

We believe that passion and finding joy in what you do is the oxygen of learning.

There is evidence that indicates that human lives are governed by the desire to experience joy. Therefore, becoming educated should not require pupils giving up joy but rather it should lead to finding joy in new places. Bede's builds on a pupil's desire to experience joy, rather than stifling it. Ours is an innovative approach, we seek a joyful learning experience by fulfilling meaningful and productive activities, such as creating, collaborating, enquiring and seeking answers.

When parents are asked what they want for their children's futures, they will tend to use words like happy, enthusiastic, joyful, successful and the ability to deal with the ups and downs of life.

Bede's is that place which believes strongly that pupils will achieve more if they enjoy what they are doing, they have a joy to their day which is augmented by the care and encouragement provided by the adults around them. Pupils are given the opportunity and the support to gain joy from the doing, not simply from the end result.

In his book *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad wrote, "Boredom is a disease of epidemic proportions... Why are our schools not places of joy?"

If the experience of "school" ruins pupils' spirit to learn, their sense of wonder, their curiosity about the world, and their inclination to serve those around them, then we have not succeeded in providing them with the education they deserve and require.

Many of our greatest joys in life are related to our learning, and schools should harness the opportunity to build on this innate drive. This is very much our philosophy at Bede's.

At Bede's we firmly believe that enabling pupils to find joy in their pursuit of brilliance is the foundation stone of their success and our schooling. The concept of joy can be complex, and conjures up different definitions depending on one's perspective. The opportunity to immerse oneself in your passions is key to joy. When pupils are purposefully involved in aspiring towards their goals, or an activity that is challenging but well suited to their skills, they experience a joyful state which has become known as "flow." Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi began his research on 'flow', in 1975, by studying creative activities and those involved in them. Through this work he established that the act of creating appeared more important than the finished work itself and he was fascinated by what he called the "flow" state, in which the person is completely immersed in an activity with intense focus and creative engagement. It is this joyful experience of learning that is the aspiration for all Bedians, where much of the emphasis is on the joy gained through the process as is gained from realising the end goal.

Bede's holds a belief that when you enjoy something you learn swiftly and you learn more, in comparison to when one is required to rote learn the material.

Joyful learning experiences inspire Bedians to become lifelong learners. In *The Neuroscience of Joyful Education*, Judy Willis writes, "My own experience as a neurologist and classroom teacher has shown me the benefits of joy in the classroom... When students are engaged and motivated and feel minimal stress, information flows freely through the affective filter in the amygdala and they achieve higher levels of cognition, make connections, and experience "aha" moments. Such learning comes not from quiet classrooms and directed lectures, but from classrooms with an atmosphere of exuberant discovery (Alfie Kohn, 2004)." (Willis) Bede's believes that Joy doesn't just make learning more engaging. Joy makes learning endure.

When teachers use strategies to reduce stress and build a positive emotional environment, pupils gain emotional resilience and learn more efficiently and at higher levels of cognition. Brain-imaging studies support this relationship. Neuroimaging research and measurement of brain chemistry reveal that pupils' comfort level can influence information transmission and storage in the brain (Thanos et al., 1999).

It is the Bede's philosophy that pupils must be allowed to immerse themselves into, not just their academic work, but music, drama, a rich and exciting co-curricular programme, their sport, and service opportunities. It is crucial

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that all of these are not influenced by the current approach to assessment and examination. Immersion in these activities provides a lens into seeing and understanding oneself, others and the wider world. As such, at Bede's we rejoice in the individual strides made by each pupil.

Learning at Bede's should provide pupils with fulfilment. This kind of learning is often (but not always) motivated from within, and no extrinsic motivators are needed. We also believe it is important to be comfortable with the possible difficulties that arise through our learning. This experience of challenge and problem-solving should be a joyful experience, that sense of enquiring and immersion is fundamental to our learning and it cultivates the necessity to take risks in your learning and to embrace setbacks. These difficulties are core to the learning process.

In his book *Teach Like Finland: 33 Simple Strategies for Joyful Classrooms*, Timothy D. Walker reminds us never to forget Joy. It is his assertion that people who prioritise happiness and joy perform better. Furthermore, he notes that in Finland, the curriculum features joy as a learning concept. He suggests that even on difficult days, we should still seek joy in all that we do regardless of whether you are a teacher or a pupil.

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Walker, Timothy D. Teach Like Finland: 33 Simple Strategies for Joyful Classrooms. W.W. Norton, Incorporated, 2017.

Willis, Judy. "The Neuroscience of Joyful Education." ASCD, 1 June 2007, <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-neuroscience-of-joyful-education>. Accessed 8 May 2022.