

Designed and produced by Lolly tel 01935 816400

Hanford School  
Child Okeford  
Blandford Forum  
Dorset DT11 8HN

T: 01258 860 219 E: [office@hanford.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@hanford.dorset.sch.uk)

[www.hanfordschool.co.uk](http://www.hanfordschool.co.uk)

Hanford School Charitable Trust Limited  
Registered in England and Wales with Registered Number 2572565 • Charity Commission Registration Number 1001751



# HANFORD



## Foreword

When you catch your first sight of Hanford – the beautiful Jacobean house, the ponies grazing among the buttercups or the girls running out from behind the box hedges – you know you are visiting somewhere very special.

While other schools play safe, Hanford girls climb trees, ride before breakfast, make their own clothes and develop as free spirits. This is all part of what the Good Schools Guide calls our ‘gloriously happy-go-lucky atmosphere’.

We want our girls to have fun and lots of it, but we also expect them to work hard. We pride ourselves on a traditional, rigorous approach which has stood the test of time. For example, girls learn Latin the old-fashioned way, with proper grammar first. History is learnt chronologically, working forward from the Norman invasion. In English, the girls enjoy Shakespeare, learn poetry by heart and understand the importance of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.

We believe this traditional approach explains why, for a small school, Hanford achieves excellent academic results, with many of our girls winning scholarships to their senior school. We also have high expectations of our girls musically and artistically, and that too is reflected in the large number of awards every year.



Hanford looks and feels like a family home. Mrs. Canning, who founded the school with her husband, always wanted it to work just like a family, allowing freedom of thought and individual development (which was the reason why we never had a uniform, a radical step in the 1940s). Sarah Canning, her daughter, has upheld these principles ever since. To safeguard the school's future, Sarah passed it in its entirety to a charitable trust in 2004.

Today, Hanford is a thriving school for girls aged 7 to 13. While many join us in the IIIrd Form (Years 3 and 4), we are happy to be joined by girls at any stage. The majority of our children board, but we have always welcomed day girls who live locally or those who do not yet want to board full-time. Day girls are very much involved in everything that goes on at Hanford and they often stay the night so that they don't miss the fun.

Our girls come from all over the country, but the majority come from Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. We also have a large contingent from London and have always had a strong link with service and diplomatic families. In the summer term, we are usually joined by a few Spanish girls who spend the second half of the term with us.

We have growing numbers and a spring in our step as more parents and their daughters choose a school which has excellent results, but where childhood is still magical.

We hope this little book gives you a sense of Hanford and our spirit, but to truly appreciate what Hanford has to offer, please come and see us for yourself.

**Nigel Mackay**  
Headmaster





## CHAPTER ONE



# The Spirit of Hanford

We believe that the children who come to Hanford should always be allowed to be children and to enjoy the natural life and play of a child. They should be allowed to mature in their own time and as individuals in their own right, learning how to live with other children. There is, therefore, always time for play and for free imagination, which enables them to make friends and to keep them.

The opportunity to excel in any sphere, be it work, music, art, games or riding, is always available to them, but they are never pressured into a fixed mould. Girls of the same age differ greatly in their maturity and confidence.

Our aim is that by the time they leave Hanford they will have learned to work independently without continual pressure and supervision, and will have recognized within themselves the desire and ability to achieve.



## CHAPTER TWO



# The History of Hanford

Set in 45 acres of unspoiled Dorset countryside Hanford has at its heart a beautiful listed Jacobean house, built for the Seymer family in 1622.

The Cannings, after leaving Canford School, decided that it was the ideal place for them to realise their dream of opening their own school. They rented the house, started the school, and in 1951, bought the property from Vivien Seymer, a descendant of the original owner. Over the years, other buildings have been added. Fan's House, given by Ingram Spencer in memory of his daughter Fan, provided the extra dormitory space that was needed as the school grew.



## CHAPTER THREE



# Academic Life

Teaching at Hanford covers a much wider area than the National Curriculum. We teach French from Year 4 and Latin to the majority of the classes. There are school exams twice a year, and the girls are regularly tested to monitor reading, spelling and reasoning ability. Children are streamed as appropriate. The curriculum is taught by subject specialists, with children moving between classrooms for each lesson.

We have an up-to-date ICT room and make sure that our girls leave us with good computer skills – but we know that proper education is about much more than expensive technology.

We always try to be as flexible as we can, providing children with the support they need. For some, this means preparation for a scholarship or individual lessons in Russian or Mandarin. For others, it may mean extra help in English or Mathematics. We do whatever we can to bring the best out of every child.





Small classes and proven teaching methods mean that girls of all abilities do well at Hanford. In recent years all our children have passed Common Entrance into the schools of their choice. Girls have gone from Hanford to Benenden, Bryanston, Cheltenham Ladies College, Downe House, Godolphin, Leweston, Marlborough, Roedean, Sherborne Girls, St. Mary's Ascot, St. Mary's Calne, St. Mary's Shaftesbury, Stowe, Tudor Hall and Wycombe Abbey.

