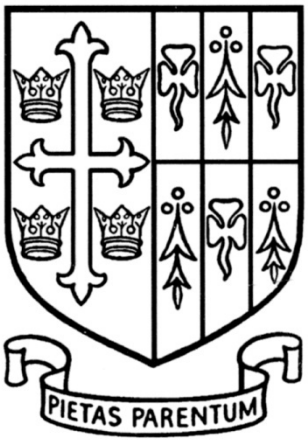
ST EDWARD'S OXFORD



14+ ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

For entry in 2016

ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour

Candidate's name: . . . . . .

Answers should be written on lined paper.

The first **10 minutes** should be spent reading the text in Section A.

- Section A asks you to analyse a prose passage.
- Section B is a creative writing task.

You are advised to spend just under **25 minutes** on each section. Use the last few minutes to read over what you have written and correct any mistakes. The quality of your writing will be assessed in both sections.

SECTION A: READING

The following passage is the opening to the novel *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. The narrator is dreaming about a mansion house called Manderley.

> Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me. There was a padlock and chain upon the gate. I called in my dream to the lodge-keeper, and had no answer, and peering closer through the rusted spokes of the gate I saw that the lodge was uninhabited.
>
> No smoke came from the chimney, and the little lattice windows gaped forlorn. Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me. The drive wound away in front of me, twisting and turning as it had always done, but as I advanced I was aware that a change had come upon it; it was narrow and unkempt, not the drive that we had known. At first I was puzzled and did not understand, and it was only when I bent my head to avoid the low swinging branch of a tree that I realised what had happened. Nature had come into her own again and, little by little, in her stealthy, insidious way had encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers. The woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end. They crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive. The beeches with white, naked limbs leant close to one another, their branches intermingled in a strange embrace, making a vault above my head like the archway of a church. And there were other trees as well, trees that I did not recognise, squat oaks and tortured elms that straggled cheek by jowl with the beeches, and had thrust themselves out of the quiet earth, along with monster shrubs and plants, none of which I remembered.
>
> The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss. The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; the gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws. Scattered here and again amongst this jungle growth I would recognise shrubs that had been landmarks in our time, things of culture and grace, hydrangeas whose blue heads had been famous. No hand had checked their progress, and they had gone native now, rearing to monster height without a bloom, black and ugly as the nameless parasites that grew beside them.
>
> On and on, now east now west, wound the poor thread that once had been our drive. Sometimes I thought it lost, but it appeared again, beneath a fallen tree perhaps, or struggling on the other side of a muddied ditch created by the winter rains. I had not thought the way so long. Surely the miles had multiplied, even as the trees had done, and this path led but to a labyrinth, some choked wilderness, and not to the house at all.
>
> I came upon it suddenly; the approach masked by the unnatural growth of a vast shrub that spread in all directions, and I stood, my heart thumping in my breast, the strange prick of tears behind my eyes.
>
> There was Manderley, our Manderley, secretive and silent as it had always been, the grey stone shining in the moonlight of my dream, the mullioned windows reflecting the green lawns and the terrace. Time could not wreck the perfect symmetry of those walls, nor the site itself, a jewel in the hollow of a hand.

Answer the following questions in full sentences written in clear, precise English. Spend about **25 minutes** altogether on this section.

1. Using your own words as far as possible, describe what the narrator sees in her dream. [5]
2. How does Daphne du Maurier emphasise the wild nature of the garden in the narrator's dream? Remember to use examples of language from the passage to illustrate your ideas. [10]
3. How does Daphne du Maurier show the narrator's feelings towards the mansion house in the opening to this novel? Consider a range of examples and literary techniques in your answer. [10]

[Total for Section A: 25 marks]

SECTION B: WRITING

Choose ONE of the following tasks.

Marks will be awarded for originality, clarity and vocabulary, as well as spelling and punctuation. Take a few minutes to plan before you begin writing.

EITHER

1. Think of a place you know well. Imagine it appears in one of your dreams, but is changed from how you usually know it. Describe the changes in this place and how they make you feel.

OR

2. Describe in detail one object from your past, explaining why it is significant to you.

Spend about **25 minutes** on this task.

[Total for Section B: 25 marks]