

## **Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys**

### **Year 7 Information Evening: “Learning at the Langton”**

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#### **What we are and how we work**

Simon Langton is an academic school, whose main role is to take young people from all backgrounds who have been found to be intellectually able and make the most of their potential as learners. Our own distinctive ethos adds to this basic aim a strength in making our students independent, questioning thinkers, able to take positions of responsibility in society. We are proud of the way most of them mature with us, so that it is not uncommon to receive letters of commendation from those who have met our students in activities and functions outside and beyond the school. We have a proud tradition in sporting, scientific, artistic, musical and dramatic performance, but these are always firmly linked to the students' progress in thoughtful learning about personal challenges and limits, roles and responsibilities.

We make no apologies at the school for the emphasis on learning and achievement which is at the core of what we do. Students are stretched from day one, and homework in all years throws out a challenge to them. But this is a learning institution for the teachers and support staff too. We constantly review the way we teach through lesson observations and focus on good practice in the classroom and the importance of addressing boys' educational needs more precisely. Student lesson evaluations enable us to also monitor the student's perspective.

We already achieve much at this school in terms of examinations success, but we want to do better still. All students are encouraged to take pride in their work, and the vast majority do. Where learning or behaviour is not what we expect, however, the school now has a very clear way of dealing with the problem without confrontation. Through our insistence on the completion of good quality work to firm deadlines, students are very clear that, as far as making the most of their learning potential is concerned, the school is very serious indeed!

We hope that, as your son moves up the school, he will mature and develop into a young man who gets real enjoyment out of learning and who is able to leave Simon Langton as someone who is confident enough to go on learning later in life and to carry with him something of the stimulating atmosphere of a school that strives for excellence.

Mr S Peto  
Assistant Head (Pastoral)

You can make contact with the school by any one of the following means:

Tel: 01227 463567      Fax: 01227 456486      email: [office@thelangton.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@thelangton.kent.sch.uk)

Website: <http://www.thelangton.org.uk>

# Learning at the Langton

In order to summarise the suggestions made that we hope will help your son to settle happily into the school, I have collated the following list:

1. Make sure he has a water bottle with him. Watering the body means watering the brain!
2. Please encourage him to leave folders and books at school in his locker unless he really needs them for homework. It is VERY BAD for him to be carrying bags that are so heavy that they would challenge a heavyweight champion of the world!
3. You have probably spent a fortune on his bedroom. He has everything he needs and it is probably the sort of retreat that you dreamed about having when you were a child, but who knows what he is actually doing in there when you think he is toiling away at his homework? Watching television? Reading comics? Dreaming? Homework, at least in Years 7 and 8, should be done downstairs, under relaxed supervision. Many young people prefer to work with music in the background and there is some evidence that this can help concentration.
4. Help your boy with his organisation. Before he goes to bed, help him to pack his bag with the items he needs for the next day, going through his timetable with him. Gradually reduce your input, so that he takes more responsibility.
5. Homework is important but it should not spoil family life. If your son is spending too much time on homework, let his form tutor know.
6. It's a good idea to have a special place at home for his school things, or a shelf or bookcase.
7. The homework diary is the link between home and school. Make a habit of looking at it each day and signing it at the end of each week. There should be no secrets!
8. The best piece of advice (and moral support) I have heard is: they are children, you are the adult, you are the boss and you make the decisions.

**Many parents ask, ‘How can my son improve his work?’ Here are three suggestions.**

**Spelling** – Help your son to develop a spelling card. First, talk to him and help him to identify any common words that are ‘blind spots’ – no more than 20. Keep this list on a piece of card in the blazer pocket.

**Daily Reading** – I recommend half an hour of sustained, silent reading which means no TV, radio or distraction. Reading makes a difference to every aspect of language development:

Oral and written style  
Punctuation and spelling  
Grammatical structure  
Comprehension  
And it is supposed to be fun...

If your son is a less confident reader or needs to improve his comprehension, then I suggest ten minutes of reading **aloud** to you. It means he will have to slow down and think about what he is reading and then he can do the other twenty minutes in silence.

Alternatively, get him to read one or two chapters, and then ask him some questions about what he has read. Some boys really like this, as it makes them feel that parents are involved in their reading.

**All written work** should be planned, written, edited and corrected. Reading the final draft **aloud** to someone is very helpful. This process takes longer, of course, but it pays enormous dividends in terms of marks and therefore self-esteem.

*If you have found an effective way of supporting your child/ren’s learning, please let us know so that we can share good ideas with other parents.*