

Exporting Educational Excellence

British Schools Overseas

Edited by Amy Wevill and Edward Wild



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group

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Wild Search is grateful to the Alpha Plus Group for supporting this publication.

Front Cover: Shrewsbury International School - Bangkok, Riverside Campus

Preface

The Lord Bilimoria CBE DL

This year the coronavirus has impacted the economy and health of every nation in the world. There is not a single person left untouched by its effects. A great number of British businesses are facing significant financial challenges and I am keen to support them and encourage the government to do so through these unprecedented times. They are seeing shocks in both demand and supply. However, having seen Cobra beer through two recessions, my experience has taught me that those who succeed are those who make bold moves in times of adversity.



Exporting Educational Excellence is important and timely as it brings together those leading and advising independent schools and their international projects to share their stories of success, and the challenges they have faced. Many of these projects are forging new paths in new countries and are excellent examples of what can be achieved through international collaboration. This will surely give inspiration and support to others considering future plans which take their success to new parts of the world to benefit future generations.

These unprecedented times have been a defining test of leadership. The contributors to this report have had to completely rethink their models, to embrace online learning, manage a challenging recruitment period and consider their core values. I have seen just how difficult recent decisions have been, and the pace at which it has been necessary to adapt. While opening dates may have been postponed, each of these schools is moving ahead, holding firm to their vision of establishing their British education institution or partnership overseas – from Morocco to Nova Scotia. Their determination to succeed should be rewarded as we emerge from the current crisis.

I have long been an advocate of the value of British education, not only as a cultural asset, but to our economy. Before recent events, the economy was heading in a positive direction, with government support and reinstating the post study work visa. It is vital that we do not lose this momentum, and indeed, the current economic challenges make it all the more important that we not only maintain it but increase it.

I encourage those thinking of taking on new endeavours in this time to be bold. British education has such a strong reputation across the world, indeed its world class institutions deserve to succeed wherever they choose to establish overseas partner institutions. This report demonstrates their energy, enthusiasm and educational engagement and I welcome its publication as a contribution to celebrating one of Britain's great exports.

*Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE DL
Independent Crossbench Peer*

Introduction

2020 was already going to be one of great significance to the UK in terms of its international relationships and how it is perceived overseas, even before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. It will see the transition period for leaving the European Union end. The UK government has decided to remove HUAWEI completely from 5G networks, a decision the Chinese Ambassador firmly warned against, and tensions continue to grow in the developing China-Hong Kong relationship. The US election will lead to either a new President with quite a different approach to foreign policy or a second term Trump administration. The UK was also due to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 meeting in Glasgow, now rescheduled for 2021. And of course, COVID-19 itself has tested global relationships in numerous ways, such as through applying quarantine requirements to specific countries, movement of international students, restrictions around trade of certain medicines and equipment and in building coalitions around scientific developments.

How the UK is perceived overseas today, how we can strengthen our bonds and in which areas we are able to shine on the world stage are all important areas to assess and explore at this time. Education is one of these: in which Britain is a world leader. Names of our leading universities and independent schools are familiar across the globe. This publication is the latest in a series that Wild Search has published which examine British education overseas, how it brings value to the UK, economically, culturally and in terms of soft power, and what can be done to support institutions looking to encourage international students here or to establish elsewhere.

Following Exporting Excellence, which was published in autumn 2019 we have continued discussions with British independent schools who are in the process of setting up new campuses abroad or are considering doing so. We are delighted to bring together the views and reflections of those leading these projects across the world; from Canada to Morocco to Thailand.

Pam Mundy sets the scene and discusses the strength of the market, despite the challenging times. Mark Hanley Browne discusses how Alpha Plus colleges have adapted their international offering through the developing COVID situation. Strength of the investor partnership is cited as being the key to Shrewsbury's success in taking their ethos to Thailand, as explained by Dr Maghin Tamilarasan,

their International Development Director. He and others remind us of the importance of philosophical alignment in the partnerships made. As well as this, George Budd, Principal of Moreton Hall and Shaun Fenton, Headmaster of Reigate Grammar advise against investors looking for a quick return.

Integrity of brand is also vital. Retaining the ethos of the home school strengthens the brand and keeps quality high. Even in terms of where to establish, this should be thought through. It truly chimes with the ethos of Gordonstoun, which has sailing and mountaineering as part of the core curriculum, that they should establish a sea facing campus in the beautiful Nova Scotia. To further ensure authenticity without distracting from the home school, Peter Green, Executive Head of the Rugby School Group notes the importance of getting the leadership structure right.

As well as feeling connected to the school, it is also important to consider the potential market in a given location, Shaun Fenton and George Budd point to opportunities in less saturated markets and the benefits of being early entrants, such as Moreton Hall in Pujian, China and Reigate Grammar in Morocco. Political considerations are also important, as discussed by Mark Hanley Browne, Chief Executive of Alpha Plus who have partnerships in Hong Kong and China. He suggests flexibility and where possible attracting students from a range of markets would put schools in good position and remains optimistic about these markets.

As this report demonstrates there is indeed plenty to be optimistic about, though as 2020 has taught us, ensuring strong foundations with the ability to adapt to changing circumstance is critical. We hope this publication is of interest and helpful to those considering expanding their international offering and are grateful to Mark Hanley-Browne and Alpha Plus for supporting the project.

We hope that you will find this report stimulating, informative and beneficial, however you are engaged in education. With more than a decade's experience in advising educational leaders and boards on senior appointments, Wild Search are well placed to work with you both in the UK and internationally.

Destination ... Unknown? International Expansion or Consolidation ... Where Next?

Pam Mundy, Trustee, ACS International Schools

'Confidence, capital and new markets fuel entrepreneurship and job – generating expansion of existing businesses.'

