



the agency  
for education

QUICK TIPS

## EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MARKETING



# Making sure your marketing **hits the mark** every time

Effective school marketing relies on a wide range of factors working well together. Essentially though, it's simple. You need to be presenting the right messages and image to the right people at the right time. By incorporating the following simple ideas into how your school is marketed and therefore perceived, it will make you appeal to greater numbers, and more of the families that are the perfect fit for your school.



## **TIP 1. Focus all your activities**

You can never be all things to all people. Neither should you try to be. In reality, every school is different and should play to its own unique strengths. Try to appeal to families who share your values and are looking for exactly what you offer, and don't worry about those who are looking for a different style of school. Focus on families who fit with your ethos.

## **TIP 2. Explain exactly why you are unique**

Be very clear about what makes your school unique. Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet. In which of the following areas do you excel? Reputation — are you centuries old and steeped in tradition? Do you have famous alumni? Teaching style — what's special about the way you teach? Are you especially progressive or more conservative in style? And finally, what personality does your school have? Take stock of your brand and always play to your strengths.

## **TIP 3. Is your brand clear?**

Your school has a brand just as much as any corporation, and your brand can be identified as the sum total of facts, emotions and associations conjured up by the mention of your name. Working out what your brand is and articulating it is crucial in achieving effective and compelling marketing messages. These in turn will enable you to appeal to the right families.

## **TIP 4. What's your story?**

Work on your elevator pitch or mission statement. This is a very brief summary of what makes your school special. It should be descriptive, clear and honest, appealing on an emotional as well as a factual level. It should also sound natural and informal, so all staff feel comfortable delivering it. An effective elevator pitch is a great conversation opener and should always leave the recipient wanting to know more.

## **TIP 5. Break away from the pack**

It can be very difficult for prospective families to understand the subtle differences between the schools they are considering. The reason for this is that all schools tend to use the same language and bland, safe, clichéd marketing ideas. Parents need to grasp instantly your differences from all of your communications, and this needs powerful messages that they can immediately identify with.

## **TIP 6. Involve and train your stakeholders**

Everyone connected to your school is a stakeholder, and they should all be familiar with the school messages and brand, so that they can represent you when they have contact with potential families.

## **TIP 7. Tailor your communications to your audience**

Make sure potential pupils hear about school life; potential parents hear about what they're getting for their money and how happy their children are; and make sure existing parents hear about how they've definitely made the right choice for their child's education.

## **TIP 8. Make it personal**

Nothing is more valuable to your school than stories of your current and former students and teachers. When at all possible, allow members of your community to share their own stories in their own words, perhaps in essays or short videos posted to your website.

## **TIP 9. Keep it visual**

Images are the first things people see and the first emotional reaction they have to your school, so make sure your website and school literature contains high quality photographs, videos and design elements that truly represent your brand. Judge your visuals objectively. Imagine you're seeing them for the first time. What do they say about your school.

## **TIP 10. Be consistent**

Once you've agreed on your messaging stick to it! Repetition is the best way to communicate who you are, and it will stick with your prospective parents. It's also easy to go off on a tangent with different design styles. Again, everything you do from a sign to a prospectus should be the same look and feel to ensure that it is easily identifiable with your school.

In a highly competitive environment, schools need to become more aware about how they market themselves. These tips are only a quick overview, but will hopefully help as a start point when you consider your marketing in the future.

# Who are The Agency for Education?

The Agency for Education are specialists in design, branding, marketing, graphic design, advertising and digital media for schools, academies, colleges and universities. We can produce everything you need to market your school, enhance your school's environment or communicate with pupils, students, parents and the wider world.

From a one-off project to a complete brand review, we can advise you at a strategic level, creating bespoke marketing and communications designed to deliver results.

Because we appreciate every school is different, we approach each prospectus design with a fresh pair of eyes. We always strive to produce a guide to your school that is different, vibrant and that really sets you apart.

We have produced many prospectuses that have hit the mark for a very varied collection of schools from large independent schools to academies. A few case studies are included here, but if you would like see more of our work visit [www.theagencyforeducation.co.uk](http://www.theagencyforeducation.co.uk). Alternatively, if you would like a no obligation chat about any school marketing project, just contact us today on 0121 224 8300 or email [info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk](mailto:info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk)



# Big ideas for George Dixon Academy

**CLIENT**

George Dixon Academy | Birmingham

**PROJECT**

Sixth Form Prospectus

**SERVICES**

- Brand Strategy
- Identity
- Design for Print
- Copywriting
- Print production

George Dixon Academy (GDA) needed help to position the Sixth Form more effectively within the school community and address declining numbers. GDA want the Sixth Form becomes the natural pathway for pupils through the school, but a reduction in applications suggests that more could be done to improve perception, communication and profile within GDA.

The Agency were commissioned to develop the brand and communication material to give the Sixth Form its own character within the school. Based on the results of research we conducted with staff and pupils, we developed a brand and messaging structure that would form the basis for all future communications, internally and externally.

The concept we developed really told GDA's story. "The small sixth form that thinks big" reflected their huge achievements often against a very challenging backdrop. We created a fresh and vibrant new identity and a conceptual 'prospectus' that told their story in a compelling visual and physical way, with the large format style.



