

BEHIND THE SCENES

FELSTED SCHOOL

Headmaster **CHRIS TOWNSEND** explains why developing character is as important a part of a school education as academic achievement

Education at Felsted is not just teaching children to pass exams. We aim to prepare each child to have an impact in life beyond school. This is done through educating the whole person to develop young women and men that want to make a difference in whatever field they pursue in life.

Fortuitously based on a rural campus in North Essex's stunning countryside, Felsted welcomes boys and girls, aged four to 18, from all over the world to be part of the best of British boarding school education. Throughout the school, students are spoilt for choice in terms of opportunities to try new things and develop their passions. Just as we seek to make a difference through the experiences we provide as a school, we want each student to understand that he or she has a responsibility to make a difference in the wider world. Exam results should be a by-product of a good education that has strong values, such as hard work, rather than being the sole focus.

However, it's not just providing opportunities that supports the development of an individual's character. It's the school's whole approach to learning that can have a major impact on a child's character development. Our purpose and strapline at Felsted is to 'develop character' and a desire to 'make a difference', and as such, our school values underpin all we do in order to achieve this. They're best understood in the following five words:

- **Welcoming:** Felsted immediately strikes any

visitor as a friendly place, with a strong sense of community. Our students are taught to express these welcoming attitudes both in school and the wider community.

- **Respectful:** We develop character with integrity. We're courteous, confident and humble. Confidence without arrogance, and care and kindness towards others whatever their culture or background are expected of all.
- **Adventurous:** We have a passion for life-long learning. We love adventure, exploring and testing ourselves. We're not afraid to ask why or make mistakes to learn. This feeds off and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit that runs through the school and in life beyond Felsted.
- **Fun:** Having fun is essential for learning. We're vibrant and dynamic and believe that fun is a powerful vehicle in education.
- **Inspirational:** We challenge ourselves to reach our full potential. We work hard and are determined and resilient to reach

our goals. We strive for and value personal achievement and team success, including celebrating the successes of others. We understand that success looks different for every student, and value all progress as much as absolute achievement.

We've been hugely impressed by the character displayed among our student body during this pandemic, but also by former pupils in their fields of work. Examples include pupils challenging themselves to raise funds for the NHS, local hospitals and charities in the UK and overseas that have been desperate for support. School prefects have led various challenges to inspire the student body to make a difference from home. Some pupils have challenged themselves fitness-wise, while others have sold artwork or cakes to raise thousands for good causes and those in need.

Many former Felstedians in the medical profession have been on the front line of the pandemic, as has former pupil Chris Smith, virologist and 'Naked Scientist'.

In other professions, we have pupils working to make a difference to our planet, to diversity and in championing mental health; in every walk of life we witness Felstedians reflecting the fact that we're developing individuals, rather than seeking to fit one particular model of what character means. What is evident within many of them, is their drive to go that extra mile to make a difference for the benefit of the people around them and the wider community. This demonstration of character is what makes us proud. 🍷





Felsted staff and pupils embrace adventurous challenges and fun in the pursuit of learning