Elaine Chao

There are those who would say that, in the midst of a world health and economic crisis, the concept of British schools venturing into new partnerships, markets and locations is the epitome of the phrase 'this way lies madness'. Over the past weeks and now months, we have all become depressingly familiar with the terms 'closure', 'liquidation', 'fire sale' and the other equally soul (and commercially) destroying terms that permeate each news bulletin, headline and infiltrate our daily conversations. Alongside 'unmute your microphone', 'Zoom invitation' and 'hand sanitiser' ... they have become part of the lexicon for 2020 and in doing so, do little to incite the appetite of many schools to consider international expansion

There are incredible opportunities for British Schools to expand into international territories

or explore the brokerage of new partnerships! In fact, why destabilise the 'mother ship' to chase new markets? How to guarantee success? How will 'what works' here be sure to work elsewhere? All valid questions!

The fact is that intelligence indicates that exactly the opposite is true (and certainly the evidence shared by those making highly successful forays into international markets in this publication bears witness to this) and that there are incredible opportunities for British Schools to expand into international territories. In reality it is more of a question of 'Where to go?', rather than 'Whether to go?'. Worldwide, British education is held in high esteem and is a sought-after 'brand' in most international locations which has led to the emergence of new markets, alternatives to what many would consider to be the 'tried, tested and oversaturated' usual suspects.

The thirst for investment into 'mid-market' K-12 schools is increasing exponentially (whilst there is still a desire for 'premium brand' schools) and there is also a rapidly growing interest and available investment funding into Nurseries and Early Learning Centres. Locations such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka ... in fact, South East Asia overall are driven by the desire to accelerate the quality of the education offer to nationals and also to attract international trade that means a need for high quality international schools. This applies particularly

to those bringing the British education offer with its 'pedigree' of long-established quality (even if, for some, that is perception rather than reality!) Added to this is the stark fact that many families who have returned to their home country, due to the exodus driven by the pandemic are currently reconsidering the merits of leaving and returning to their relocation countries and are looking for the same British education, literally closer to their home. Other well-established locations, such as China, the UAE and more accessible parts of the Middle East continue to welcome British Schools despite the current crisis. Those schools with a foothold in these locations are looking further afield to the less widely known regions, increasing their own footprint and bringing much needed revenue back to support the founding school in Britain, often for charitable purposes or to increase 'home market' quality further. Markets poised to come to the fore during the next decade and already beginning to attract interest include; Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Latin America (particularly and provided that the economy stabilises, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Mexico) and key African countries such as Nigeria, Mozambique, Morocco and Egypt, all mid-market and local population oriented.

For British Schools prepared to access the available opportunities, there is also the advantage of 'opening up' opportunities for student exchange and a level of cross-cultural learning

For British Schools prepared to access the available opportunities, there is also the advantage of 'opening up' opportunities for student exchange and a level of cross-cultural learning (for leaders, teachers and school business professionals) that can never be replicated on a 'virtual' platform. Some British schools have previously (and prior to the pandemic) been deterred from expansion by concerns that such a venture will somehow 'dilute' the quality of education offered by the founding school, or distract both Governing Board and leadership away from the 'day job'. Those who have found success in international expansion have addressed this at the very beginning of the journey, meticulously examining and determining the 'DNA' of the school, its capacity (and capability) to expand and forensically examining the most appropriate territory for a first, or further, expansion.

The 'match' matters, particularly at this time ... the most lucrative or desirable (from a location perspective!) is not always the most appropriate for a specific school, akin to choosing to relocate to a new country following a one-week holiday in that place! This is when 'doing the homework' of due diligence both in terms of territory and in the selection of investor partnerships, is critical and more so now. As Dr. Seuss wisely noted: 'The more you read, the more you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.' ('I Can Read With My Eyes Shut')

In short, thinking it through and asking 'Why should we do this? Why do we WANT to do this? What will we gain?' 'Where do we start?' should confirm that if international expansion has been part of discussions prior to these challenging circumstances, the time IS now, the opportunities ARE available and that 'staying

the question of why anyone should consider new partnerships and expansion during the ongoing challenging time seems to be that it is the most obvious and beneficial way forward for many British Schools and should, at the very least, be an agenda item for serious consideration.

put' may eventually mean that, as Will Rogers put it 'Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.'

So... the question of why anyone should consider new partnerships and expansion during the ongoing challenging time seems to be that it is the most obvious and beneficial way forward for many British Schools and should, at the very least, be an agenda item for serious consideration. It may well be time to 'mute the microphone' of the

dissenters, start the 'Zoom conversations' with investors and potential partners and have the hand sanitiser ready for the international visit! In the words of Seth Godin:

'There's no shortage of remarkable ideas, what's missing is the will to execute them.'

Alpha Plus Group and China

Mark Hanley-Browne, Chief Executive, Alpha Plus Group

This report is going to print at a very interesting and challenging time, given the current COVID crisis and also given the tensions between the UK and China over the new security laws which Beijing has recently imposed in Hong Kong. With this in mind, in this article I would like to examine what both of these things mean for Alpha Plus, and by extension for other UK schools and school groups which are currently doing business in China and Hong Kong, drawing on our recent experiences there.

The Alpha Plus Group does not own or operate any schools in Hong Kong or China. However, we do provide educational services to partners in Hong Kong and on the mainland, with a particular focus at Early Years level. We also recruit strongly from China and Hong Kong for our three boarding schools in the UK: Abbey College Cambridge; Abbey College Manchester and DLD College, London. I hope that, using these examples, I can offer some insights into doing business in Hong Kong and China at 14 - 18 level and at Early Years level during this period of unusually rapid change.

As in the UK, many nursery and Pre Schools in China have been closed for months on end in 2020 due to COVID. This has presented significant challenges for our partners, and for the Alpha Plus Group, given our role as an educational provider of support services to these schools. In our case the services we are providing relate to the licencing of a dual curriculum in English and Mandarin. This is based on content which we have developed here in the UK in our nursery and Pre-schools, most notably at the Minors Nursery School in Notting Hill, and we are supplying these materials alongside training for teachers so that they can deliver this curriculum in Hong Kong and China.