# PS Sixth. In tune with the students.

## CLIENT

Prior's Field School | Surrey

## PROJECT

Sixth Form Prospectus

## SERVICES

Brand Development

Identity

Web design

Design for Print

Copywriting

Print production

Prior's Field Sixth form was losing out to competitor colleges because pupils at the independent Prior's Field Girls School that traditionally fed the Sixth Form, felt that the competing colleges were much 'cooler' and more appealing. Prior's Field Sixth needed to make changes to brand perception and communicate their difference to retain and grow pupil numbers.

We choose music and Apple products as the source of inspiration for the brand strap line and the style of the associated marketing material as we felt that this would truly resonate with the intended audience. We created a mini prospectus that was done to resemble an iPod classic along the positioning line "In Tune With You". It folded out and focussed the key differentials that we had identified.

We didn't feel a full blown prospectus would be a good use of resources or as well received. Instead, we focussed on what was most relevant in the mind of the pupils from the research undertaken and succinctly presented the information. We created document folders that were designed to look and feel like Apple laptops, creating the windows on the 'screen' to house key school statements. These were incredibly well received and used flexibly throughout the sixth form.



# St John's. In their own words.

**CLIENT**

St John's School | Essex

**PROJECT**

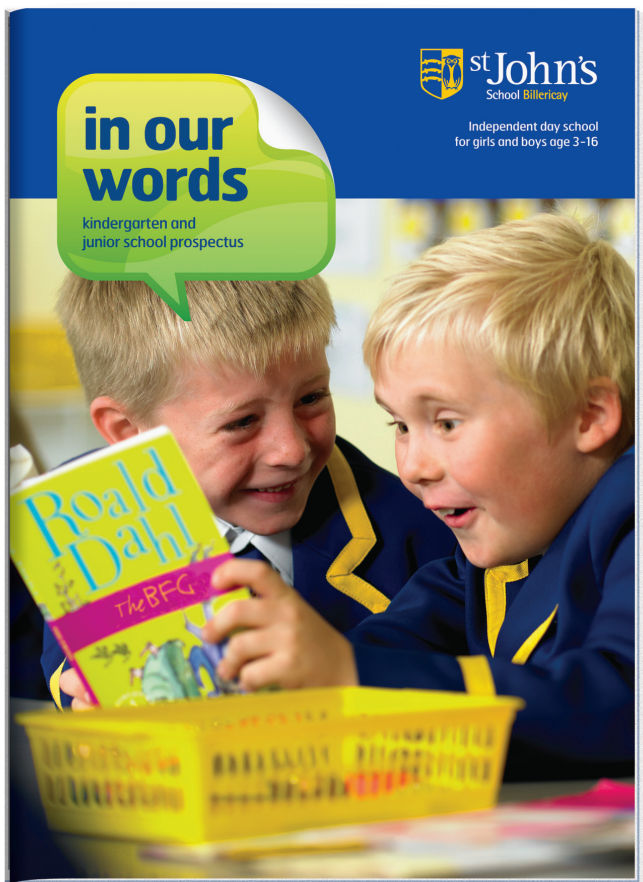
Junior & Senior Prospectus'

**SERVICES**

- Brand Strategy & Development
- Identity
- Web design
- Design for Print
- Advertising
- Copywriting
- Direct Mail
- Print production

St John's is co-educational independent day school founded in 1928 with a long and proud history by offering their pupils a blend of academic excellence in a caring environment. The school was facing a decline in pupil numbers to larger, better known schools locally. This was predominantly due to its perception and lack of visibility in the local area. The Agency created a brand and marketing campaign to combat both issues head on.

The repositioning of the school built on its core ethos of nurturing happy, individual high achievers formed the cornerstone of a compelling and powerful campaign. The prospectus' were based on a testimonials book in the bursar's office spotted during one of our many visits to St John's. The book contained numerous emotional, heartfelt thankyou letters and postcards from both parents and pupils some of whom had a very challenging time before they attended the school. This was the diamond we always look for, and became the foundation of the powerful prospectus where the story of the school is told "In their own words".







the agency  
for education

**Inspired  
thinking.**

**Outstanding  
creative.**

**Exceptional  
results.**

**We are not 'just another design company'.**

From strategic brand consultancy and marketing to compelling advertising campaigns that deliver results across all channels, we have the perfect blend of commercial acumen and creative genius to help you. Whatever it takes, we deliver – on budget, on time and always way above expectation.



**The Agency for Education** is a sub brand  
The Agency Brand Consultancy Limited

Studio 20, Fazeley Studios,  
101 Fazeley Street,  
Birmingham B5 5SE

t: 0121 224 8300

[info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk](mailto:info@theagencyforeducation.co.uk)

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



**the agency**  
for education

All materials contained within this document are copyright of The Agency Brand Consultancy Limited and cannot be reproduced or used in any form without permission of The Agency.

A full version of terms and conditions can be found on our website.



**the agency**

[www.theagencylimited.com](http://www.theagencylimited.com)

