



PROSPECTUS

Finchley Catholic

High School

Welcome to

Finchley Catholic High School



“I very much hope you have the opportunity to visit us and see our wonderful school in action. We have a strong and proud tradition of providing an outstanding Catholic education for all who choose to study here. We look forward to welcoming you to our community.”

Niamh Arnull

Headteacher

“Students’ attitudes to learning, behaviour and all aspects of school life are exemplary.” Ofsted



I turned my heart to know and to search out
and to seek wisdom. Our Catholic community
exists to serve our pupils.

Our mission



Be a school where we experience the joy of
God's creation and develop a faith that
will sustain us through travails as
well as victories.

Grow enquiring minds that will value
scholarship and develop a joy of learning that
will stay with us all our lives.

Nurture a steadfast community in which
everyone has a thirst for dignity, respect and
social justice.

So that when our mission is fulfilled, we will meet
the future with soaring ambition and a relentless
desire to build a better world and in so doing,
accomplish the purpose that God has for all of us.

Meet the future

We appreciate that the transition from primary to secondary school can be daunting as well as exciting. You want what's best for your son as an individual with his own interests, talents, needs and desires.

You may already know that Finchley Catholic is the right school to nurture your son, but if the options seem overwhelming, we hope that you are able to get a sense of what a truly special place our school is through this prospectus and by visiting us here at Finchley Catholic.


To visit us is to see how fortunate we are to have such an attractive, leafy and spacious school site, extremely well-maintained and benefiting from both beautiful historic buildings and state-of-the-art additions such as the purpose-built performing arts block, suites of brand new computers and our recently constructed Canon Parsons Sixth Form Centre.

At Finchley Catholic High School, we work hard in partnership with you to make certain that your son feels supported and valued when transitioning to a larger community. Our primary aim is to ensure that our pupils are happy at school and we do everything we can to make sure that they are. We have strong links with our feeder primary schools and make visits

to incoming pupils and their teachers in the summer term before boys begin with us. Pupils also come for a transition day in the summer term when they meet their form tutors and begin to receive information that will help them settle quickly. In the same term, we have a Cheese and Wine Evening for new parents so that they too can feel well-informed and begin to forge friendships with parents in the same situation. If your son is the only pupil joining us from his primary school, we provide additional support including an extra transition day.

In our experience, our family atmosphere ensures Year 7 pupils gain confidence and forge new friendships very quickly. Any feelings of apprehension are swiftly replaced by a sense of belonging and pride at being a 'Finchley boy'.



A young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white collared shirt, and a dark tie with a yellow cross and green stripes, is playing a brass instrument. The instrument has a crest on it. The background is dark blue.

“I’m very happy that my son has settled really well and he receives guidance and support when needed. My son thoroughly enjoys coming to school; he loves all the teachers and the atmosphere overall.”

Year 7 parent

A faith that will sustain us

As a school built on the foundations of compassion and inclusiveness espoused by the Gospel, our Catholic identity permeates through all we do.

We aim to deepen and enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, by teaching and example, so as to enable them to become true followers of Jesus Christ. At the same time, we recognise that doubt can be a natural part of the spiritual journey of a young person, and we provide a safe space in which to explore questions of faith.



“The experience of Catholic worship for the whole school community is outstanding.”

Diocese of Westminster Inspection Report

“The teaching and feedback cannot be faulted. Every element is explained in the utmost clarity and the feedback given is useful.”


Year 11 Pupil Voice Response



Within our school community, pupils are encouraged to actively engage themselves spiritually through prayer and practice. Throughout the school day, starting in morning registration, pupils spend time in reflection and prayer and are led by peers and tutors in weekly assemblies based on the Gospel themes of the liturgical calendar. At specific times of the Church year, including Advent and Lent, pupils are led by the school Chaplain in reflection services which include different and engaging means of praise and worship bringing a modern context to religious traditions. We enjoy very strong links with our local parishes and frequently welcome parish priests to lead students in the sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrate mass with the whole school, parents and year groups. Our 'Justice and Peace Group' comprises pupils who support our Chaplain and take an active role in leading liturgy and organising charitable work. Parents are also wholeheartedly encouraged to participate in our liturgical life and receive invitations to the annual Carol Concert and masses celebrating milestones in their children's educational journeys.

Annual retreats enable pupils to take a step back from life and reflect on their faith journey with relevant themes that coincide with the challenges of their daily lives. Our yearly Lourdes pilgrimage is another popular opportunity and we recently inaugurated a pilgrimage to St Albans marking our 90th Year and in recognition of our patron saint. The richness and diversity of our liturgical life is enthused by a determination captured in our mission statement: 'to be a school where we experience the joy of God's creation'.





“The high expectations leaders and teachers have for every student to achieve their best academically and personally are a notable strength of the school”

Ofsted

Enquiring minds

Nurturing intellectual curiosity and inspiring a passion for learning is our core business.

