

ST MARGARET'S

SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

*Putting girls first
in everything we do*

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



WELCOME

Founded in 1846, St Margaret's School for Girls, the only girls' school in Aberdeen, caters for up to 400 pupils ranging in age from 3 to 18. It has gone from strength to strength, adapting to the needs of successive generations.

Our special blend of innovation, challenge and support equips girls with the ambition and skills to thrive at university and beyond. Our school is large enough to offer flexibility and choice in terms of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, but small enough to ensure that each girl is well known within a friendly and family atmosphere. St Margaret's staff are experts in teaching girls and are committed to supporting each girl both inside and outside the classroom.

We believe that a single-sex education offers girls the space in which their intellectual and physical identity can blossom, a space which is free from stereotype, full of challenge and rich with opportunity and care. It is in this sort of environment that girls can develop the self-esteem and confidence which will enable them to make a positive impact on the world.

We provide our pupils at all ages and stages with a variety of extra-curricular opportunities. Music, sport, debating, drama, dance, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and many other activities are available. These are enjoyable in themselves, but they also help girls to develop the skills and personal qualities which will contribute to success and happiness in and beyond school.

Our all-through community, from nursery to sixth year, provides abundant leadership opportunities and fosters a sense of belonging. At St Margaret's there are no female stereotypes and no glass ceilings: we provide opportunities for girls to grow in any direction their talents take them.



Our relationship with parents has been crucial to the school's success throughout its history. We know that parents are entrusting to us that which is most precious to them and are partners in their child's education. That partnership begins from the first contact with the school and for many continues long after a child leaves us.

This prospectus tells only a small part of our story. We look forward to welcoming you to St Margaret's and showing you what a special place this is.

Anna Tomlinson

Miss Anna Tomlinson, M. Theol (Hons), PGCE

BENEFITS OF AN ALL-GIRLS ENVIRONMENT

The benefits of single-sex education for girls are manifold. Research proves that girls learn best when they feel confident and happy.

In girls' schools, teachers can create the right emotional atmosphere to optimise participation and maximise progress. With only girls in the classroom and on the sports field, they have the freedom to be – and become – themselves, and to explore fully all of the opportunities available to them. We create a learning environment in which girls feel comfortable in taking risks and asking questions. Research by the Girls' Schools

Association shows that fifth and sixth year girls in single-sex education are almost twice as likely to take physics and chemistry as their co-educational counterparts; 80% more continue with modern languages and 70% more with mathematics. At St Margaret's the consistently high uptake of STEM subjects regularly converts to university degrees in maths, science and engineering.





Head Girl Team

“In the nursery, children are becoming involved meaningfully in their own learning through the introduction of learning journeys and through the use of floor books. They are developing their independence very well through nursery routines such as snack time and self-registration.”

EDUCATION SCOTLAND
REPORT



NURSERY

The nursery is a vital and integral part of St Margaret's, where foundations are laid in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and transition to the junior school is smooth.



We provide active learning opportunities for boys and girls aged 3 to 5 in our well-resourced nursery and outdoor area. The children's interests lead and develop our planning. We promote learning through planned and spontaneous play to encourage imagination, creativity and exploration.

Outdoor learning in our safe, enclosed playground is important to us. Initiatives such as the Wee Green Spaces project, whilst developing awareness of local green space and caring for the environment, encourage the children's independence skills, resilience, problem-solving abilities and ability to assess and

manage risk. Twice weekly, the children have the opportunity to participate in timetabled music and gym sessions with specialist teachers.

We have well qualified, enthusiastic staff, who bring a wide variety of experience to our nursery. Our nursery environment reflects the care, quality and professionalism of our staff who include a full time nursery teacher as well as qualified early years practitioners.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

The many girls who begin their St Margaret's career in our nursery or junior school enjoy the benefits of small class sizes and individual attention in their most formative years.

Numeracy and literacy are at the core of their curriculum, but class teachers also deliver lessons across a wide range of subjects, using a cross-curricular approach and employing active learning strategies. Digital learning and teaching are integrated appropriately into all areas of the curriculum. Additionally, specialist teachers are on hand to deliver PE, music, drama and French from 1 to 5 Junior, at which stage senior school specialists

take over all these subjects, along with art, often teaching in their own senior school rooms.

Our 7 Junior girls enjoy science in our new, state-of-the-art laboratories where they pursue the separate disciplines of physics, chemistry and biology. Latin is also introduced at this point. Curriculum transition from junior to senior school is, therefore, effected as seamlessly as possible.





"We are a happy and friendly school, where our girls are encouraged to do their very best in all aspects of their learning. We set high expectations for them and offer a wide range of different learning opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. The girls enjoy working and playing together and take an active part in all of their learning."

MRS NORMA MURRAY,
HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL

"We are offered many varied and stimulating opportunities within the music department, such as performing in concerts and being part of choirs and many different ensembles. Throughout the whole school, the tuition in individual instrumental lessons, and in class music lessons, is outstanding."

ADVANCED HIGHER
MUSIC PUPIL



SENIOR SCHOOL

In I Senior, girls follow a wide, balanced curriculum to develop skills and extend knowledge and experience in all areas. Curriculum choice begins at the end of I Senior when girls pick their foreign language options.



At end of II Senior, girls choose eight subjects to study at National 5, starting in III Senior. At the end of IV Senior they choose five Highers, while Advanced Highers continue to form the core of the VI Senior curriculum, in preparation for the academic rigours of university. At every stage plentiful careers advice is provided, tailored to the individual.

