



*"Everything you can imagine is real"* Pablo Picasso

*Imagination* – a word we take for granted. Yet *imagination* is a crucial ingredient for anyone wanting a prospectus. In our experience too many solutions are little more than photographic dialogues. A photographic documentary fails to inspire and can often convey the wrong message.

As prospectus designers we see it as our job to convey the spirit and life of a school to the reader. It is important not to dwell on the landscape or the buildings but more on the individual qualities of the school that enable it to empower children with confidence. We have worked with a large number of schools who all want to convey their school as special. In the end all good schools claim similar underlying objectives and share an identical syllabus. The difficult part is identifying that special ingredient that distinguishes a particular school from others. When JWA are commissioned to undertake a new prospectus we will take many hundreds of photographs to fully familiarise ourselves with its character. Imagination is present at all stages, from the style of the photograph to the style and co-ordination of the prospectus. We take pride in taking pictures that are not contrived, but are taken from real situations, which enables us to capture the true spirit of the school.

Perhaps the most important factor is to identify and feature the school's salient points. Most schools take pride in the self-motivated independent students they help to form yet so frequently their prospectuses fail to reflect the unique character of the school. It may be wishful thinking but surely there must be an advantage if the publication at least gives a clue of the real energy and aspirations of school. We have come across hardy stylised solutions which may be better suited to faceless annual report material than the portrayal the vitality and unique character of the school.

In our view a good prospectus will effectively stimulate interest, enough to encourage the reader to find out more. *Imagination* comes into play here because if the prospectus can convey mental images in a compelling way then we have fulfilled our brief.

That's why at JWA each prospectus we design is driven by creativity, certainly a formula that many schools have found crucial in their marketing strategy. The prospectus is not dead; it has not been leapfrogged by DVDs or websites. It still has and will have a crucial role in compelling new candidates to visit your school. Quite how it does that makes all the difference. We like to think at JWA we go beyond the role of producing prospectuses but find the very best qualities of each school and make them come alive!

For more information, or to discuss our work further, please contact Lisa Bretherick at JWA.

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