




HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

A Specialist Science School and Academy Trust



Prospectus
2016-2017

National Support School
designated by

National College for
Teaching & Leadership

 North Herts
Teaching Alliance





“ Everyone was really friendly and the activities and workshops were amazing, they helped our Tutor group to bond! ”

YEAR 7 STUDENT



“ We all came together and worked hard – it really felt like we were a team. ” YEAR 7 STUDENT

A very warm welcome to Hitchin Girls' School.

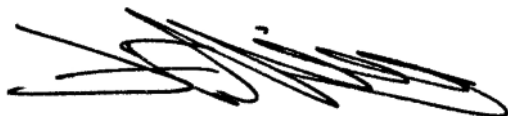
I am delighted that you are considering our school for your daughter and hope that this prospectus will give you an insight into the school, our values and expectations, and encourage you to visit us and find out more about the outstanding education that we offer to our students.

We are a fully inclusive school where the individual development of our students is paramount. We encourage them to develop independence and resilience in their studies to enable them to be lifelong learners.

We are very proud of our academic successes over many years and celebrate the fact that students of all ability levels make excellent progress in their chosen courses. However, academic achievement forms just part of the story and we offer a wealth of educational experiences, clubs, activities and opportunities across the year which instil so many of the qualities and skills which our young people need for their future.

We work hard at Hitchin Girls' School and our expectation is that everyone makes their best endeavours in all that they do. The very highest standards of conduct, respect, effort and personal attainment are our goal for all members of our school community.

Our school community is friendly and wholly supportive of all its members and many of our students refer to it as a family. Should you choose Hitchin Girls' School we look forward to welcoming you into our community.



Frances Manning
Headteacher

Hitchin Girls' School is a high achieving, all-ability girls' school serving the local community. There are 1086 students on roll, including 260 in Years 12 and 13.

Sharing the same seventeenth century foundation as Hitchin Boys' School, Hitchin Girls' opened over a century ago as a fee-paying day and boarding grammar school. It moved from Bancroft in the town centre to its present site in 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 have maintained this following the conversion to Academy Status in 2011. We are also proud to hold the ICT Mark, International School Award, Arts Award, Secondary Geography Quality Mark with Centre of Excellence status, Investor in Careers and the CPD Mark in recognition of our high quality staff development programme.

Hitchin Girls' is an Ofsted Outstanding graded school. The full Ofsted report can be viewed on our school website and on the Ofsted website.

In March 2015 the school became a National Support School for a new Teaching Alliance which is working collaboratively with schools in North Hertfordshire to provide training and support to their staff and those moving into the profession.

The school is oversubscribed every year and our planned admission number for September 2017 is 165. Each year, students join the school from around 40 junior schools in Hitchin and the surrounding villages. The school works closely with many junior schools in the town and villages on link projects in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, PE, Computing, Art, Music and Latin as well as through our extensive Sixth Form Ambassador scheme.

Our Sixth Form is very successful and currently comprises 260 girls. In addition, we share teaching to provide a wide ranging course offer with Hitchin Boys' 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 while various music, sporting and social activities are arranged across the Consortium and by the Consortium Student Council.

Hitchin Girls' School is committed to giving every student a broad education and helping to develop 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 which 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, caring environment with frequent contact and close co-operation between parents and the school.

Facilities & Resources

The school has an excellent supply of personal computers and laptops available for student use around the school as well as Apple Macs, iPads and tablets, all of which are networked and internet-connected.

Our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle, is continually being developed and is widely used to support student learning in all subject areas. Parents are also able to access the VLE to view information regarding their daughter. Students are issued with a school email account and can access their school emails, the school network and the VLE during school and from home. Sixth Form students are encouraged to bring their own devices to connect to our wireless network.

As well as department teaching rooms, there are also specialist areas for Art and Design, Food, Textiles, Design & Technology, Computing, Drama, Media Studies, Music and Science. Physical Education and sporting facilities include a gymnasium, a newly developed hard tennis and netball area together with a new changing room facility. Our new Sixth Form Centre opened in September 2014, providing an extensive and modern common room and study facilities and three fully equipped classrooms for Post 16 teaching.

We are currently constructing a new four court Sports Hall, which will also include a Dance Studio, Fitness Room and classroom area.