Along with the obvious challenges, the COVID crisis has also presented our partners and ourselves with huge opportunities. In particular we have learned that it is possible to deliver effective learning programmes remotely, even at Early Years level, provided that all the key elements are in place. These include the need for parents to be able to make the time to spend with their children at home while the school provides the child with suitable content at a distance; the distribution of the right equipment to staff so that they can deliver the content; ensuring

the knowledge which we have gained over these past six months has been invaluable. Our teachers have demonstrated that they have the capability to deliver first class teaching and learning at a distance at this level.

that the pupils who are receiving the content also have the right equipment; and providing the training to staff in how to deliver effective remote learning. It is fair to say that it has been a very steep learning curve for all involved. However, the knowledge which we have gained over these past six months has been invaluable. Our teachers have demonstrated that they have the capability to deliver first class teaching and learning at a distance at this level. They have shown that they can remove all the practical hurdles in delivering the content. So we have been able to show that remote learning is a viable alternative for educating young children should the schools have to close again for periods of time in the future (which, at the time of writing, seems highly likely, at least on a local level).

In the meantime our college teaching staff have demonstrated that they can educate their students, aged 14 – 18, very effectively at a distance, whether or not the distance is only over a few miles, for the domestic students, or over thousands of miles for the international students. True, the different time zones have provided a particular challenge in this case, given that our colleges recruit our students from over 80 different countries. But the teachers have managed the feat very well nonetheless.

As boarding schools, our colleges have also shown that it is possible to stay open and remain fully operational throughout a pandemic by following strict hygiene measures and by the use of distancing and “huddles” (which is similar to a “bubble” where a small group of students are allowed to interact without distancing during a period of quarantine, after arrival from abroad). The Principals have been able to offer the students the chance to stay in college or to return home during the crisis, but either way the students have been able to receive the full tuition programme whether they have been on site or studying remotely. Given this track record, it is no surprise that most of last year’s students have now indicated that they intend to re-enrol for this September, because they know that they can continue their studies from home, should the pandemic prevent them from travelling to the UK, while knowing that their room is waiting for them in the UK as soon as they are able to travel here safely.

The biggest challenge for our colleges has therefore been about recruiting new students from abroad to start in September. This has been more difficult to do than in previous years, given that many students and parents are understandably anxious about travelling during a worldwide pandemic, and also families have become more cautious about their finances (coming to board and study in the

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not we should continue to offer this option in the years ahead. The attraction for students and their parents is that a combination of on site and off site learning can be offered more cheaply than a full on site boarding experience. As with all innovative ideas, however, we will have to wait and see if the market is ready for this as a permanent development, post COVID (during COVID, there is little choice but to explore blended learning models as part of the solution).

On the political side of things, it is too soon to know what the effect of the recent tensions between the UK and China over Hong Kong are going to be. For the past year, we have actually seen more students applying to come to the UK from China and Hong Kong than previously, and we are guessing that this is partly due to the USA as a destination falling out of favour given USA-China tensions. But will the same effect be seen in the UK in due course? This is something which we will only be able to answer in the next recruitment cycle, as we monitor patterns in applications to the UK from different parts of the world next year, compared to this year and previously. It is fortunate for us, in the meantime, that we currently draw from over 80 different countries and our network is expanding. If there is a drop off in pupil applications from China in due course, we will be able to compensate for this given our wide global reach. Nevertheless we are alert to the danger and will be watching developments very closely over the coming months.

I am optimistic that Hong Kong and China will remain a strong market for Alpha Plus and for other UK based education providers in the years to come

UK for one or two years is obviously a big commitment, financially speaking). However, we have found that the option of offering “blended learning”, where a student can enrol for remote teaching for September, and retain the option to travel to the UK to have their tuition in person (say arriving from January 2021 onwards) or continuing with remote learning all year, is proving to be attractive. This, in turn, has led us to consider, once COVID is no longer dictating the agenda, whether or

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For my part, I am optimistic that Hong Kong and China will remain a strong market for Alpha Plus and for other UK based education providers in the years to come. Despite recent disagreements between our two

countries, Beijing appears committed to encouraging the teaching of English to all students alongside Mandarin and so we are forecasting continuing demand from Chinese schools to licence our dual curriculum at Early Years level and to commission the training for teachers which goes along with this package. In the meantime our ability to deliver at a distance has improved during the COVID crisis and our teachers can now deliver the curriculum both here and abroad whether or not the schools are open or closed. This means that we are now future proofed if any other pandemic follows on from COVID in due course. In the meantime the increased flexibility which our colleges are now able to offer to both domestic and international students should stand them in good stead for years to come. We all know that adaptability is key, whenever the environment changes – and we have learned that our colleges are more adaptable than most.

Of course we wish that COVID hadn't happened. We also wish that the political relations between China and the UK were not as strained as they are right now. However, there is no need for us to be pessimistic about the future of independent education in China and Hong Kong, despite these things. Instead we are viewing these challenges as opportunities and are simply adapting our offer accordingly.

I have no doubt that many other independent education providers from the UK will be doing the same and that we will all continue to be successful in exporting excellence to China.



Shrewsbury School International - from Shropshire to Bangkok, Hong Kong, China and beyond.

Dr Maghin Tamilarasan, International Development Director, Shrewsbury School

Along with a select band of pioneers, Shrewsbury School was one of the first British independent schools to establish an international presence. Our overseas journey began in 2003 with the opening of Shrewsbury International School Bangkok Riverside, a co-educational day school educating pupils aged 3 to 18 in a truly inspirational setting on the banks of the Chao Phraya River. Now a thriving school of over 1700 pupils, in the heart of the Thai capital, it is no exaggeration to say that it is seen as one of the benchmark educational establishments in the country and the wider region.

