



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS





“At HGS, everybody is so welcoming.”

YEAR 7 STUDENT

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL.

I am delighted that you are considering Hitchin Girls' School for your child's secondary experience and that you may be joining our school community. In my third year of Headship, having previously held the role of Deputy Headteacher for ten years, I can confidently say that our school possesses an incredibly strong ethos; the environment is familial and supportive, and we value each other. We embrace innovation whilst being aware of our history and traditions. We are diverse and inclusive yet have a strong identity. Learning, for students and staff alike, is at the heart of all we do, creating a vibrant atmosphere where high-quality learning can take place and the whole school can thrive. Central to all of this are our core values of aspiration, perseverance, kindness, respect and positivity - all of which are underpinned by our community, families and relationships.

Hitchin Girls' is a high-performing school, graded Outstanding by Ofsted, where we offer an exceptional experience for all of our students. We pride ourselves on the teaching and learning we deliver and the level of care and support we provide for the entire school community.

We are a fully inclusive school and are aspirational for our young people, both academically and also in terms of their personal, social, emotional and moral development. We encourage them to

acquire independence and resilience throughout their years with us and support them to be lifelong learners.

We are very proud of our academic successes over many years and celebrate the fact that students of all abilities make excellent progress and achieve great outcomes. However, academic attainment forms just part of the story, and we offer a wealth of opportunities for extracurricular learning experiences, clubs and activities, which instil so many of the qualities and skills needed by our students in the future.

We work hard and play hard at Hitchin Girls' School and our expectation is that everyone will try their best in all that they do. The very highest standards of conduct, respect, effort and personal attainment are the goal for all members of our school community. Our school is friendly and wholly supportive of all its members, with the result that many of our students refer to it as a family.

This prospectus is intended to give you some important information about us, but cannot capture the day-to-day life and experience of the school. Please take time to visit our website and Virtual Open Event page for more information, and if you would like to visit us in person, please get in touch and we will do our best to accommodate you. If you have any questions please contact us.



JAMES CROWTHER HEADTEACHER



Past, present & future

Sharing the same seventeenth-century origins as Hitchin Boys' School, Hitchin Girls' School opened in the nineteenth century as a fee-paying day and boarding grammar school. It moved from Bancroft in the town centre to its present site on Highbury Road in 1907. The County Council took overall responsibility for the school following the 1944 Education Act. The last boarders left in 1960 and the school became a non-selective community school in 1974 for students aged 11 to 18.

We were appointed a Specialist Science School in 2004 and converted to Academy status in 2011. We are proud to hold the Hertfordshire Mental Health Kitemark, the Leadership Skills Foundation Centre of Excellence status, Investor in Careers Award and the CPD Mark in recognition of our high-quality staff development programme. Hitchin Girls' School is an Ofsted Outstanding-rated school. The full Ofsted report can be found on our school website and the Ofsted website. In December 2019, following an assessment process involving some of our students, we were awarded World Class Schools status, and we were re-accredited as World Class in 2022.

Hitchin Girls' School is the lead school in the North Herts Educational Partnership as a strategic partner of the Albans Hub. The partnership works in collaboration with North Hertfordshire schools to deliver staff Professional Development and National Professional Qualifications (NPQ), and support Early Career Framework training for new teachers.

The school is oversubscribed every year. It works closely with many local primary schools in a variety of schemes, including our Sixth Form Community Ambassadors who work in a number of our feeder schools, and Learning Leaders who support departments within schools.

Our Sixth Form is very successful, sharing teaching with Hitchin Boys' School and The Priory School as part of our longstanding Hitchin Post-16 Consortium. We also share in the celebration of Founders' Day with Hitchin Boys' School.

An exceptional education for all

Hitchin Girls' School is committed to giving every student a broad education and developing their individual talents to the full, in preparation for the demands of the outside world. In doing so, we respect the different religious and cultural backgrounds of the whole school community.

