



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

— TWICKENHAM —



Prospectus

Welcome

St Catherine's is a fully independent, all-girls Catholic school, which welcomes girls of all faiths and none, into a caring and vibrant community.

You only have to visit St Catherine's to see that our pupils are happy, confident, and enthusiastic girls. At St Catherine's we foster curiosity, creativity, and resilience, and our excellent pastoral care helps each girl to discover her own gifts and talents. In turn, the girls are inspired to contribute wholeheartedly to school life and this creates a very special place, where each girl feels she belongs.

Every year, as another group of assured young women leaves St Catherine's, we know that they take with them more than just their excellent academic achievements. Their time with us helps them to grow in knowledge of themselves and others, and they can then find their place in the world as young women of ambition, courage and compassion.





Leadership Changes at St Catherine's

This year is a time of change at St Catherine's. I will be relocating to Australia in January 2026 and the Board of Governors has appointed Mr Andrew McCleave as the new Head.

Mr McCleave will join St Catherine's in April 2026, from the Ballard School in Hampshire which, under his leadership, was recognised as the Co-educational School of the Year in 2024. Mr McCleave is known for his pupil-focused approach which emphasises academic excellence alongside strong pastoral care. Before joining St Catherine's, Mr McCleave held senior roles at other leading independent schools, including Director of Studies at The Lady Eleanor Holles School and Deputy Head Academic at City of London Freeman's School.

During the Spring Term of 2026, Mrs Jessica Hennis-Rowe will serve as Interim Head. As Deputy Head at St Catherine's for six years, Mrs Hennis-Rowe has a deep understanding of the school community and its values and will ensure excellent leadership during this period.

These leadership changes are being managed with a clear sense of shared purpose. All three of us are focused on the exciting future of St Catherine's and ensuring that the girls thrive.

We look forward to welcoming the next generation of St Catherine's girls and to meeting you when you visit us soon.

Mrs Johneen McPherson
Headmistress



Our History

The story of our School began in 1914 in a house on Twickenham Green called St Catherine's.

The Sisters of Mercy founded this Catholic school and named it after the great 14th-century reformer, St Catherine of Siena.

The School moved to the present site of Pope's Villa in 1919, with its buildings and grounds on both sides of Cross Deep, joined by the underground passage known as Pope's Grotto. The Lawn was purchased in 1948. The ground floor was used as School Kitchens and Dining Room, and the First Floor for the teaching of Domestic Science.

A pre-fabricated Hall was built and paid for entirely by the parents in 1954. In 1991 the Sisters of Mercy moved out of St Catherine's and the School became independent.

Over recent years, the Prep Department has been extended, and a new Sixth Form Centre has been built. In addition we added changing rooms and new facilities for Art, Photography, Food and Nutrition, and History.

The Science Block was upgraded and extended in 2016 and the Creative Hub was acquired as an additional Performing Arts space. The School looks forward to further planned developments as we continue to make the most of our modern and attractive site.

Our school motto, 'Non Verba sed Facta' (Not Words but Deeds), emphasises action and authenticity which can be seen in the girls' enthusiasm, and in their openness to deeper values as they become young women ready to serve and to lead.

Location

St Catherine's School in Twickenham benefits from a highly convenient and accessible location within the leafy suburbs of South-West London, making transport straightforward from neighbouring areas, the city, and from Surrey.

The school recommends the use of public transport wherever possible to ease congestion in the local area.



Twickenham is well-served by London's extensive public transport network. For a list of bus and train routes, please see our website.



Key Features



St Catherine's is a caring community in which every pupil is friendly, known, and warmly encouraged to explore her gifts and talents.

An All-Girls School

At St Catherine's, there is no such thing as boys' and girls' subjects. In fact, we like to remind them the best football player is a girl and the best mathematician is a girl! We tailor our provision to reflect our pupils' needs and interests, and encourage their creativity, risk-taking and resilience. There are many opportunities for the girls to discover leadership skills and to develop their goals and ambitions. This means they step out into the world, and into a variety of competitive university courses, with confidence and self-knowledge.