Owing to ever increasing demand, in 2018 we opened Shrewsbury International School Bangkok City Campus and Shrewsbury International School Hong Kong, both offering superb, spacious, purpose built facilities for girls and boys aged 3 to 11 with specialist primary teaching staff delivering a rich educational experience.

The attraction to both local families and expatriates is clear – our international schools have become recognised for the highest levels of academic achievement, excellence in sport, creative and performing arts, and a wide variety of co-curricular opportunities that the Shrewsbury name is synonymous with. All this while preparing pupils for the modern world in the comfort of their local environment.

There has never been a more critical time to develop closer links and greater understanding between nations, and where better to start than with the young leadership minds of the future.

The benefits to Shrewsbury School UK are also multiple – the international schools have helped to underpin and expand our bursarial, partnerships and community initiatives, while creating meaningful international links for our pupils and staff. There has never been a more critical time to develop closer links and greater understanding between nations, and where better to start than with the young leadership minds of the future.

The success of our international schools can be attributed to a few key factors – an exceptional partnership with our investors, with whom we share a long-term commitment to delivering the Shrewsbury ethos and philosophy in a local setting, including an unwavering commitment to whole person education; the identification and ongoing nurturing of outstanding talent at all levels; and the continuing close association and interaction with Shrewsbury School in the UK.

While many school groups continue to focus on reputational risk as a one-way street, our approach to our international schools has been one of close and deliberate collaboration rather than imposition. In practical terms this is achieved through UK Governor attendance at Advisory Boards at the international schools three times a year, and year-round interactions between the international Principals and

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collaboration opportunities are immense whether looking at academic programmes, alumni networks, career opportunities or staff training and personal development, and the pace of progress has been inspiring.

their senior teams with their peers at Shrewsbury School in the UK. Operationally, teachers share learning resources across the world and are continuously exploring ways to foster even greater collaboration using the digital technologies that have very much come into their own in the last few months. These collaboration opportunities are

immense whether looking at academic programmes, alumni networks, career opportunities or staff training and personal development, and the pace of progress has been inspiring.

Looking to the future, we are well underway with the next phase in our international growth. We have announced the opening of new schools with our existing partner in the Shanghai and Guangzhou regions in China over the coming years. The Shrewsbury International Schools in China promise to be breath-taking in both scale and ambition and will help to bring academic excellence through a wide-ranging curriculum that uncovers and encourages a genuine love of learning, alongside inspirational teaching that challenges each pupil to strive for her or his personal best.

Beyond China, we are actively exploring opportunities in focus countries with a growing demand for the premium British international education the Shrewsbury name epitomises, including India, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Although early days we are genuinely excited by initial discussions with prospective partners keen to join us in the next chapter in our international growth story.

As well as developing our own schools around the globe, we are actively growing wider global partnerships, forming links with other schools, institutes and organisations with a view to developing a global mindset and sharing educational perspectives across borders. As a member of the G30 association of prestigious secondary schools we enjoy links as far afield as Australia, India, South Africa and the United States.

With so much going on, the next few years promise to be busy and exciting in equal measures as we continue to expand and evolve the Shrewsbury presence around the globe.



Shrewsbury International School - Hong, Kong



Gordonstoun - Breaking New Ground

Richard Devey, Head of Senior School and Lisa Kerr, Principal

Gordonstoun has always been different. From our origins in the 1930s (where our Founder Dr Kurt Hahn championed citizenship, challenge in the outdoors and social responsibility long before they were fashionable) we have always thought of ourselves as something of an educational pioneer. The only School in the UK with an operational fire service, and one of the few with compulsory sailing and mountain expeditions as part of the core curriculum for all, we have never been afraid to forge our own path and stand out from the crowd.

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With this in mind, establishing a franchise of Gordonstoun overseas was always going to be an interesting proposition, and one where the conventional was not necessarily going to be the route we took. However, at the outset of that franchise journey many years ago, none of us involved in the process would have expected that the North East corner of Canada would be home to the first of our franchise schools to open, scheduled for Autumn 2021.

The School's links to Nova Scotia go back hundreds of years. Sir Robert Gordon, after whom the School was named, was also Scotland's premiere Baronet of Nova Scotia and was responsible for the development of the colony out there in the mid-seventeenth century. However, it was a more recent contact through the parent of a current member of our teaching staff that led to a visit to Gordonstoun in late 2017 of a delegation from Nova Scotia, initially exploring our educational methodology with a view to opening a School out there, rather than as a potential franchise partner. However, as discussions progressed it became clear that there was synergy between our School's approach and that which the Nova Scotia team were trying to establish, and the idea of a franchise partnership grew from that first meeting.

Further visits to the School by a range of dignitaries, including the Premiere of Nova Scotia Stephen McNeil, soon followed, with a Gordonstoun team also heading out to Canada to learn more about the proposals and investigate site options. Annapolis County was chosen as the region to locate the School; an area of outstanding natural beauty bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Bay of Fundy, with the final site being chosen close to the small town of Annapolis Royal. The site itself comprises over 250 acres of mountain, wild land and sea frontage, and has to be one of the most beautiful sites for a UK franchise School to locate anywhere in the world. It has recently been home to a theme park and, whilst the local community are sad to see the theme park's demise, the thought of a new and vibrant international

community of young people, bringing jobs and investment in to the area, has been greeted with much excitement.

Construction is aiming to be highly environmentally friendly, which the aim being to construct North America's first Net Zero Energy School. EA Farren Ltd, the franchise partner in Canada, are enlisting the services of a specialist company to ensure that, from ground breaking, through completion and on to operation, the School is as energy efficient as possible, harnessing the latest in sustainable technologies to create a campus that is ready for the next century and beyond.