At the heart of our success is a focus on adapting our teaching to the needs of the individual, helping each child to flourish in their own way and make exceptional progress. High quality assessment and feedback allow us to intervene quickly when pupil progress is not rapid enough.

We all remember our most inspirational teachers and, here at Finchley, each and every teacher works tirelessly to provide an enjoyable, memorable and enlightening experience for the students in their care. Our teachers are consistently encouraged to consider what makes a great teacher and to reflect on their own practice.

All are supported through training and sharing of good practice to be highly effective practitioners. We are fortunate to have overcome the current teacher

shortage so that, in contrast to many schools, our posts are filled by highly qualified subject specialists.

Our support for children with Special Educational Needs is excellent. We have a dedicated and talented team of teachers and teaching assistants devoted to the task whilst we also ensure that all teachers are equipped to support each and every pupil in their care. Our Excellence in Scholarship programme provides stretch and challenge for our most able pupils and involves a very well-received programme of talks, trips and preparation for further study at the top universities.

We offer a full range of GCSE options including subjects such as classics and music, often squeezed out at other schools due to budgetary constraints or a lack of specialists. We determine GCSE entry according to what's best for that individual and we work hand in hand with pupils and parents to ensure that the right level of challenge is provided for each child.

A better world

Beyond our quest for academic excellence, we are concerned with nurturing outward-looking, global citizens and work hard to instil values of social responsibility and altruism. Finchley boys look out for one another and for those in need locally, nationally and globally.

We believe in the utmost importance of providing leadership opportunities for our pupils which help them to develop into well-rounded and confident individuals with the ability to change the world for the better. Leadership roles include house captain, sports captain, literacy leader, learning advocate, peer mentor, liturgy leader and, in Sixth Form, the opportunity to apply to be Head Student or Prefect. Our pupils are phenomenal in their efforts to support charities and to engage positively with the wider community. As well as an outstanding annual Lenten fundraising effort, we look for every opportunity to help those who need it most, responding to urgent appeals as they occur and with more regular events such as assembling food hampers for the homeless, our annual Senior Citizen Christmas party and CAFOD fast days. In their charitable efforts, our generous and enterprising pupils have volunteered in a Kenyan Orphanage, baked cakes, washed cars, dressed up, played music, read long lists of books, petitioned governments and completed sky dives.



“The school’s
commitment to action
for social justice is
outstanding.”

*Diocese of Westminster
Inspection Report*

Our parents, too, are exceptionally generous and many give freely of their time as members of our wonderful Parent Teacher Association. Our PTA has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds towards the improvement of school facilities through fantastic events including the mainstays of the annual Summer Fete and Christmas Market, but also more sociable occasions such as golf days, quizzes and race nights. We would encourage you to get involved as it is both rewarding and a great way to meet other parents.

A steadfast community

Finchley Catholic has a well-earned reputation for outstanding pastoral care. Our commitment to the happiness of each child in our care is unwavering.

Every pupil touches base twice daily with his form tutor who provides ongoing guidance and care. Pastoral Leaders and Assistant Pastoral Leaders are always on hand to deal with any issues that arise and are in regular contact with parents when necessary. Our vertical house system offers an additional layer of kinship and includes termly house assemblies, allowing pupils to forge links with those in other year groups.

Happily, bullying is infrequent at FCHS, but it is an issue we take very seriously and if it does occur, prompt and effective measures are taken by staff to combat it. If you have any concerns, please share them with us at a very early stage.

We have a dedicated student services team to whom pupils can go should they need administrative support. We also have an academic mentor for each year group who will work with any student whose progress is of concern. In addition, our highly skilled school counsellor offers emotional support where needed.

Finchley also enjoys a reputation for strong discipline. High standards of behaviour and courtesy are expected of all students and we place a strong emphasis on a positive work ethic, high aspiration and respect for all members of the school community. Our sanction and reward system allows us to nip behavioural issues in the bud and we use an online system that parents can access to record both causes for celebration as well as concern. We take every opportunity to recognise achievement and foster a culture of success.

Communication with parents is very important to us: as well as emails to parents on specific topics, we publish a half-termly edition of the Albanian, our newsletter which chronicles events, achievements and announcements. In addition to the annual consultation evenings, we produce written progress reports and hold a range of parent information evenings. We value, and regularly invite, your feedback.

“Teachers and all staff are dedicated to the children. My queries are always addressed quickly and everyone is helpful and kind.”

Year 7 parent





“The school provides opportunities for all its students, no matter where their strengths lie.”

Year 10 Parent

Discovering passions

Our extra-curricular provision offers something for everyone, from the reading fanatic to the county sportsman. And if your son hasn't yet discovered his passion, he will have the opportunity to find it.

We have an enviable track record of sporting success. Our football, rugby, basketball, cricket and athletics teams are frequently local and county champions. Other sports enjoyed by pupils include table tennis, trampolining and dodgeball. We have our own very well maintained sports fields near to the school as well as an on-site AstroTurf pitch and two large gymnasiums.