We are not a hothouse and do not seek to make children conform to any particular pattern, but over the same period, academic, art, games and music scholarships have been awarded to Badminton, Bryanston, Downe House, Godolphin, St Mary's Calne, St Mary's Shaftesbury, Sherborne Girls, Talbot Heath and Tudor Hall.





## CHAPTER FOUR



# The Arts

### Music

Music is an important part of life at Hanford. Our Head of Music is supported by peripatetic instrumental teachers. Nearly every child plays one musical instrument and many play two. There is a choir for each Year Group, which any child may join. There is a Chapel Choir, to which entry is by audition. There are also flute groups, a wind band, a string group and an orchestra. Children regularly perform for each other in informal concerts throughout the year. They may sing with their choir or play their instrument in Chapel on Sundays. The Wind Band is sometimes invited to play for garden parties and village fêtes. Two or three times a year there are concerts at the school to which parents may be invited. Every child sings in the school's Carol Service.





## Art and Handwork

The quality of art at Hanford is outstanding. The house, animals and surrounding countryside are used as sources of inspiration and the aim of the art syllabus is to instil a love of the subject.

Creativity and imagination are developed through a variety of skills, including drawing, painting, print-making, textiles, sculpture and pottery and children are encouraged to draw in their free time. An “Art Club” is also available at weekends. We have spacious work areas comprising a painting studio, a well- equipped pottery and a sewing room.

Handwork is taught as a separate subject. The girls love making their own clothes here, which they often wear in school, and they all learn to use a sewing machine. Senior girls also have one lesson a week of “Art Appre”. Learning about famous artists and seeing slides of their work teaches children to look, discriminate and form their own opinion. Visits to galleries become much more rewarding for children and parents. Many of our girls have later gone into the Art world but never forget their early introduction.





## Drama

Drama forms an important part of teaching and extra-curricular activities. Every member of the school takes part in a specially written play performed on the lawn on Parents' Day at the end of the Summer Term.

The famous Hanford Nativity Play is produced with the sixth form each year. The fifth form girls stage a musical each spring. A ballet is performed in the Spring Term by those who take dancing lessons.

Form plays and playlets, ranging from Greek myths to Bible stories to plays written by the children themselves, are produced throughout the year.





## CHAPTER FIVE



# Games

Children at Hanford enjoy participating in formal games every afternoon. During the winter terms, sports include netball, hockey, pop lacrosse and cross country running. During the summer we teach tennis, swimming, rounders, cricket and athletics. Gymnastics is taught throughout the year.

We strive to develop team spirit and House competitions are staged in all sports giving every child the opportunity to represent a team whilst engendering camaraderie and mutual support. School matches are played on Wednesdays and at weekends and high standards are achieved by all the school teams.

Facilities at Hanford include netball and tennis courts, a well equipped gymnasium and an outdoor heated swimming pool, open from April until the autumn half-term. These are set within the extensive grass lawns which provide Hanford with its blend of informality and rural charm.

Tennis coaching, ballet and tap dancing lessons are available throughout the year during games afternoons as optional extras.



## CHAPTER SIX



# The Stables and Riding

Hanford is famous for its ponies which provide fun for all and are suitable for children to handle and ride on the hill. It is possible for a child to bring her pony if it fulfils these criteria or to bring a pony to be schooled and ridden before a particular competition. Riding is an extra but is enjoyed by almost all the children, many of whom would not otherwise have the opportunity.

The Stables are Grade one listed, full of timeless atmosphere with the tack rooms and boxes still as they were originally set out. The emphasis of all the Riding instruction is to teach the children to do as much as possible themselves.





There is a Riding Committee, members of which catch the ponies in the early morning, help groom them in break and take turns to help lead the beginners.

There is an indoor Riding School, an arena and cross country and jumping paddocks. Lessons with the instructors are always varied.

Children have “out” rides on the hills, never on roads, and in the summer they ride in the early morning before breakfast. Also in the summer, tetrathlons take place. One is held at Hanford in which anybody can take part – lots of running, puffing and shooting. There are different cross country courses for different standards – even the smallest riders.





## CHAPTER SEVEN



# Living at Hanford

Hanford, being an old house, is fortunate in having many rooms of different sizes and shapes. This enables the younger children to use the larger dormitories on the first floor, and to settle in and make friends in bigger groups, while being close to the Senior Housemistress and matrons.

On the top floor there are smaller rooms for the more senior girls. In Fan's House, there are five dormitories, a playroom and a special Housemistress. It is a 1960s' building with under floor heating which the children love. The older girls spend their last term here where they can be more self governed and learn how to organise themselves before leaving for their senior schools.