The school provides a range of study facilities, including Homework clubs and extensive access to the school Library which is open every day and houses library lessons for Year 7 students.

SMART cards are used for payment in the Dining Room. These also act as each student's library card, provide access to Highbury House teaching rooms, the Sixth Form Centre and as an identity card.

"Hitchin Girls' School has provided me with endless opportunities to develop as both a student and a young woman, from my first day of Year 7 to my last year of school. Every individual is encouraged to be the best version of themselves they can be. Whatever goals and aims your daughter has, the school will always do everything in their power to help them reach their full potential."

HEAD GIRL 2016



Hitchin Girls' School is proud to provide a dynamic learning environment with high quality teaching that enables each individual to achieve or exceed their potential. The curriculum supports students in building strong, transferable skills, which will enable them to become responsible adults who can make a positive contribution to, and be prepared for, the work place.

In raising students' aspirations and creating a wide range of opportunities we aim to support their development as confident, responsible young people prepared for life in the 21st century.

The Key Stage 3 Experience



Year 7 students are taught in predominantly mixed ability tutor groups, except for Mathematics, Science and French where they are set on entry to the school.

At Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9), students will study:

English
Mathematics
Science

Art & Design
Computing
French
Geography
History
Learning for Life
Music
Philosophy & Ethics (Religious Studies)
Physical Education
Technology

Ancient Civilisations
Drama
Latin
Spanish

Students experience all four of the latter subjects across Year 7 and choose two to continue into Year 8 and one in Year 9.

Key Stage 4, Years 10–11



All students opt for GCSE courses for the beginning of Year 10. All students study the core subjects of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science (Double or Triple Science), Learning for Life, Physical Education, Philosophy and Ethics.

The options at GCSE and equivalent qualifications are extensive. Students can choose from:

Ancient History
Art & Design
Business Studies
Computer Science
Dance
Design & Technology – Food, Textiles, Product Design & Graphic Products
Drama
French
Geography
Health & Social Care
History
Latin
Media Studies
Music
Philosophy & Ethics
Physical Education
Sociology
Spanish
College – Work related courses

Years 12 & 13, The Sixth Form



The Sixth Form offers a wide range of subjects as part of the highly effective Hitchin Consortium with The Priory School and Hitchin Boys' School. This enables students to select from an extensive range of subjects at A Level and Btech. Over 89% of our Sixth Form students go on to university at the end of Year 13.

Enrichment opportunities are varied. The Sixth Form are expected to participate in the life of the school through leadership opportunities, mentoring programmes and charity community participation. They serve as Ambassadors for the school, making a valued contribution to the school community. Work experience is an important part of Post-16 education.

A separate Sixth Form Consortium prospectus is available from the school.

Communication

Hitchin Girls' School will communicate progress regularly and we encourage parents to become fully involved with this throughout their daughter's school life.

Weekly bulletins and a termly newsletter are produced for students and parents providing reports on past events and information regarding future activities. The school website and Learning Platform also has information, news and advice and is regularly updated.

Termly progress reports are sent home and every year group has an annual consultation meeting. This provides an opportunity for parents to discuss their daughter's academic work and progress with subject staff. Additional support evenings for parents take place across the year and include a *GCSE Options Meeting* for Year 9, *'Supporting your child through GCSEs'* for Year 10 and a *Post 16 Options Evening* for Year 11 considering A Level studies.

Parents can expect to be contacted by the school if their daughter's work or behaviour gives either her Form Tutor or the teaching staff cause for concern. Tutors and Heads of Year are always happy to meet parents, by prior appointment, to discuss any matter.

All students are issued with a student planner so that they can record homework and other information. Parents are encouraged to check that this is being maintained on a weekly basis.