A School with a caring culture

We believe happy, secure girls learn best. Girls receive kind encouragement and tailored support from teachers who know them well. This allows them to grow in confidence, feel empowered to learn and succeed, and to pursue their academic and co-curricular ambitions with courage and enjoyment. Our caring culture is founded on Catholic Christian principles and we welcome girls of all faiths. Our happy community instills the key values of integrity, service, and self-worth.



A school that is just the right size

St Catherine's is big enough to offer a wide range of opportunities and small enough for us to know each girl. This means we can support and promote each pupil's academic progress and ensure she aims high. In doing this we are inspired by the saying of our namesake, St Catherine of Siena: 'Be who God wants you to be and you will set the world on fire'. This is a fitting way to think about how the School assists each individual so that she realises success in her learning, music ability, on the sports field, and on the stage.

Admissions

Prep School: Years 3-6 (automatic entry to Year 7)

Parents and families are warmly invited to attend an Open Event or arrange a personal tour. Following your visit, please formally register your daughter for the Prep School. Registration initiates the next steps: a pupil visit and age-appropriate literacy and numeracy assessments. The application is finalised upon receipt of her current school reports and a reference. Eligible pupils are encouraged to apply for one of our four Prep Scholarships.

Year 7

For Current St Catherine's Prep Pupils

The move from Prep to Senior School is a guaranteed and automatic progression. Internal assessments in December are for academic setting and Scholarship consideration only; they do not determine entry, allowing for a focused and seamless transition.

For External Applicants

Candidates from other schools are assessed based on a holistic review, which includes one-hour examinations in Mathematics and English, a review of their school reports and reference, and an informal interview. We seek girls whose gifts and talents align with the St Catherine's community ethos.

Sixth Form

Pupils currently in Year 11 at St Catherine's have an automatic place in our Sixth Form.

For External Applicants

Pupils wishing to study in the Sixth Form at St Catherine's usually achieve six GCSEs at grades 6-9. They generally gain a grade 7 in the subjects they wish to study at A Level; however, if a pupil shows aptitude and willingness in other ways, entry can be discussed with the Headmistress via our Admissions Manager.





Prep School

St Catherine's Prep begins in Year 3 and we recognise that Key Stage 2 is a significant part of your daughter's school journey. It is an explorative, fun and engaging phase where we nurture inquisitive minds in the confidence that our all-girls environment helps to create friendly, resilient and ambitious girls.

Pastoral care is central to the wellbeing of girls in our care. Teachers are devoted to pupils' personal, spiritual and academic growth and foster curiosity and creativity, which in turn helps each girl to explore her own gifts and talents.

St Catherine's Prep is further enriched by its link to our Senior School which offers Prep girls exciting additional facilities and academic extension.

Automatic entry to the Senior School means girls avoid the pressure of the 11+ process - instead they know they are already valued members of the school community. This approach ensures that pupil wellbeing is prioritised in the transition to Year 7.



Senior School

Throughout the Senior School, girls are supported and encouraged to strive in all areas of the curriculum, and to make new discoveries about themselves and about the world in which they live.

Lower School (Years 7 & 8)

During the first two years in the Senior School, the girls are offered a broad and balanced curriculum which includes Mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Computer Science, Music, Creative Art, Drama, Physical Education, Swimming, and Food and Nutrition. The girls also have a weekly PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) lesson where they learn about and discuss personal relationships, health and safety, and careers, as well as political and social issues.

Middle School (Years 9, 10 & 11)

During Year 9, the girls are supported and guided as they make their GCSE subject choices. Girls study a number of compulsory subjects: Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, the three Sciences, a Modern Foreign Language, Religious Studies. They also choose three more from a wide range of option subjects.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form at St Catherine's offers an environment defined by academic rigour and nurturing support. It is a dynamic community where young women are encouraged to develop their intellectual curiosity, challenge their assumptions, and come of age both socially and academically.