The young matrons are usually gap year students; some of them are old Hanford girls who return to help and know all the tricks of the trade. Much of the fun in boarding comes from 'dares' – trying to outwit the matrons but also enjoying them as elder sisters on whom they rely when they have any worries. Boarding life is about learning to live together, looking after one's possessions and showing respect for other people's property. Children, after the first year, are encouraged to make dormitory requests to be with their friends and, as far as possible, their wishes are granted.



Hanford has always placed great importance on good manners. Over the years a typically Hanford way of encouraging good manners has developed, with a girl moving up (or down) a scale as her manners improve (or not). Royal Guest is the top category. Only two or three reach this height. Piglet is the most lowly position and seldom occupied.

Flowers, fruit and vegetables for the school are grown in a large walled garden and add to the feeling of living in a family house. Fresh flowers from the garden are always on the dining tables and around the school. Lemons are grown in the greenhouse and by tradition picked on Shrove Tuesday to go with the girls' pancakes. In season, raspberries, black and red currants arrive. Crumbles are filled with rhubarb and apples. The 'green vegetables', potatoes, lettuce and tomatoes arrive without air miles while the fruit trees are loaded with apples, pears, plums and damsons.

The children, if they wish, have little gardens of their own, full of interesting flowers and whatever they choose to grow in them.



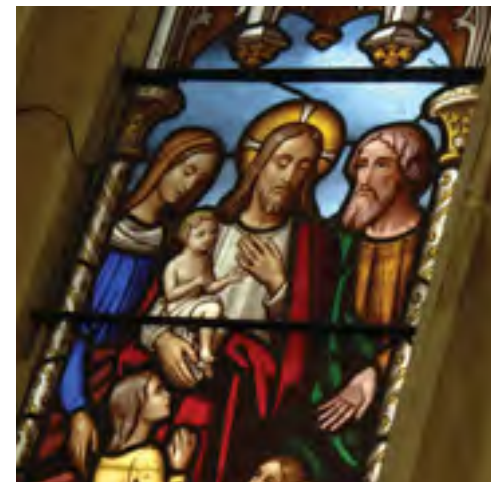


## Chapel life

The Chapel lies at the centre of Hanford's life and every day starts with a short service. On Sundays there is a half hour non-denominational service taken by the Headmaster. The children read the lessons, sing the responses and sometimes sing or play their instruments.

The Chapel Choir sing anthems and the other choirs perform from time to time. The traditional words from the Prayer Book and the King James Bible are used. Parents are always welcome at the Sunday Service. There is a candlelit Compline during Lent in which the children play a leading role.

At Christmas, there is a Carol Service in which girls of all ages read the lessons and sing, and the Chapel is packed with parents. Sometimes there are christenings of Old Girls' children and even weddings of those who have never forgotten the Chapel and what it meant to them.

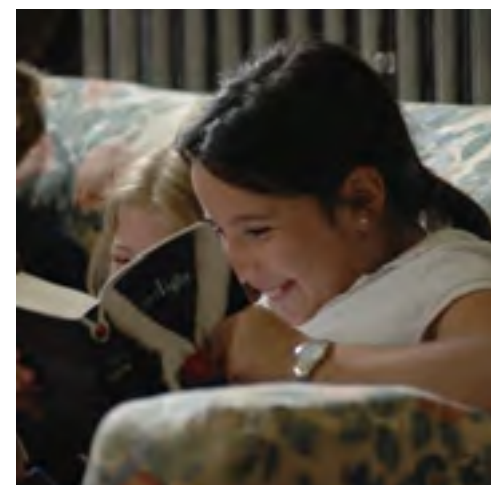




## Time for play

Afternoons are arranged so that the children have time to play with their friends on the playground and on the lawns. There are also special areas set aside for them: Tumbledown for the juniors, the IVth form gardens and Chestnut Village for the Vth forms. Children quickly learn to play their own games without the need for constant adult encouragement or direction, although supervision is constant.

The weekends are an important time for extended play and for the development of the child's imagination. Some children may be involved in matches; others may ride, look after the chickens, swim, climb trees, walk in the hills, play music or organise various forms of entertainment which are entirely voluntary and are for their own diversion and amusement. These include Art Club, Gym Club, Wiggle Club (dancing), acting, computers and other games. All activities, while organised by the children, are supervised by a member of staff. Children may watch television in the evenings on Saturdays and Sundays.





### Contact with parents

On Sundays all children write a letter home after lunch. Children are allowed to use mobiles but they must be handed in at bed times. They may receive telephone calls on a dedicated children's line and may telephone from the children's call box. They may send and receive e-mails. Children are usually allowed out for the day and/or the night after lessons on Saturdays or for the day after Chapel on Sundays. The system for outings is completely flexible and nights may be taken on almost any weekend; there are no compulsory exeats.

Hanford has always had girls whose parents live abroad and is well used to looking after them. We have links with Spain and schools in other European countries. Contact with parents is maintained by letter, phone or e-mail. Accompanied taxis take children to and from airports. Because there are no compulsory weekend exeats, there are always children at the school every weekend throughout the term.

