



# BISHOPSTROW COLLEGE

A pathway to excellence



## 1 Year IGCSE Programme Case Study – Olena Bordakova (Olenka)

*Olena Bordakova started at Bishopstrow in the summer of 2016, ahead of enrolling on the College's 1 Year IGCSE Programme. Here, Olenka shares her perspectives on life at Bishopstrow over the past year.*

### 1. Where were you studying before Bishopstrow?

Before Bishopstrow, I was a student of a lyceum school in my home town (in Ukraine).

### 2. What were the main reasons why you chose to enrol at Bishopstrow?

I was interested in finding out about new cultures and getting to know other people, as well as using the opportunity to study abroad and to understand what the British education system is like.

### 3. What subjects are you studying?

I am on the 1 Year IGCSE Programme and am studying towards 8 IGCSEs - English as a Second Language, Mathematics, Statistics, Science (double award), Business Studies, Geography and History.

### 4. What happens in a typical day?

We get up when the bell goes off and hope not to be late for breakfast, as we only have 15 minutes for our morning routine. Then I am looking forward to a long day full of lessons and breaks in between. This is followed by a session of sports and a prep (homework) session after dinner. The days are pretty tiring, but bedtime is at 10.00pm, so there is a lot of time to feel fresh for the next day!

### 5. What about the weekends? What do you do on Saturday and Sunday?

The most significant thing about Saturday mornings are the tests prepared by the teachers beforehand. These tests are used to determine our progress. In the afternoon, we get a chance to go into town (Warminster or Bath) for some shopping etc. Sundays are always full of trips to exciting places, such as Bath, London, Bristol, Winchester, Oxford etc. These are both interest-developing and amusing!

### 6. What is the boarding accommodation like at Bishopstrow?

The boarding accommodation at Bishopstrow is very comfortable and designed to bring people together, as there are no single rooms. This encourages us to talk to each other and therefore improve our English. The rooms are very nice. I particularly like the boards (on the wall) by our beds, where we can stick pictures, photos of family etc.

### 7. What about the food? How would you describe the meals and quality of the food?

The food at the College is amazing. It is hard for me to remember a time when I would have missed a meal! Sometimes I feel like I have eaten too much, but this is only because the diet provided is well-balanced, so that every time I eat, I feel full afterwards!



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**8. Did you have a 'destination school' organised when you arrived at Bishopstrow?**

I did not. I only had a list of potential schools that I intended to visit. The College helped compile this list.

**9. Can you explain which schools you considered for sixth form entry and why?**

The schools I particularly liked were Queen Anne's School Caversham and Cheltenham Ladies College. After visiting these schools, I felt like one of these two schools would be an ideal destination, due to what people were like and the atmosphere, which was very friendly in both cases.

**10. How did you find the entrance exams and interviews for these schools?**

To be honest, this was the most stressful part of the year for me. I was so nervous that no one (school) would take me, but the results (in terms of offers received) were fantastic. What I can say is that sometimes it is good to be nervous, but it is also important to have some degree of confidence in yourself.

**11. Which schools made you an offer?**

I only took the complete set of examinations for two schools. I received offers from both Queen Anne's School Caversham and Cheltenham Ladies College.

**12. Which school will you be joining? Why did you choose this school?**

I will be joining Cheltenham Ladies College in September 2017. This College impressed me the most and it was so very different to the other schools that I visited. I feel like it will be hard work, but one of the reasons that I choose 'CLC' is to challenge myself!

**13. What has been the biggest challenge in moving from Ukraine to study at a British boarding school?**

Before coming to Bishopstrow, I had never been so far away from my home for such a long period of time. This has probably been the hardest challenge, as it is not easy to talk to my friends or parents whenever I want, now that I have a busy life at Bishopstrow. However, I have gradually got used to it, which is how it should be.

**14. What has been the best thing about Bishopstrow? What have you enjoyed the most?**

There are so many things that I enjoy at the College that it is almost impossible to choose just one! However, what has impressed me most has been the staff's attitude towards the students. Both the teachers and boarding staff are very friendly and outgoing. They are always ready to support me and give me advice. They are fun to be with and I will never forget them!

**15. How has Bishopstrow helped in your transition from a school in Ukraine to getting an offer at your destination school?**

The College suggested about 8 schools (to my guardian) to initially consider. As far as I know, the College was very helpful in terms of organising documents and the entrance examinations for these schools. Bishopstrow also helped me improve my English significantly – I could never have hoped for such an improvement on my own. This helped me adapt to a new place with people who mostly speak only English.



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**16. Would you recommend Bishopstrow to other international students looking to secure entry into a top boarding school?**

I would sincerely recommend Bishopstrow to any international student who has the chance to come and study here in the UK. It is a wonderful place. At Bishopstrow, it is possible to improve your English and your knowledge of other academic subjects as well. You will learn a lot of cultural things and will enjoy making new friends and talking to them in another language. This will make you feel very proud of yourself! The College will also help you become more independent and careful with your time. You will get the opportunity to challenge yourself in different areas, including sports and studying. The only reason not to consider Bishopstrow is if you are fearful of new adventures!