Educationally, the plan is to run the IB Standard and Higher Level programme, married to the Gordonstoun model of breadth, challenge and service to others. At capacity, 600 students will be enrolled from grades 9-12, with enrolment being phased over a four year period. Students will be mainly boarding (and drawn from all corners of the globe), although it is hoped to have a good number of local Nova Scotian children also enrolled. Plans are also well advanced for a scholarship and bursary programme for the School, enabling students from a range of social backgrounds to have the opportunity for what is certain to be a wonderful education. We are exploring opportunities for developing an extensive Sail training programme (along the lines of that offered at Gordonstoun) on the water which bounds the site, and aim to develop our links with global educational organisations with which Gordonstoun has very strong links, such as Round Square and Outward Bound.

Our hope is to build something different, but something which stands out as a model of excellence, and paves the way for other significant developments we have announced, or will announce, in the coming years.

All of those associated with this project on both sides of the Atlantic are enormously excited by what lies ahead. Our hope is to build something different, but something which stands out as a model of excellence, and paves the way for other significant developments we have announced, or will announce, in the coming years.



Principal's Residence - Gordonstoun, Nova Scotia



Rugby's Vision for International Development in the 2020s and beyond

Peter Green, Executive Head Master, Rugby School Group

An English independent school education is today one of the most sought-after commodities around the world. It is also one of the UK's most successful exports. Rugby is a relative newcomer to the international stage, opening its first sister school in Thailand in 2017, in Rugby's 450th anniversary year. We have been delighted to see Rugby School Thailand grow quickly and successfully, beginning its third academic year with a roll of 700 Rugbeians, each of whom enjoys the full experience of a Rugby education on a striking 80-acre campus.

The development of Rugby School Thailand is an expression of Rugby's ambitious determination to be able to offer a Rugby education to more and more families around the world. It provides the opportunity for boys and girls in Thailand and across the region to enjoy the full Rugby boarding experience, where each girl and boy can aspire to academic excellence, and where the development of the whole person is the whole point – Rugby's 21st century interpretation of the educational ideals set forth almost 200 years ago by Dr Thomas Arnold, Rugby's (and England's) most famous headmaster.

We have found that many families in Thailand are choosing Rugby School Thailand instead of the various day schools in the capital, where the inevitable pollution and traffic can mean them spending hours each day in cars. Set among the beautiful countryside 90 minutes south of Bangkok, Rugbeians in Thailand have the advantage of having plenty of space in their school day to enjoy the huge range of co-curricular activities on offer without the daily commute.

One of the many lessons I learned in helping to set up Rugby School Thailand is that parents who choose such a British education are seeking authenticity. They want to know that the education they are buying for their children – in Thailand, Japan or anywhere else outside of the UK – reflects entirely the aims and ethos of the British school. They do not just want a name over the door and a smart uniform. Many of the commercial international school groups have large head-office teams to run their

One of the many lessons I learned in helping to set up Rugby School Thailand is that parents who choose such a British education are seeking authenticity.

schools' operations, a luxury not available to UK independent schools, where Heads and Bursars are, inevitably, focused upon the successes of their own schools. Rugby's answer to this has been to re-organise its leadership. The Rugby Group of Schools came into being in September 2020 and is comprised of Rugby School, now being led by Gareth Parker-Jones, our Prep school, Bilton Grange, and what will be a growing

number of international sister schools in the coming years. I will be leading the Executive Leadership Group, who between us have the full range of educational expertise in Rugby's curricular, co-curricular and pastoral programmes, together with marketing, admissions, estates, finance and project management. Rugby's Executive Leadership will work closely with its international partners to manage the development of each new Rugby sister school. It will offer that key ingredient – authenticity.

As teachers become increasingly sought after in schools in the UK and internationally, we want to ensure that the Rugby Group of Schools provides its teaching staff with the opportunity to develop professionally as part of a global educational network, supporting their continuous professional development and having the scale as a Group to promote teachers across our growing portfolio of schools.

The development of the Rugby Group of Schools will also broaden the experience we can offer Rugbeians around the world. The first pupil exchange with Thailand took place last year and we hope to make this an annual event, where Rugbeians can share their experiences of growing up in different cultures and learn from one another. One of the advantages of a Rugby education in the coming years will be our new enrichment programme. The latest addition to the Rugby Group of Schools will be Rugby School Japan. Two campuses will open, in 2022 and 2023, together with an enrichment campus on Hokkaido, where 13-year-olds from across

the Rugby Group of Schools will spend an extended period of time, or at the enrichment campuses we are planning to develop at all of our schools. Rugby Enrichment will offer Rugbeians a mixture of formal lessons and co-curricular programmes, outdoor pursuits geared to the locality, and life skills, which will enable our pupils to lead more engaged and meaningful lives. For Rugby's 13-year-olds, we hope that Rugby Enrichment will be a transformative experience and one that will live with them forever.

These are exciting times at Rugby! Dr Arnold's vision of a humane education for which Rugby is today renowned is now being offered to increasing amounts of young people thousands of miles away from The Close.

The development of the Rugby Group of Schools will also broaden the experience we can offer Rugbeians around the world.

Moreton Hall - Developments in China

George Budd, Principal and Victoria Eastman, International Director, Moreton Hall

Moreton Hall's connections with China go back more than 20 years. From recruiting a handful of Chinese girls into the senior school to opening a pre-prep school in China has been an interesting journey.

Our traditional, Shropshire school has been culturally enriched by the introduction of students from all over the world. Not only have our local students been challenged by the academic prowess of Chinese mathematicians but they have had their eyes opened to a much wider world, in which recognising cultural differences and developing tolerance and mutual respect is paramount.

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Our knowledge of the Chinese education system, gleaned from numerous visits to China, led us to open the International Study Centre, which prepares students for entry to top boarding schools in the UK, bridging a gap between the two cultures and education systems. Visiting groups of young students from China have been fully integrated into the Moreton First curriculum. Their teachers reported they had experienced a very different style of education, which exposed shortfalls in the Chinese system. This then led to groups of teachers from China coming to Moreton to participate in Teacher Training courses to learn about UK teaching methods and to benefit from our educational expertise.

