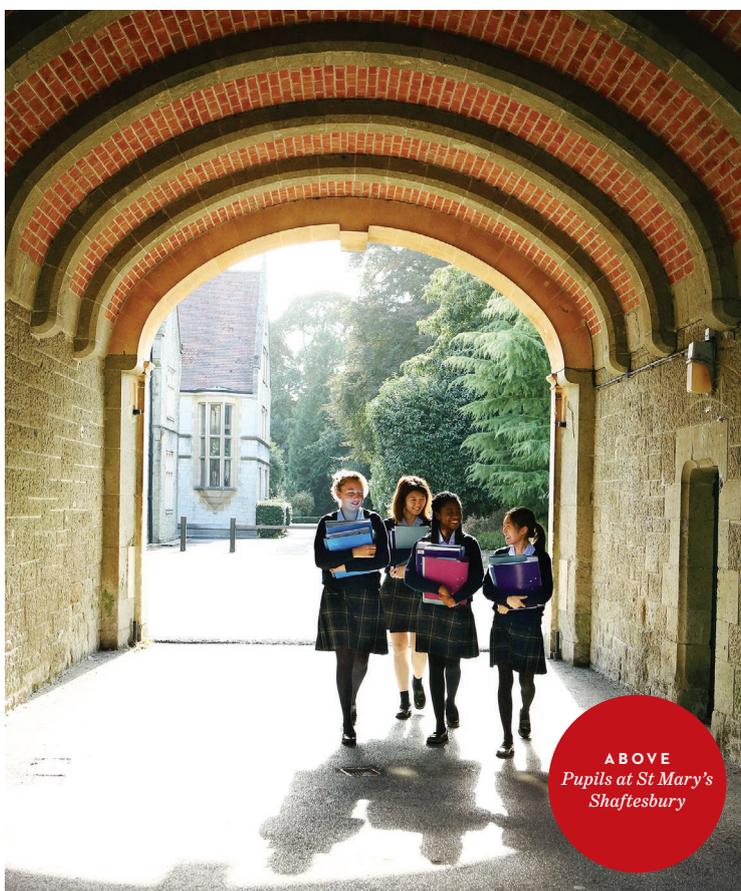


**KIRSTY REED**

LEAD TUTOR CONSULTANT

**Q** *My daughter is about to start Year 6 and has an entrance exam next January for her senior school. We have been working on some practice papers over the summer and she is on track in most areas, but is finding her maths questions challenging and I am finding it difficult to support her as so many things have changed since I studied. Should I let her go at her natural pace or could introducing a maths tutor increase her confidence and have a positive impact? I want her to enjoy her evenings and weekends and don't want them to become too work-focused. I would appreciate your advice on this.*

**“Private tuition should never be viewed as an additional pressure; the tutors role is primarily to support”**



ABOVE  
Pupils at St Mary's  
Shaftesbury

**A** Almost every student will have different areas of the curriculum they thrive in and others they struggle with. Private tuition is certainly a good option to consider if your daughter is showing an area of weakness that may affect their performance at a critical stage in her education. The key is to find a tutor who can establish a strong rapport with your daughter and who can conduct their lessons in way that is not seen as an extension of school. A good tutor will be someone who can bring their

subject area to life and employ teaching techniques that will build your daughter's confidence, as this is a critical part of every student's progression. Private tuition should never be viewed as additional pressure; the tutor's role is to primarily support your daughter and help her to believe that she can accomplish her goals. Do ensure that all the necessary checks are made by the tutoring agency on your behalf, and that you only choose an agency that is a registered member of the Tutor's Association.



## CATHERINE KELSEY

DIRECTOR OF ELITE CLIENTS

**Q** *My youngest child has been in some trouble at school over the past year and as a result had a period of exclusion. We are working hard to support him but feel that the best thing for him would be a fresh start at a new school. He is quite bright and is expected to do well in his GCSEs, however we are worried that he will not be considered due to his past record. Please could you give us some advice on what we should do.*

**A** Our initial response is always to say that you mustn't panic; there will be a school that will be right for your child and be prepared to give them a chance. It just takes a bit of time, understanding and courage to find it. Using an experienced education consultant in this situation can be very helpful as they will have good relationships with schools and can remove some of the emotional pressure you may be feeling. They will also be able to support your child over the longer term to ensure their troubles are addressed. Should you choose to approach schools directly, however, you should clearly explain the reason for your enquiry and ask whether they will consider him right at the start. The school will also want to talk to your son's old head of year or housemaster to find out some more background. Once you are past this first hurdle then you should

focus on the pastoral aspects of the school and arrange a visit for the whole family, which will involve formal interviews. Make sure your son is prepared to admit to his past poor behaviour and be able to demonstrate that he learned his lesson from this experience. And please remember, exclusion doesn't mean the end of your child's journey but the start of a new opportunity.

**Q** *Both my husband and I travel a lot with our jobs so we are considering sending our daughter to a boarding school, but aren't sure whether boarding is right for her. What would you suggest?*

**A** The great thing about almost all UK boarding schools nowadays is that, in addition to a good education, they also offer top-rate facilities, opportunities for meeting new people from different cultures and a chance to develop a sense of independence and confidence in a dynamic environment. Long gone are the old days of boarding being seen as a punishment; it's now a privilege. Most children new to boarding settle in really well after the first term of understandable homesickness, but it is inevitable that for some it just doesn't work. One way that you can really test whether boarding is right for your child before they take the plunge is to send them on an Immersion Programme. A good education consultancy should be able to offer you a programme which gives you a choice of schools for your child to 'immerse' themselves in over a trial period during term time; 'try before you buy', as they say. At Gabbitas Education we work with 10 very different boarding schools across the UK and are able to arrange a trial from as little as two weeks up to a term or more, depending on what's required. It is a wonderful chance for a child to see if it is something they (and their parents) would be suited to.



## DANIELLE FLOOD

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES & GUARDIANSHIP MANAGER

**Q** *We live in South America and are thinking of sending our children to a UK boarding school in the next year or so. We have heard that they will need a 'guardian' but do not understand what this means. Please can you explain this?*

**A** A guardian is a UK-based, English-speaking contact who is responsible for an international student's welfare whilst they are at school in the UK. A guardian is expected to be responsible for arranging transport and accommodation for exeats (weekend leave) and half-term holidays, and also for the beginning and end of terms. Guardians are expected to take an interest in the children's school life and attend any meetings on behalf of parents as requested and report back. A Guardian Agency will appoint a local guardian family for your children to stay with. The Guardian Agency will perform all the appropriate checks and obtain the necessary references to ensure the family meets the required child safety and protection standards. Children who have a guardian arrangement in this way often flourish as they are well cared for and supported from every angle.

**“Guardians are expected to take an interest in the children's school life and attend meetings on behalf of parents”**

**“LONG GONE ARE THE OLD DAYS OF BOARDING BEING SEEN AS A PUNISHMENT; IT'S NOW A PRIVILEGE”**