

Making the grade

What is the secret to MPW's extraordinary exam success rate? Principal John Southworth explains why it comes down to the sum of its parts

Words MARK KEBBLE



Founded in 1973 by three Cambridge University graduates, the MPW Group has become one of the most well respected independent college brands in the UK, renowned for

transforming the grades of students at GCSE and A level. 'We do get students who come here who have also been incredibly successful,' Principal of MPW London John Southworth points out. 'I have students here who have strings of As and A*s at GCSE. Most come here because of our reputation - we make promises and we deliver our promises.'

There are a variety of reasons why they do just this, ranging from small class sizes - 'Our average class is six, but our maximum class size is eight' - to a range of extra-curricular activities on offer, but two aspects really stand out: their Director of Studies and bespoke timetabling. 'That is one of the things that does set us apart,' Southworth says of the latter. 'We do our timetabling at the college literally the weekend before term starts. What that means is every single student who comes here gets to do what they want to do.'

Southworth joined MPW in January 2013 in a Director of Studies role, so is well positioned to explain its impact. 'In most schools you would call them form tutors. Most of those would look after about 30 students, but would also have a full teaching timetable. Each of our Director of Studies looks after about 40 students, but they have a vastly reduced teaching timetable. They can spend nearly all their time dealing with their students on a one to one basis as and when required, talking about their progress, about their performance, and



MPW routinely brings out the best of its students to help them fulfil their potential



about their aims and objectives. When students arrive, straight away they will meet their Director of Studies to find out exactly what they want to do, where their strengths and weaknesses are, and how best we can help them.'

Refreshingly, at a time when plenty of educational establishments prefer to focus on more than just exams, Southworth makes no bones about the driving force behind MPW. 'We are academically focused and we are never going to hide away from the fact,' he states. 'Students come here to get good results and our value added is something

we are incredibly proud of.' One aspect is their level of exam practice offered. 'We run monthly revision classes that are run in classes across the college. They are synchronized so we can compare and contrast groups. All the way through we are doing regular testing, and our teaching is very much based on a tutorial framework. It's not a teacher standing in front of a class writing things verbatim on a board.'

Southworth recounts some stories of students who have come to MPW and truly fulfilled their potential, as well as proudly stating around 70% of their students go on to top tier university destinations such as Russell Group or Medical/Dental School. 'Now it's about not resting on your laurels,' he says on the future. 'Everything we are doing on a daily basis is about how we can do things better.'

Find out more by calling 020 7835 1355 or visiting mpw.ac.uk