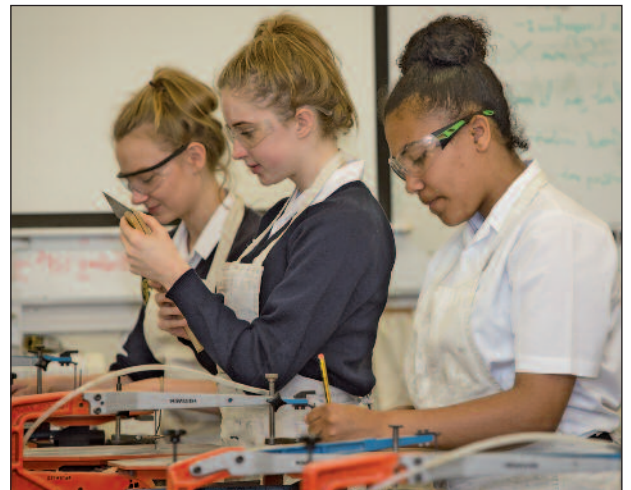


Safeguarding

The school is required to take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of students and follows the required statutory procedures. Copies of all school policies which exist to protect the interests of students and employees, as agreed by our School Governors, are available from the school or website.

Home Learning

Staff set activities for home learning regularly throughout the school to encourage independent study and reinforce and extend the work covered in lessons. Parents can assist by offering encouragement, providing suitable working conditions and letting us know if there are any problems.



Assessments

The school sets regular tests, assessments and examinations for all students, throughout their courses. Decisions regarding examination courses and entries are made from Year 9 upwards in consultation with students and parents.

Careers Advice and Guidance

Our Careers programme provides students with the necessary self-knowledge and information to make informed and realistic decisions about their future. It is managed by the Careers Co-ordinator, subject staff and Form Tutors. We work closely with Connexions, Further and Higher Education institutions, and value our links with local business. The Careers Resources Centre includes a range of Moodle based resources that offer careers information, job details and employment opportunities, Further and Higher Education links and a variety of computer programmes.

Transition

We hope that your daughter will be happy and soon settle into the life of the school. She will belong to a tutor group of about thirty students. The tutor group meet at the beginning of the morning and also work together on such things as charity events and inter-House competitions.

In addition to the Open Days in the preceding Autumn Term, your daughter will be invited to come into school for an Induction Day during the Summer Term prior to her entry. This provides the opportunity for her to take part in a variety of activities and to meet her Tutor and Head of Year in addition to a number of other staff. This is then followed up with an Induction Week to support her transition when she starts in the September.



Each Year 7 student will have a Year 10 'buddy group' in her House to assist with a smooth transition into school over the first term. The Head of Year has an overall view of every student's progress and general welfare.

The Form Tutor will develop the most complete knowledge and understanding of your daughter. This is done by keeping a close eye on all aspects of her school life, and offering help and support as well as assistance with any problems that may arise. Years 12 and 13 also take an active interest in the welfare of the younger members of the school.

The Heads of Year visit all transferring students during their last term at primary school ensuring a smooth transition to their secondary education. We believe communication between home and school is very important and you are always very welcome to contact the Pastoral Support Assistant, your daughter's Form Tutor or Head of Year to discuss any matter.

House System

The school operates a House system with six Houses: Austen, Bronte, Curie, Frank, Jewel and Teresa. Each has around 170 students comprising of a tutor group from each overseen by a House Co-ordinator.

Student Development Department (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)

Every student at Hitchin Girls' is supported to ensure they fulfil their potential. The Student Development Department works closely with staff to ensure full access to the curriculum for all and to tackle any difficulties that interfere with the learning process. This is done on an individual basis, within a small group, as support in the classroom or as advice to subject staff. Various mentoring schemes operate with older students assisting younger students needing additional support and to extend those who are exceptionally able. Older students also act as Peer Mentors to support younger students in non-academic areas. Information on the school's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities policy and Code of Practice is available on the school website.

*"The support we had
in our first year was
really reassuring.
Most of all,
I loved having a
Year 10 buddy."
YEAR 7 STUDENT*

Assembly and Collective Worship

The school holds regular school, House and Year assemblies led by staff and students. These are broadly Christian in nature and take place regularly throughout the week. We also recognise the diversity of the school, local and wider community through the celebration of festivals and events from other religions. Parents may withdraw their daughter from assemblies by writing to the Headteacher.

School Council

The School Council is an important part of school life and meets six times a year. Each form elects a School Council representative and then each year group elects two representatives to sit on the full School Council. Within the Sixth Form, students have the opportunity to apply to join the School Council. The School Council is chaired by the Head Girl and students are able to put forward their suggestions for the improvement of our communal life.