We provide a tailored experience designed specifically to meet the needs of young women today. It is well-established that girls thrive academically in a single-sex environment, pursuing their academic goals free from distraction and with the confidence to speak out. This is evidenced by a significantly higher uptake of STEM subjects within our school, compared to the national average.

The size of the Sixth forms allows us to invest in each girl. We offer a full and diverse range of academic subjects and co-curricular opportunities, with the flexibility to tailor the timetable to suit individual aspirations. Every pupil is a much-valued individual who receives bespoke attention and support as she prepares for higher education and beyond. Our Sixth Formers are renowned for being confident, capable and kind. New girls are quickly and warmly integrated into our friendly, open community.





Chaplaincy and Ethos

St Catherine's is a school rooted in a commitment to nurturing young people. While many of our pupils are Catholic, or Christians of other denominations, we warmly welcome girls of all faiths and none, and see the diversity of our community as a particular strength. We encourage the girls to explore deeper values and we see belonging and friendship as especially important.

The faith life of the School includes prayers, Masses and special liturgies, and the girls' creative participation is always evident; they are compassionate and engaged. Girls of all ages are offered an annual retreat, and the School Chaplain organises themes and experiences to suit each age group, and also offers other activities through the year.

At St Catherine's we see the focus on social justice as a very important part of education. We aim to help girls to appreciate the world they are in, and to be well-informed, thoughtful and brave as they respond to inequalities and injustices. The pupil-led Charities Committee provides a platform for the girls to make sure that their passionate responses lead to initiatives and change. Girls also enjoy the opportunities for service offered through the Duke of Edinburgh programme, and through other events and activities throughout each year.

Extended Day Provision

Pupils and staff at St Catherine's enjoy excellent facilities, which are continuously updated and renewed to ensure learning resources are contemporary and purposeful.

We offer an extended day for pupils to help busy parents. Our Breakfast Club takes place in the Dining Room and opens every morning at 7:30am. Breakfast is available until 8:25am. This facility is available to all girls.

While Homework supervision is provided for Senior pupils, our After School Club runs every day from 3:30pm to 6:00pm for all Prep girls. All girls are supervised by qualified, experienced staff and enjoy a variety of creative activities.

The Senior Library at St Catherine's is a sanctuary for quiet study and homework; it includes books, journals and monitored web-links. It also has a careers area where students can access university prospectuses and information on requirements for pursuing different careers.

The Librarians offer reading themes, events and book clubs; they promote participation throughout the day and in competitions, and support activities like the Young Reporter Programme.





Co-Curricular

St Catherine's has an extensive co-curricular programme, encompassing sport, other physical activities, music and drama. Our girls are also involved in service in the community. The broad range of experiences we are able to offer outside the classroom allows our pupils to learn, to have fun and to develop new and productive relationships with their peers.

The activities offer an important opportunity for our pupils to develop their skills and to experience competition and teamwork. Activities may vary from season to season and from year to year, and depend also on the interests of the pupils and teachers at the school. Every pupil belongs to one of four Houses: Bronte, Cavell, Nightingale and Pankhurst. The house system includes a variety of activities and competitions, and plays a vital role in school spirit and ethos.



School Community, FOSC and Alumnae

St Catherine's has a vibrant, happy school community, which is especially celebrated at our annual St Catherine's Day in the Summer Term (as shown in the photograph above, of family members on this festive day).

FOSC was formed in 1976 to fund-raise and provide extra equipment for the School and its pupils and staff. Many of our parents are members of The Friends of St Catherine's School (FOSC) which plays successful role in fundraising and relationship-building. The FOSC committee welcomes contact from parents and invites all families to join in the activities and fundraising events.

We take great pride in celebrating the bright futures pioneered by our Leavers. The School has annual social events, ensuring our Alumnae remain connected to the school and to each other as they embark on their professional and personal journeys.

The St Catherine's Alumnae Association provides invaluable, lifelong benefits, fostering a supportive global network. Through our Alumnae events, past pupils are able to network, participate in the School's fundraising events and be involved in community events alongside current pupils. We encourage all Leavers to stay connected via our website, to read our newsletters and to follow us on social media.