We seek to maintain traditional values in work and behaviour, and encourage our students to develop those qualities of character that will help them to make a worthwhile contribution to society.

We believe that this can best be achieved with the highest expectations within a firm yet flexible and caring environment,

with frequent contact and cooperation between parents and the school.

Our study facilities include department teaching rooms, the majority of which have interactive boards, plus specialist areas for Art & Design, Computing, Drama, Music, PE, Science and Technology.

All students in KS3 and KS4 use Chromebooks in lessons and for homework. This technology helps them become responsible digital citizens and lifelong learners, in and out of the classroom. We support our students' virtual and remote learning across all subject areas using Google Classroom.

Our four-court Sports Hall, which also contains a dance studio and fitness suite, opened in early 2018. To support the expansion of the school from 2018, we have also added a ten-classroom teaching block, two new Science laboratories and larger dining facilities.



Academic & personal development

Hitchin Girls' School is proud to provide a dynamic learning environment with high-quality teaching that enables each individual to achieve or exceed their targets. The curriculum supports students in building strong transferable skills as well as fostering their personal development.

YEARS 7-9

Year 7 students are taught in predominantly mixed-ability groups, except for in Maths and Science where they are set on entry to the school. In Years 8 and 9 we continue to deliver lessons following a similar structure, with sets introduced for French. However, we can adopt a flexible approach to setting at this stage and, where the need arises, we make adjustments to some mixed-ability groupings to meet the needs of that cohort.

YEARS 10-11

All students choose GCSE courses to study alongside the core compulsory subjects of English Language and Literature, Maths, Science (Double or Triple), Learning for Life, PE and Philosophy and Ethics.

SIXTH FORM (YEARS 12-13)

A wide range of subjects are offered within the consortium of Hitchin Girls' School, Hitchin Boys' School and The Priory School. Students select from an

extensive choice of subjects at A Level and BTech. The vast majority of our students go on to study at university, while others successfully enter vocational apprenticeship schemes.

YEARS 6-7 TRANSITION

In addition to Open Days, we invite Year 6 students to come in for an Induction Day during the Summer term prior to their entry, followed by an Induction Week in September. Our Transition Team hold meetings with all primary school staff and meet with students. We are in regular email contact with all new families from when your place is allocated. Our Transition Newsletters support families with the whole process.

HOUSE SYSTEM

We operate a House system, with each House named after an inspirational woman: Austen, Bronte, Curie, Frank, Jewel, Pankhurst, Rosa and Teresa.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate student progress regularly via termly reports, the Go4Schools application and annual parent consultation evenings. We also send out weekly newsletters for students and parents with a roundup of recent news and information about future events. The school website, Google Classroom, Twitter and Facebook are also used to communicate information, news and advice.

CAREERS

Our careers programme provides students with the necessary self-knowledge and information to make considered and realistic decisions about their future. Our Google Careers Zone includes a range of Google Classroom-based resources that offer careers information, job details, apprenticeship and employment opportunities, Further and Higher Education links and a variety of computer programmes. All students have access to Unifrog, which is an online platform that supports them in exploring careers and subject choices.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

SEN information is passed on from feeder primaries, in order to ensure students' needs are understood at transition. Every student at Hitchin Girls' School is challenged to ensure they fulfil their potential. This may be done on an individual basis, within a small group, as support in the classroom or as advice to subject staff. Interventions may take place at registration time, at lunch or through a bespoke timetable. Various mentoring schemes also operate, with older students assisting younger ones who need additional support (in academic and non-academic areas). The Learning Support team will establish appropriate assistance alongside students and their families.

What we expect

BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

Hitchin Girls' School recognises and celebrates success in all areas of school life, providing a structured environment through our Behaviour for Learning system. We take every opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of all students through our rewards system and celebration events. The school has a long-held tradition of using common sense and courtesy in matters of daily routine, and of showing care and consideration to everyone involved in the school community. This is reinforced by our Charter of Respect and Kindness, enabling students to learn, teachers to teach, and everyone to feel safe and secure at school. If inappropriate behaviour choices are made, consequences are issued and the student is supported to make the right decisions in the future.

