



## MY SIXTH FORM

### BETHANY REEVES

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Bethany Reeves is an alumna of Putney High School. She was awarded an organ scholarship to read music at Brasenose College, Oxford, and is now in her second year of study.

At Putney, Bethany was captain of a number of sports teams and in the sixth form became Deputy Head Girl, House Music Captain and Senior Tennis Captain. She plays a similarly active role in the community at Oxford, playing in various musical ensembles and representing the Oxford University Tennis Club and college netball team.

Bethany plays eleven instruments, with grade 8 distinction in six of these, and holds an ATCL piano recital diploma. She is a keen composer and has had her work performed by the Royal Opera House Orchestra and at the BAFTA awards. Bethany also regularly performs at the Edinburgh Fringe.

**H**aving been to a GDST school since the age of five, when I started sixth form at Putney High School I expected it to be the same as all the other years I had spent at Putney High. I'd had an amazing time up to Year 11, but sixth form opened up even more opportunities, bringing with it a significantly more mature and independent style of learning.

The biggest difference that I experienced between Year 11 and sixth form was that lessons became more like university seminars, with each student contributing their own ideas and the lessons becoming more discussion-based. Along with this came a more friendly relationship with my teachers, in which I felt as if we were in a reciprocal learning relationship, rather than one in which they tell me things and I purely listen. Of course, the shift from studying ten to three subjects was also a significant difference, but I quickly grew to love the fact that I could learn about my three favourite subjects in a lot more depth, and dedicate much more time to each one than I was able to at GCSE.

With music as my primary focus of study in sixth form, I really made use of the wealth of extra-curricular activities that were on offer. More than 30 extra-curricular groups for music alone ran each week; I was part of two orchestras, two choirs, an a cappella group, and two chamber ensembles. Aside from music, I played in the tennis and netball teams and got involved with teaching younger students who were struggling with certain subjects.



In addition to taking part in these clubs, I was also Deputy Head Girl, House Music Captain and a Sports Prefect. A high level of commitment was required for these activities, so I was careful to organise my time, in order to get the most out of my A level studies whilst still broadening my experience through clubs and positions of responsibility.

I think the extra-curricular side of sixth form is hugely important to the whole sixth form experience as it helps you to develop skills beyond the academic realm, as well as being a really enjoyable way to relax and make friends from other year groups.

Alongside extra-curricular activities, sixth form also offered a number of super-curricular activities such as "Hot Topic" sessions; a programme of talks which took discussion of subject-related topics beyond the A level syllabus. These sessions were designed to prepare us for university interviews and, moreover, for university education. I found them so helpful and they contributed hugely to our desire to look deeper into our chosen university subject.

For me, I knew I wanted to study music at university from a very young age, but lots of my friends at school were unsure about what they wanted to go on to do after sixth form. The teachers were all really helpful with this and were always willing to have a chat about possible university options, as well as the option of attending

art colleges, going straight into employment or apprenticeships, or taking a gap year.

When it came to applying to universities, we were lucky enough to get plenty of guidance in terms of both the application and interview processes. The seminar-style lessons, numerous mock interviews and UCAS advice sessions all helped to support us through the application process, meaning when I got to the stage of staying in Oxford for a few days for my interviews, I felt really well prepared. Rather than dreading the interviews, I was looking forward to them!

I enjoyed my whole sixth form experience so much, and am extremely grateful for where it has got me. I am so thankful to all the inspiring teachers who always made time for us to make sure we were having the best time possible - both in terms of our academic studies and our general welfare and happiness.

I made such great friends at Putney High, as well as developing really good relationships with my teachers, and it provided a very smooth transition from Year 11 to university. I am really happy here at Oxford and am enjoying getting stuck into all the extra-curricular things the university has on offer, as well as spending time learning about the thing I love the most. I do really miss sixth form though and sometimes wish that I could just click my fingers and go back!

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