More Able Students (Gifted and Talented)

We consider all our students to have unique abilities and strive to support each and every one to fulfil their individual potential. At a whole school level, students who are excelling, or have the potential to excel across the curriculum, will be identified by subject staff. Support starts in their lessons, but additional help and guidance may also come from their Heads of Year, who may offer advice, a mentor or Year 12 Ambassador. Overall responsibility for our more able students lies with an Assistant Headteacher who monitors those identified with specific strengths and interests throughout the academic year, communicating with students and parents when necessary.

Travel to and from school

Where practical and safe, the school encourages walking or the use of public transport to help alleviate congestion around the school entrance. Further information on home to school transport is available on the Hertsdirect website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and public transport timetables can be found at www.intalink.co.uk



"Making a movie of our typical day, with some of my new friends, was a really fun experience!"

YEAR 7 STUDENT



Statement of Rights

- The students have a right to learn
- The teacher has a right to teach
- All within the school community have a right to be safe both physically and psychologically in the classroom

Classroom Ground Rules

- Arrive on time fully equipped
- Remove outdoor clothes as you enter the classroom
- Follow instructions without argument or comment
- Listen to those who are meant to be talking
- Use appropriate school language and respect others
- Allow others to get on with their learning: avoid inappropriate use of hands, feet and objects
- Mobile phones and portable music devices switched off and in bags
- Only water in a clear plastic bottle is allowed

"Everyone was really helpful and they helped us to find our way around the school."

YEAR 7 STUDENT

Community Ground Rules

- Follow the school Charter of Respect
- Always be on time for school
- Wear uniform correctly
- Move around school in a quiet and orderly way
- Food and drink must only be consumed in the designated places
- Chewing gum is not permitted in school
- Treat the school with care and respect; do not drop litter
- Do not leave the school site without permission
- Treat the school environment with care and respect; do not vandalise property
- Offensive or dangerous items must not be bought into school
- Illegal substances, cigarettes and alcohol are not permitted on the school site

Behaviour for Learning

Hitchin Girls' recognises and celebrates success in all areas of school life providing a structured environment through our Behaviour for Learning system. 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 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.



School Uniform

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

The very highest standards of conduct, respect, effort and personal attainment are our goal for all members of our school community.

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 daughter's medical progress and discuss her educational needs with our Pastoral Support Assistant, Form Tutor or Head of House.

Students are not expected to take holidays during term time. The school will only be able to authorise absence for time out of school for reasons other than illness in wholly exceptional or unavoidable circumstances. Should requests be made which do not fulfil this criteria any resulting absences will be unauthorised and appear as such on the student's attendance record. We use Fixed Penalty Notices following the Hertfordshire County Council Guidance for Schools.



Equality Policy

Hitchin Girls' School is committed to giving every student a broad education and helping to develop their individual talents to the full. We support traditional values in work and behaviour encouraging students to develop qualities of character to enable them to make a positive contribution within the wider community.

Hitchin Girls' offers a wide range of clubs, trips, visits and activities encompassing all areas of the curriculum. All students are encouraged to develop their personal interests through these opportunities whether organised and led by staff or students. Most activities take place at lunchtime and after school. Further details can be found on our website and learning platform.

Specialist Science School events including our Science Week and annual Science Fair are held as part of the National Science and Engineering Week. We also run an extremely popular Mathematics Challenge.

The school has a strong tradition of offering a wide range of physical activities to all its students. Students are encouraged to adopt a more active lifestyle. Over 60% of our students regularly participate in some form of sport outside of lesson time. The school teams are entered for Local, District, County, Regional and National Championships. The school holds an annual Gym & Dance display to which parents and friends are invited.

Musically, there are many opportunities for every girl to develop her individual and group musical skills with a variety of lessons and group activities available. Students perform regularly in local and county ensembles and occasionally at national level but they are also expected to retain their commitment to the school choirs and instrumental groups. A large number of concerts and recitals are given each year to which parents and friends are always invited. Music Technology classes are also run for students, with particular interests in recording and ICT.