Our recent, most exciting development was to collaborate with a Chinese partner to set up a pre-prep school in a city called Pujiang in China, which opened in September 2019 with 150 children aged 3 – 6. The Early Years curriculum, with its holistic approach to education is becoming increasingly popular in China, where ideas such as Forest School, free play and child-centred learning are not widespread. With plans to open further schools over the next three years, this is a long-term income generator for the school, allowing us to carry out new building projects and improvements to Moreton Hall.

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Sailing - Rugby School - Thailand

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money. We focused on the 3 to 6 year old age group, which is not governed by such strict educational policy in China, making it easier to get a licence to open a brand new school.

The city of Pujiang was chosen as it was a city under re-development, had a population of around 1 million and was easily accessible to Shanghai by fast train (90 minutes). Crucially, there were no other international schools there but market research showed that this was an area with young middle class parents, who wanted their children to learn English and study a more holistic style of education without losing their Chinese identity.

Since opening, the biggest challenge has probably been the recruitment and retention of teaching staff, although this has been overshadowed by the global pandemic. The school closed for several months due to Covid 19 but re opened in May. Moreton Hall EAL teachers have been supporting the Pujiang teachers over the summer by recording online English lessons via zoom for the children to participate in. These lessons have been a great hit. Plans to open the next school in September will have to go on hold as no building work has been allowed over the past three months. However, the opportunities in China are huge. Although the education market in Tier 1 cities such as Shanghai is probably saturated, the Tier 2 and 3 cities offer great potential, perhaps even more so now if parents are seeking a western-style education for their children without sending them overseas.

current partner, Chinese born but raised and educated in the UK, did we feel he understood how to blend the best components of the Chinese and British education system. Crucially, he also understood that this was a long-term project, unlike some investors who just want to see a very quick return on their

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Moreton Hall International - Pujiang

Building Bridges to a Better World - Reigate Grammar's International Partners

Shaun Fenton, Headmaster Reigate Grammar School and Executive Headmaster Reigate Grammar School Nanjing

Our strategic vision is to grow our global network, to strengthen the family of Reigatians living and working around the world through a community of schools. This schools' family creates empathy and understanding, they will help to blend the best of UK education with local traditions to form a new paradigm. International growth will have real educational benefits here in the UK as well as in the schools we help to grow overseas.

Of course, these new school partnerships will bring financial benefits to us in the UK to better provide bursaries, pastoral care, great teaching, new facilities and to weather any economic or political storms that come our way. However, the benefits go beyond money as we prepare children to be global citizens and help staff to develop a more international outlook. As with all good partnerships, all stakeholders benefit. Our first international partnership was with Kaiyuan Education in China. We are fortunate to work with strong and visionary partners committed to educational value but with secure finances. In this context, the multi-school contract in China has been a wonderful start. Our first school is now open in the ancient Chinese capital Nanjing and the second, RGS Zhangjiagang, is currently being built to open in 2022.

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However large and exciting the market is in China, we always wanted to diversify and so using our global network, supported by the Department for International Trade, we made super progress in Morocco. Economic and socio-political circumstances vary but parents everywhere want the best for their children and see that investing in a great education is the best investment.

Morocco is a fascinating and amazing country. As an African nation with European influences and a vision for international engagement, the people I met were impressive. Our partnership with the British International School of Casablanca has come at the worst time, because of COVID-19, but also the best time as the country and our partners have an exciting commitment to international education. We will work with them, through the COVID crisis and come out the other end in a stronger partnership and well-placed for the next generations of students.

There has been a huge focus on UK schools establishing partnerships in the Middle East, particularly Dubai, and in China and for good reason. However, every analysis suggests that Africa has huge potential and a fast-growing role in the world. We

were excited about the opportunities to be early adopters and look forward to working in Morocco for generations to come. International schools are not a way to generate a quick financial return, they must be seen as a long term commitment

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and investment where much of the value coming back to the UK school is educational and cultural. I believe that only from this authentic position will financial returns be secured and sustained in China and even more so in the markets that are currently smaller and less developed than China.

Our work to develop partnerships has taken us to half a dozen countries or more and we now have a well-staffed, expert and ready-for-action International Schools' Team at RGS but we keep coming back to some fundamental truths.

Firstly and most importantly, it is vital to focus on finding the right project and the right partner. This is more important than a particular location or country. When developing collaboration, there needs to be the right blend of financial strength and also motivation to create social value through education. There needs to be mutual trust and confidence. There will inevitably be differences of opinion and perspective between partners and those differences need to be embraced and used to create better solutions. For most UK schools, our value comes in the fact that we can add huge reputational know-how, wisdom and capacity to a project and from the background of all things great about UK education – which includes more than a fair share of association with Oxbridge, Harry Potter and English as a global language. We have spoken to many potential partners, some who I would have loved to work with but the project wasn't quite certain enough and others who seemed to have a great project but where the partner lacked the humility and patience to invest in our school leadership value to secure long term educational value rather than short term financial return.

Secondly, it is absolutely essential to have organisational buy in in the UK – which means moral purpose not just man hours available. In the parents, staff, Governors and students there will be elements who are convinced because they see the commercial gain, the market advantage and the new ability to invest in the UK

school. However, there will also be significant sections of the wider UK stakeholder community who will need to see how this project fits with the moral purpose of the school – to build bridges of global empathy and understanding, to improve educational opportunities, to create social value. That is what motivates them to work at or choose the school in the first place and they will be looking to see how these innovations internationally support the core values.