UNIFORM

Uniform is worn by all students at Hitchin Girls' School until the end of Year 11. Sixth Form students are required to wear business attire. We believe this helps to encourage a good working atmosphere and promotes the feeling of belonging. We appreciate parents' cooperation in making sure that students are dressed appropriately. Full details of the current uniform requirements are available from the school or our website.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school at all times unless they are absent through illness. In the event of long-term illness, parents are asked to keep the school informed of their child's medical progress, provide the school with copies of all medical records and discuss their educational needs with the Pastoral Support Team, Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Students are not expected to take holidays during term time. We use Fixed Penalty Notices following the Hertfordshire County Council Guidance for Schools.

Learning beyond the classroom

CLUBS

Hitchin Girls' School offers a wide range of clubs and activities encompassing all areas of the curriculum. Most of these take place at lunchtime and after school. Further details can be found on our website and Google Classroom.

SCIENCE

Events include our Science Week and annual Science Fair, held as part of the National Science and Engineering Week. We also run an extremely popular Mathematics Challenge. We are actively involved in Science, Tech, Engineering and Maths (STEM) events throughout the year.

SPORT

The school has a strong tradition of offering a wide range of physical activities to all its students, encouraging them to adopt a more active lifestyle. The school teams are entered into local, district, county, regional and national championships. We also hold an annual Gym & Dance Display to which parents and friends are invited.

MUSIC

There are many opportunities for every student to develop their individual and group musical skills, with a variety of lessons and activities available. Many concerts and recitals are held each year, which family and friends are invited to attend.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH SCHEME

The Bronze level is introduced to students during the Autumn term of Year 10. Many of them progress to the Silver and Gold awards.

EXPEDITIONS, FIELD STUDIES & TRIPS

These take place during school time, in the evening, at weekends and during the holidays, forming a natural extension to the school curriculum. In addition to trips to theatres, museums and study centres, previous trips included Classics trips to Italy and Greece; History trips to Berlin; Spanish trips to Barcelona and Granada; Biology expeditions to Tanzania and Malawi; a Business Studies trip to New York; a Design & Technology trip to Paris; a Geography trip to Iceland and a sports tour of Holland.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We provide extensive opportunities, both inside and out of the classroom, for our students to develop their leadership skills throughout their time at HGS. Every tutor group elects a Prefect, Deputy Prefect (who leads on House charity events), and a Health and Sports Prefect. Working alongside their tutors and peers, these young people uphold and promote our school values, encouraging and enabling others to contribute to, and benefit from, everything that HGS has to offer.

Prefects are also members of our Student Leadership Team, who meet regularly to focus on six core areas of celebration and development in our school: Teaching and Learning; Culture and Diversity; Mental Health and Wellbeing; Charity and Community; Ecology and Sustainability; and Digital Communication. Led by our Sixth Form Senior Prefects, the Student Leadership Team work together on new ideas and initiatives to make positive contributions that have an impact on the whole school community. Working together with the staff Senior Leadership Team, this vital forum for student voice and action ensures that students help shape the future of our school.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS & LEARNING CHAMPIONS

Our Community Ambassadors and Learning Champions are Year 12 students who have volunteered to get involved with a range of different activities, either in school or in the wider community. These include helping out with, or running, clubs within school, supporting younger students, or helping in local primary schools.

“HGS is an amazing opportunity to fulfil your dreams... teachers are supportive and inspiring.
I am very proud to be part of it.”

YEAR 7 STUDENT

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“Hitchin Girls’ School provides a wide range of opportunities for all students, and supports each and every individual in reaching their fullest academic potential. HGS also allows the development of each student’s character, encouraging us to mature as learners but also into young adults - I have been immensely supported by staff at each stage of the journey.”

HEAD GIRL

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 TWITTER (@HITCHINGIRLS) AND  FACEBOOK

Working in partnership with