Many expeditions, field study and other trips, such as theatre visits, take place during school time, in the evening, at weekends and during the holidays and they form a natural extension to the school curriculum. Recent overseas trips include the Ancient Civilisations trips to Italy and Greece, History trips to Berlin, Business Studies trip to New York, Spanish trips to Barcelona and Granada, a Design and Technology trip to Paris, a Geography trip to Iceland, PE sports tour to Holland and a Biology expedition. For the past 5 years a delegation of Sixth Form students have participated in the Student Global Leadership Institute programme in Hawaii.

"I can't wait to join all the new clubs and am looking forward to being a proper student at HGS!"

YEAR 7 STUDENT



The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

The Bronze Level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is introduced to students during the Autumn term of Year 10. Many progress to the Silver and Gold levels and there are currently 80 students participating in this Award Scheme.

International Opportunities

Your daughter will learn and earn in a truly global society. We are proud holders of the International Schools Award 2016-19 from the British Council in recognition of the global dimensions of our curriculum and the partnership work that we do around the world.

We are also extremely proud to be the first and only UK school to be invited to be members of the highly prestigious Student Global Leadership Institute which is an intensive two week summer programme hosted by Punahou School in Hawaii every August.

We have an extensive network of schools around the globe with whom we collaborate learning opportunities such as The Chapin School in New York City; other countries include Japan, Sweden, Denmark, China, New Zealand and India.

We pride ourselves on the international charity work we do. The school is involved in raising money to support children and schools in Ecuador with an emphasis on more children being able to access an education. We are also exceptionally proud to be part of the US based Memory Project through which, to date, we have created over 200 portraits of orphaned or vulnerable children in Honduras, Haiti, Nepal, The Philippines and Afghanistan.

"I really enjoyed orienteering... I love to explore so this was perfect for me."

YEAR 7 STUDENT



Ambassador Programme & Leadership Opportunities

This is a pivotal element to being an HGS Sixth Form student. Every Year 12 student (and many Year 13s) undertake a Hitchin Girls' School Community Ambassador role to support the learning and well-being of others either here at HGS, in our family of primary schools or in the wider community. This programme equips our students with excellent life skills that will support their UCAS or job applications.

Our Learning Leader group consists of students from Years 7 – 13. They are involved with many different activities and events throughout the year. Their focus is how best teaching and learning can be delivered at HGS and they work closely with both student and staff groups on a regular basis.

Joining the School

As an Academy the school is its own admitting authority. The admissions process for secondary transfer has been delegated by the Governing Body to the Local Authority who also manage in-year admissions to other year groups. Further information about secondary transfer, including admissions criteria, is to be found in the booklet 'Moving On', which is available from Hertfordshire County Council. 650 parents applied to Hitchin Girls' School for September 2016. On accepting a place at this school for their daughter, parents are required to undertake that she will attend school regularly and punctually, keep its rules and accept its authority.



Sixth Form

Enquiries about admission to the Sixth Form should be made initially to the Director of Sixth Form at the school. The vast majority of our students continue their education with us Post 16 and we also welcome external applicants for entry. Sixth Form Prospectus is published in the Autumn term and is available from the school or website.

Access Arrangements

The school welcomes people with various physical abilities and disabilities. However, due to the age and layout of the school

buildings, not all parts of the school are accessible to someone in a wheelchair. Details of the school's accessibility plan is available from the school.

Financial Support

Parents who are in receipt of certain benefits may be eligible for financial support towards certain items including travel costs, school meals and individual Music tuition. Further details are available on the Hertfordshire County Council website, www.hertsdirect.gov.uk. Students and parents can also apply for funding from several financial trusts including the Hitchin Educational Foundation – information is available from the Bursars.

Charges and Remissions

Many of our educational visits and experiences are only possible with the voluntary financial assistance we receive from parents. In the school's policy for Charging and Remissions for educational activities (full details available on request) the Governing Body embraces the principle of free school education and that no student is ever excluded from an activity because of financial difficulty. The Hitchin Educational Foundation responds generously to requests from the school to fund a wide range of activities, both in and out of school and they also provide grants for school uniform in case of need.

The information in this prospectus relates to plans for the academic year 2016–2017 and was correct as of July 2016. However, it should not be assumed that any of the arrangements or particulars would remain unchanged either before or during the year in question and in subsequent academic years.



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
A Specialist Science School and Academy Trust

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Chairman of Governors: Mr. C. Hall

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