About the Authors



Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE, DL is the founder of Cobra Beer, Chairman of the Cobra Beer Partnership Limited, a Joint Venture with Molson Coors, and Chairman of Molson Coors Cobra India. Lord Bilimoria is the Founding Chairman of the UK India Business Council and a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London. In 2006, he was appointed the Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea. He is an honorary fellow of Sidney Sussex College Cambridge and Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Judge Business School, Cambridge University. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Ernst & Young and graduated in law from the University of Cambridge. In July 2014, he was installed as the seventh Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, making him the first Indian-born Chancellor of a Russell Group University in Great Britain, and he is the President of the UK Council for International Students Affairs (UKCISA). Since 2017 Lord Bilimoria has been a Bynum Tudor Fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford. In June 2020, he was appointed President of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).



George Budd has been Principal of Moreton Hall since since September 2019. Before this he was Deputy Head of Godolphin School, a girls' only boarding and day school in Salisbury, Wiltshire. Following an education at Hampton School and Durham University, George began his teaching career in the state sector before moving to Lady Eleanor Holles School in 2007 as a Geography Teacher and later Assistant Senior Teacher, working on partnerships with local schools and outreach. In 2010, George moved to Sir William Perkins's School as Head of Geography and then Head of Sixth Form before joining Godolphin School as Deputy Head Academic in 2016.



Richard Devey is Head of the Senior School. Richard has worked at Gordonstoun for 28 years and over that time has had many roles including Head of Department, Housemaster, Head of Sixth Form and Deputy Head (Pastoral). Most recently he has led on Gordonstoun's exciting franchise expansion plans, including new campuses in China and Canada. His wife, Joanne, also works at Gordonstoun and both their children have passed through the School. He is an avid sportsman and has been a proud member of the School's Fire Service for almost 25 years.



Victoria Eastman is International Director at Moreton Hall. After teaching German and EAL in various Shropshire schools, Victoria joined Moreton Hall as Head of EAL in 2006 when they set up their International Study Centre. She was Head of the ISC for 10 years and since 2016 has been responsible for all Moreton Hall's international student recruitment. She is also closely involved in running their annual Summer School and developing new courses and programmes. The most recent project she was involved in was the founding of their first school in China, a pre-prep school in Pujiang, China.



Shaun Fenton has been Head of Reigate Grammar School (RGS) since September 2012. Prior to RGS he led Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham and Sir John Lawes School, Hertfordshire. Educated at The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School and Keble College, Oxford, Shaun briefly worked in the commercial world before returning to Oxford in 1993 to complete a PGCE and gained the degree of Master of Education in School Leadership. In addition, he holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship. During the academic year 2018-2019 Shaun held the post of Chair of HMC.



Peter Green became the 40th Head Master of Rugby School in 2014. From September this year he will become the Executive Head Master of the Rugby Group of Schools, which includes Rugby School, its Prep school, Bilton Grange, and Rugby School Thailand. Rugby School Japan was announced last year and will join the Rugby Group when it opens in 2022. Further sister schools are being planned to open in the coming years. Peter read Geography at the University of Edinburgh and began his career at St Olave's Grammar School in Orpington. Following six years at Strathallan in Scotland he became a Housemaster at Uppingham and then Second Master at Ampleforth. In 2007, he became the Headmaster of Ardingly College. Peter was a member of the HMC Committee from 2010-14 and has been a Governor of Worth since 2014. His interests are singing, Rugby Football and the Church.



Mark Hanley-Browne is Chief Executive of the Alpha Plus Group. He graduated with a degree in Natural Sciences from Oxford University before going to Cambridge University to study for his PGCE. He is an experienced educationalist, having taught at Sevenoaks School, Charterhouse School and Highgate School before becoming Head of Emanuel School in South London. He held this post for thirteen years, leading the school through a period of very successful development and making it one of the most popular schools in the capital. Mark has created partnerships with schools in the USA and in China and worked with the United Westminster Schools Foundation.



Lisa Kerr has a degree in Music, a twenty year career in media and business and ten years on the Gordonstoun Board of Governors, Lisa became Principal in 2017. She has three young children, all at the school, often rides her bike to work, conducts a local choir and occasionally joins the school orchestra when they are short of a cellist.



Pam Mundy most recent executive roles include; Consultant Director for Dar Al Marefa School, Dubai, Chief Academic Officer for Knightsbridge Schools International and Director for Quality Assurance and Professional Development for World Class Learning (now part of the Nord Anglia Education Group) based in Houston, Texas. Pam serves on the following boards: ACS International Schools (as non-Executive Director, Trustee and Chair of the Education Committee), the Knightsbridge School, London, Dukes and Little Dukes Education Groups. She is also Chair of the Chatmore International Schools Board, Bermuda. She sits on a variety of international Ministry of Education Committees and ground-breaking international educational research groups.

Pam provides consultancy to many of the world's leading school and education groups, UK multi-academy Trusts, independent and international schools on strategic planning, leadership, development and expansion. She also provides advice and guidance to 'start up' schools on brokering and securing investment, selecting partnerships and works on a wide variety of high net worth education development projects.



Dr Maghin Tamilarasan is responsible for overseeing the interface with Shrewsbury's international sister schools in Thailand and Hong Kong, identifying and executing new business development opportunities and establishing wider global links.

Prior to joining Shrewsbury School he held a number of senior roles in industry covering global strategy, business development, operations and technology, most recently with Rolls-Royce plc.

Maghin grew up in the UK, the Middle East and India. He is married with two young daughters and in his spare time he loves to travel to remote parts of the World and attempts to keep fit through cycling, yoga and playing tennis.



Amy Wevill manages executive and non-executive searches, leads on roundtables and events and heads Wild Research, the publishing and advisory division. Amy has a background in international research and programming high-level events, most recently at Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs). She has continued her interest and research into the international view of British education since 2012. Amy has a Public Policy MA from King's College London and a History of Art BA from University College London.



Edward Wild established Wild Search in 2010 following his earlier career in executive search with two established businesses. He has advised a wide range of education organisations and charities since 2004 on appointments and strategic planning. Prior to that he was the Development Director of Hampton School and author of its history.

