



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS



National Support School
designated by

National College for
Teaching & Leadership



A photograph of three young women in school uniforms sitting on a green lawn. They are looking at a book or document together. The woman on the left is looking towards the center. The woman in the middle is looking down at the book. The woman on the right is smiling and looking towards the center. They are all wearing dark blue V-neck sweaters over white collared shirts. The background shows a brick building with white-framed windows and an arched doorway.

“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 hope that this prospectus will give you an insight into the school and our ethos, values and expectations.

Hitchin Girls' is a high performing school, graded Outstanding by Ofsted, where we provide an exceptional experience for all of our students. We have high level provision for teaching and learning and provide the greatest level of care and support for all students and our staff.

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 develop 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 achievement forms just part of the story and we offer a wealth of opportunities for high quality learning

experiences, clubs and activities outside the classroom which instil so many of the qualities and skills needed by our students for their 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. Although we cannot currently extend our usual invitation for you to come and visit us in person, please take time to visit our website and virtual Open Evening experience to find out more about us. If you have any questions please contact us at the school.

I hope that there will be an opportunity to meet with you and welcome you to life at Hitchin Girls' School in the not too distant future.



FRANCES MANNING HEADTEACHER



Past, Present & Future

Sharing the same seventeenth century foundation 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 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 age 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, ISM Gold Award for Achievement in Music, Investor in Careers and the CPD Mark in recognition of our high quality staff development programme. Hitchin Girls' School is an Ofsted Outstanding graded school. The

full Ofsted report can be viewed on our school and the Ofsted website. In December 2019, following an assessment process involving some of our students, we were awarded World Class Schools status.

In March 2015, the school became a National Support School and is the lead school in the North Herts 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 works closely with many local primary schools on a variety of projects including our Sixth Form Ambassador scheme.

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 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 – an excellent supply of PCs, laptops, Apple Macs, iPads and tablets available to students together with study facilities; department teaching rooms as well as specialist areas for Art & Design, Computing, Drama, Music, PE, Science and Technology.

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, we have added a new ten classroom teaching block and expanded our dining facilities.

We support our students' virtual and remote learning across all subject areas using Google Classroom.



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 potential. The curriculum supports students in building strong, transferable skills as well as supporting their personal development.

YEARS 7-9

Year 7 students are taught in predominantly mixed ability tutor groups, except for Maths, Science and French where they are set on entry to the school. In Years 8 and 9 we continue to deliver lessons following a similar structure, 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 opt for GCSE courses for the beginning of Year 10 and study the core subjects of English Language and Literature, Maths, Science (Double or Triple), Learning for Life, PE and Philosophy and Ethics.

THE SIXTH FORM (YEARS 12-13)

A wide range of subjects are offered as part of the consortium with Hitchin Boys' School and The Priory School. Students select from an extensive range of subjects at A Level and BTech. Over 89% of our students go on to university.

YEARS 6-7 TRANSITION

In addition to Open Days, we invite 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 visit all transferring students at primary school and we encourage communication between home and school.

HOUSE SYSTEM

We operate a House system, each overseen by a Head of House.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate progress regularly via termly reports, Go4Schools and annual parent consultation evenings as well as issuing newsletters for students and parents providing reports on past events and information regarding future activities. 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 informed and realistic decisions about their future. The Careers Resources Centre includes a range of Google Classroom based resources that offer careers information, job details, apprenticeships and employment opportunities, Further and Higher Education links and a variety of computer programmes.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Information is passed 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 in registration time. Various mentoring schemes also operate, with older students assisting younger students needing additional support (in academic and non-academic areas).

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 celebrate the achievements of all students using 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, 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 wear. 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.

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 and discuss her educational needs with our 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 activities take place at lunchtime and after school. Further details can be found on our website and Google Classroom.

SPECIALIST SCIENCE SCHOOL

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. Students are encouraged to adopt a more active lifestyle. 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.

MUSIC

There are many opportunities for every student to develop their individual and group musical skills with a variety of lessons and group activities available. A large number of concerts and recitals are given each year to which parents and friends are always invited.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH SCHEME

The bronze level is introduced to students during the Autumn term of Year 10. Many progress to the silver and gold levels.

EXPEDITIONS, FIELD STUDIES & TRIPS

Many of these 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 Classics trips to Italy and Greece, History trips to Berlin, Business Studies trip

to New York, Spanish trips to Barcelona and Granada, a Design & Technology trip to Paris, a Geography trip to Iceland, PE sports tour to Holland and a Biology expedition to Tanzania and Malawi.

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are proud holders of the International Schools Award, 2019-22, from the British Council in recognition of the global dimensions of our curriculum and the partnership work that we do around the world. We were the first UK school to be invited to be members of the highly prestigious Student Global Leadership Institute which are two separate, intensive two week Summer programmes in Hawaii and India.

We have an extensive network of schools around the globe with whom we collaborate learning opportunities such as The Chapin School in New York; other countries include Japan, Sweden, Denmark, China, New Zealand and India. We also do much to support international charities, raising money to enable children internationally to access an education.

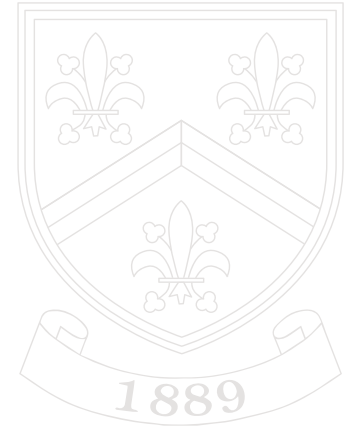
LEARNING CHAMPIONS

Our Learning Champions group consists of students from Year 12. They are involved with many different activities and events throughout the year supporting students in school and the wider community.



“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



“HGS offers an opportunity which every student deserves, encouraging academic and extra-curricular potential. It has allowed me to achieve grades I didn’t realise I was capable of, while also maintaining a good balance with extra-curricular activities.”

HEAD GIRL 2020/21

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