Although we encourage all our pupils to exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle, we offer plenty for those of a less sporting disposition. We provide the Duke of Edinburgh Award and our uptake and success is impressive. For the budding orator we offer debating and participation in the Model U.N.; for the booklover, reading groups and Carnegie Award shadowing; for the scientist, dissection club and other STEM activities; and for the performer, numerous bands, orchestras, choirs, drama clubs and street dance classes. Indeed, the standard of performing arts at the school is astounding and there are regular opportunities for pupils to be involved in both large scale productions and more intimate performances. Our pupils have had recent successes in a range of national competitions including in

creative writing, design, street dance and each year our most entrepreneurial pupil is awarded £1000 to launch the winning idea in the Mario Francescotti Business Prize.

Our commitment to broadening the learning experience of our pupils and to the development of cultural capital inspires the content of our regular Activity Days. In addition, our year 8 pupils enjoy a memorable residential outdoor education week in the summer term packed with subject specific fun and physical challenges.

The range of trips offered, both at home and abroad, is awe-inspiring. In recent years, our pupils have visited far-flung locations such as China, America, Italy, and Greece on educational and cultural forays. We have frequent Modern Foreign Language trips to France and Spain, annual Junior and Senior Ski trips to France and America respectively and regular sailing trips to the wilds of Essex. As a London school, we would be remiss not to take advantage of all our city offers and, indeed, we are frequent visitors to theatres, galleries, museums and palaces.

Soaring ambition

At Finchley, your son will be encouraged to achieve his very best at all times and to nurture and fulfil the most ambitious of aspirations.

We have a long standing track record of outstanding GCSE outcomes. Our examination results are consistently among the very best in Barnet and we have recently received congratulations from the Minister for Education for being one of the top schools in the country.

Most of our students stay on to take advantage of our fantastic co-educational Sixth Form which is housed in the attractive and state-of-the-art Canon Parsons Sixth Form Centre completed in 2015. They are joined by girls and boys from other schools who are drawn to Finchley thanks to our enviable choice of subjects and high standard of teaching.

Our excellent A Level results ensure that the vast majority of our pupils secure their first choice of university. We are very successful in aiding our pupils in securing places at top universities and offer a bespoke programme for those applying to Oxbridge.

Throughout the course of their time at school, from Year 7 onwards, our pupils are provided with an extensive programme of careers education including

“FCH forced me to have more ambition at the age of 17 than I was ever going to have on my own; and pushed me to apply to universities I wouldn’t ever have dreamt of.”

*Former pupil and
Cambridge University graduate*

guidance from our careers advisor alongside talks, mock interviews from industry experts and work experience.

The successes of our alumni are a continual source of pride. Our former students have gone on to be ordained as priests; edit national newspapers (in two cases no less!); write Olivier Award winning plays; advise the government; compose hit records; found a global advertising agency; and direct the Natural History Museum. A particular source of pride is the remarkable number of pupils who return to the fold as teachers.

Once a Finchley boy, always a Finchley boy!



A proud history



1926

Father Clement Henry 'Pop' Parsons begins teaching a small class of 18 boys in the hall behind the presbytery in Dale Grove.



1928

Whitehouse purchased.



1931

Five-acre field purchased at Southover.



1934

A further four classrooms and the tower added to the Bourne Block.



1939

Outbreak of World War Two in which 29 Old Boys and one member of staff lost their lives.



1949

Challoner School formed.



1971

Challoner School and Finchley Grammar School amalgamated to become F.C.H.S.



1988

Technology Block opened by Margaret Thatcher.



2004

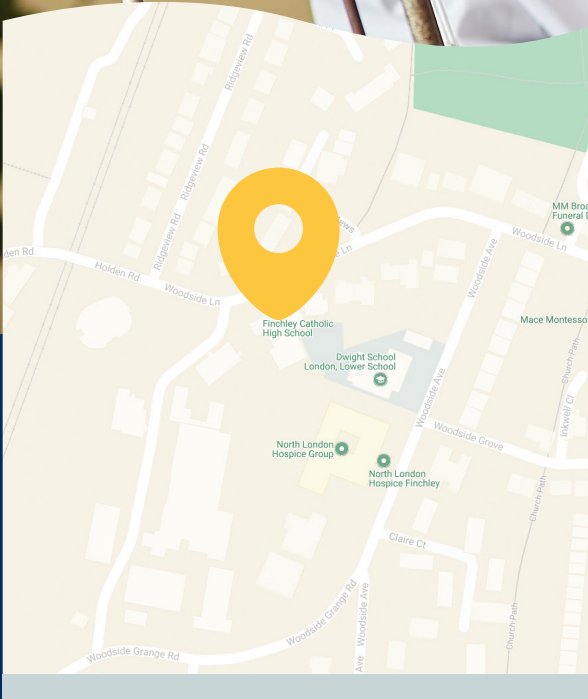
Performing Arts building opened by Emma Bunton of Spice Girls fame.



2014

Canon Parsons Sixth Form Centre opened by Bishop John Sherrington.





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