His early career was pursued in education as a teacher within day schools and national and international charities as both a volunteer and a fundraising specialist. A trustee of a range of educational charities since 2003, he is a trustee of the Royal School of Church Music.

About Wild Search

Wild Search is an established, well-connected and innovative executive search and advisory company, specialising in education. Our team provides extensive sector knowledge and brings a formidable and constantly evolving network of contacts to every search.

Celebrating our tenth anniversary this year, our market knowledge, network and the Wild Search community are constantly evolving through a combination of searches, reports and events. Our work has encompassed advising on the appointment of executive and non-executive appointments for a range of organisations, primarily in the education and charity sectors.

We have also worked with boards to develop new roles and secured shortlists for them.

We are firmly committed to providing strong methodology, a rigorous approach, thorough research, imaginative thinking, in addition to clear and candid advice. We combine transparency with a sharp focus on the key requirements for each client for every position.

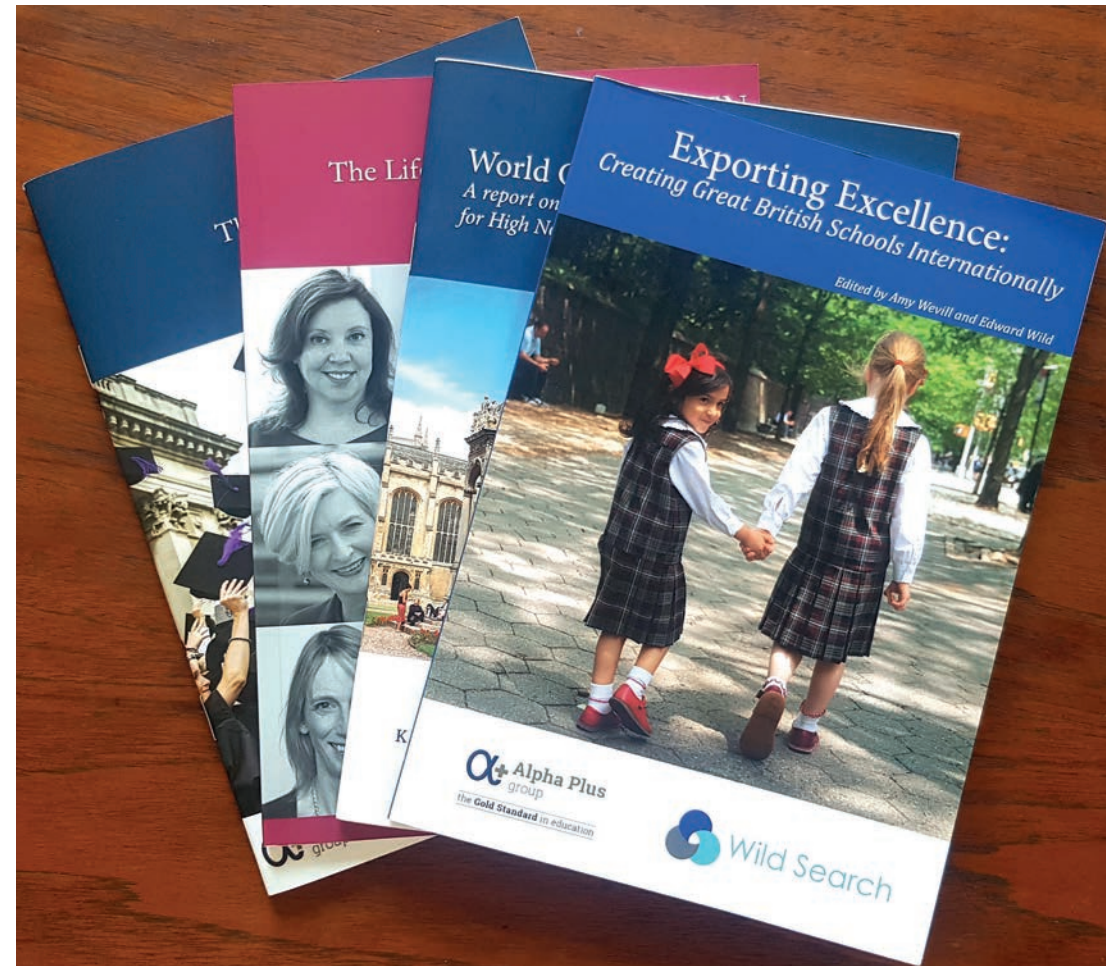


About Wild Research

Wild Research was formed in 2011 and has since published 27 reports. The majority of the reports focus on education, but others relate to charities, housing and development and the rural economy. In order to further our understanding of our clients' needs and outlook, we seek to evolve and improve our knowledge of the issues they face and challenges that lie ahead.

By contacting and interviewing experts and practitioners in each field, we aim to improve our insight, share best practice and provide new perspectives.

Wild Research welcomes ideas for reports and commissions from clients to highlight new developments and challenges within a business or sector.



About the Alpha Plus Group

The Alpha Plus Group seeks to deliver the gold standard in education. It encourages every one of its schools to have its own distinctive ethos. The group also has common aims and values, wanting to see strong leadership in each of its schools, and providing training and support to the Heads and their Senior Management Team in order for this to happen. Effective partnerships with parents are crucial to the Group's ethos and culture. We want all our staff to place the welfare of the child at the heart of everything they do. The aim of the Group is to give every child in our care the best possible start in life.

The Alpha Plus Group currently consists of 20 schools and colleges. There are 3 nursery schools, 12 pre-preparatory and preparatory schools, 2 secondary schools and 3 sixth form colleges. APG is the largest private educational company in London (15 schools in the capital) and we also have schools and colleges in Cambridge, Manchester, Coventry and Hilden Grange in Tonbridge. Internationally APG has recently opened a school in New York (Wetherby-Pembridge School).

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