



case study

Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School

Preparatory & Senior Flexible Learning Case Study



The School.

Traditional heritage with a modern approach.

The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School is one of the leading Preparatory and Senior boys schools in England and was named The Sunday Times Independent Secondary School of the Year in 2017. The school campus is situated within 100 acres of woodland and parkland in Hertfordshire, less than 15 miles from Central London.

Renowned for innovation, pedagogical development, outstanding teachers and highly motivated students, there is a strong belief these combined principles underpin the success of the school - creating an enriching environment.

When refurbishing the Preparatory and Senior school classrooms, the School looked for a partner who shared these values and was equally at the forefront of their field. Haberdashers discovered VS Furniture in 2014 and have built a highly successful relationship ever since.





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Q&A.

With Senior Deputy Head John Maguire.

What was the criteria for new classroom furniture for both the Preparatory and Senior schools?

A core principle we've established within the School is that the learning environment must support teaching and learning and not hinder the process in any way. The furniture within our classrooms needed to be flexible, easily moved, comfortable and promote learning. In the Preparatory school, VS met the criteria with Tri-tables, allowing easy movement before and during a learning activity. In addition, PantoMove chairs provided active mobile seating, whilst being very comfortable.

We wanted teachers to be able to switch between pedagogical techniques within a lesson - moving from whole class transmission to group work, for example. It was important the furniture layout and classroom design could be easily changed within a lesson to support the different teaching methods. VS furniture met this criteria and actually encouraged further experimentation.

Another important criteria was durability. The cost of furniture is often mistakenly misinterpreted because depreciation is not considered. The School wanted durable and well manufactured furniture which could withstand the trials of a busy school with over 1400 students, long-term.



When and how did you initially discover VS?

Word of mouth and personal recommendation is always the most powerful marketing for any company. In 2014, the School was conducting empirical research into the impact of the classroom environment on student learning. Another school in London recommended VS furniture, advocating they were at the leading edge of classroom furniture design, which stoked our interest.





The ergonomic design and movement mechanism of the PantoMove chair really does improve posture and provide superior back support for students.



You were invited to visit the VS showroom and manufacturing plant in Germany. Please tell us what specifically convinced you that our products were the right choice for your school?

You don't need to be at the VS showroom and manufacturing plant for long to be impressed! It was immediately obvious the company is at the forefront of innovation and design to support learning within schools – which was highly attractive for us as an innovative school ourselves.

We were also impressed by the professionalism and dedication of all the staff at VS. Everyone believed in the products and aligned to the core company values. This is infectious as a customer – you want to be part of it. Equally, the efficiency and environment sensitivity of the company is highly appealing. VS has strong ethical beliefs which is clear in their systems for recycling, reusing and energy production.

Were there any initial concerns regarding the flexibility and ergonomics of the furniture, from the teacher and student perspectives?

The PantoMove 3D chairs were very different to anything the School had purchased before. We initially fitted out just one classroom, which was occupied by a highly sceptical teacher. Within a very short space of time, that same teacher was advocating how brilliant the furniture was and reporting positive feedback from the students! That for me, is the mark of outstanding design.

Based on this initial trial, we then installed the PantoMove 3D chairs into all our classrooms with very positive teacher responses. The ergonomic design and movement mechanism really does improve posture and provide superior back support for students,



compared to anything else we've used. This combination of flexibility and comfort also aids concentration significantly.

Now the schools have had time to realise the full flexible learning potential of the furniture, can you provide some insight into your experiences?

One important point to make is that there must be a willingness to experiment with furniture layout within the classroom. For example, in our Prep school, the teachers wanted to take full advantage of the various Tri-table configurations, so set a rule that classroom layout must be changed regularly – at the very least once a day. If we'd just introduced VS furniture to teaching staff resistant to change, the flexible benefits would be lost and it wouldn't have worked so well.

Even once a culture of innovation and experimentation is established, there needs to be some additional coaching for staff to utilise the full potential the furniture. Establishing protocols, encouraging flexibility and providing classroom layout options that illustrate pedagogical value are all vital for ultimate success.

Our experiences with VS have always been highly positive. The products are outstanding both in design and manufacturing quality. As yet, we have had no breakages, nor any other issues at all. In conclusion, we couldn't be happier with the end result.





The Furniture.

VS - our flexible learning focus.

Creating a flexible learning environment. What does that actually mean?

Firstly, it's important to challenge conventional thought on what a learning environment is, or should be. Traditionally, classrooms with uniform rows of desks, facing the teacher out front, has been the accepted format for many decades. It is a very 'one-dimensional' approach to teaching - effective for some, but not for others. The reality is, we all absorb information and learn in very different ways.

Some like to study in groups, some prefer solitude. Some learners like theory and abstract concepts, whilst others prefer a practical, hands-on approach. Some like to read, some prefer more visual media. There are a whole variety of learner needs that must be met in order for each individual student to benefit equally from education. Recognising how our bodies and minds work in harmony with the environment is vital to achieving this.

Our Shift+ range of educational furniture opens up real learning opportunities. It is designed to fully support modern teaching and learning practices, as stipulated by the curriculum. Studies show that static, inflexible educational furniture often imposes severe restrictions on teachers and learners alike - inhibiting successful academic results.

At VS, our focus is to provide multiple options to change classroom furniture layout quickly and efficiently - allowing the varied teaching methods and unique learning styles to shine for each and every scenario.









The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School
Preparatory School
Nurturing Excellence

Welcome



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