BREXIT FALLOUT

Mark Beverley, director of curriculum at Sevenoaks, defends the IB, arguing that an international qualification is as relevant now as it ever has been.

The IB diploma programme caters to this desire very well. Unaffiliated to any government agenda, it has remained relatively stable and aspirational when competing qualification systems have been undermined by compromise and the caprice of successive governments. It is an internationally understood and valued qualification and, with a mix of nationalities and cultures naturally gravitating toward it, an IB school or classroom is a melting pot of viewpoints, hotly debated in a safe environment.

Academic freedom is actively supported and encouraged in the IB, which is known for providing opportunities in interdisciplinary teaching and learning. At Sevenoaks we do not find rigid demarcation between different subject areas particularly helpful; in fact it is often in the interstices between subjects where we find the most interesting ideas. Similarly, across the school and curriculum we find an approach of "both/and" more productive than one of "either/or". This inclusive attitude prepares students well for undergraduate studies.

Universities understand and trust the IB Diploma. When our students leave Sevenoaks they join top universities in the UK, the US and around the world, taking with them an internationally recognised and valued qualification. This is of particular importance, not only because of Brexit, but also because the UK national education system is undergoing seismic change at every level. The IB remains a gold standard of education that opens doors internationally as easily as it does at home. With the UK potentially standing on its own in the European landscape, a qualification such as the IB could become the common educational currency, making international higher education more accessible to those with the IB Diploma than those with A-levels.

It is too soon to assess the political and cultural impact of Brexit; however it is heartening to note that three quarters of 18 to 24-year-olds voted to remain, demonstrating their commitment and desire to be part of a bigger international set-up.

The young people who study the IB will share this desire, and with the IB’s focus on global citizenship, we can rest assured that they will inevitably make for model Europeans. In light of Brexit, our view is that education in the UK needs to become more European in its outlook in order for our teenagers to prosper in an increasingly global community.