Independence is encouraged throughout the school, and differentiated teaching in small classes enables all to make good progress. Girls and staff alike strive for academic excellence, using the most up-to-date methods and tools. All girls are expected to do their best, and to achieve from national examinations the qualifications which are commensurate with their talents.

SIXTH YEAR

Sixth year sees the culmination of a girl's school career, and we aim to make it a memorable and rewarding experience, which launches her on the next stage of her life, with all the skills and qualifications she needs for higher and further education, and beyond.

Girls are supported throughout the year with expert guidance through the university application process. From the outset the girls work hard academically, usually sitting three Advanced Highers or a combination of Highers and Advanced Highers. The hugely enjoyable Sixth Year Conference before the start of session is just the beginning of the VI Senior enrichment course comprising a weekly programme of lectures, workshops and presentations on essential life skills and concluding with a leavers' course and formal leavers' ceremony in the last week of session. A particular highlight of the year is the annual school dance in November, ever a glamorous occasion, organised by the girls with help from the head of sixth year. The girls ruefully agree that sixth year flashes by and ends all too soon.

Once girls leave school, at any stage, they become a member of our Former Pupils' Club which meets at organised events throughout the year. This is a thriving club made up of generations of St Margaret's girls and your daughter will always be considered part of its past, its present and its future.



ST MARGARET'S
connect


St Margaret's Connect is an active online community network where former pupils and former staff can sign up and become involved in the online community. The website has news updates, event registration, career mentoring, business marketing opportunities, photo boards and the opportunity for former pupils to update information about themselves. Former pupils and staff also receive regular e-newsletters from the school to keep them informed about the latest developments and news stories; it is a great way for our former pupils to keep in touch with the school.



"We are all part of the school's present
but have also been part of its history and
will definitely be part of its future."

FP CLUB PRESIDENT

Former pupils and staff gathered
together at 170th anniversary reunion



"I have seen teachers go the extra mile for individual girls countless times, whether that's by holding lunchtime revision sessions or spending time seeking out articles that they think might interest particular pupils. The key to their commitment is that they truly respect the individuality of their pupils and strive for their success, whatever that might mean for a particular girl."

HEAD GIRL

CHOICES AND CHALLENGES

Our aim here is to have happy, confident girls who know their strengths when they eventually leave us for the wider world.



In single-sex schools, girls don't just enjoy equal opportunities, they enjoy all opportunities, whether they be in the arts, sport, science, expeditions, career insights or other extra-curricular activities. Offering a wide choice is key to bringing out their full potential. Each girl can certainly discover for herself what she is good at and have the chance to develop her talents to the full with the support of our dedicated staff. We actively encourage girls to represent the school in the wider community and regularly celebrate their successes.

We see all our girls as potential leaders, whether in titled roles or simply as role models for others. Leadership opportunities are

legion at St Margaret's. The Head Girl team with their cohort of prefects, the Junior and Senior House captains, sports captains, club leaders and form class officers are just some of the areas where girls make an indispensable contribution to the life of the school and the promotion of our ethos. From ages 3 to 18, our girls comprise a single community where the older girls mentor, care for and inspire their juniors.

We have high expectations of our girls, socially and academically. As they leave us, pupils have a strong sense of self and a determination to succeed. They are confident, resilient and ready to make the most of life's challenges.

CULTURE

The foundations of art and design are laid in the early years, with specialist art and design teaching from 5 to 7 Junior.

Girls at all stages from 1 Junior to VI Senior have the chance to be involved in our drama productions, not just performing, but producing and directing too. Our show club is open to 5, 6 and 7 Junior girls who ultimately perform in a local theatre. In 7 Junior they are introduced to the works of Shakespeare, and all participate in a public performance, most recently of Richard III, Hamlet and Macbeth. Our annual senior show is produced in a city centre theatre to give girls the exciting experience of performing in a real theatre to packed audiences. Theatre and cinema visits, relating to our curriculum in English and foreign languages are a regular occurrence.

“Model UN and public speaking have done an enormous amount for my confidence, communication skills and career prospects.”

VIS GIRL

St Margaret’s has a strong musical tradition, and talents are nurtured from early years through class music and additional instrumental tuition and voice training. In a variety of choirs, orchestras and musical ensembles, girls delight audiences in many events both in school and the wider community. Our biennial musical tours abroad are unfailingly popular.

Throughout their time at school, girls’ communication skills are developed through debating and presentations to their friends or in school assemblies. In I Senior all girls are entered for the English Speaking Board examinations, while all girls who wish it participate in competitive public speaking and debating through their school careers. Model United Nations conferences enable girls to develop both debating and diplomatic skills.

The foundations of art and design are laid in the early years, with specialist art and design teaching from 5 to 7 Junior. Our new art studio at the heart of the school is flooded with natural light and is an inspirational place to work. Girls’ work includes fine art areas such as drawing, painting and print making as well as design specialisms such as jewellery, textiles, product and graphic design with the use of subject specific ICT. Girls regularly enjoy success in national art and design competitions as well as achieving success throughout National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher SQA examinations.





"Having the opportunity to take part in the vast selection of sports at St Margaret's, I have been able to build my confidence and work with so many girls in both the junior and senior school. Being part of the netball team in particular has not only allowed me to become a more motivated individual but has also contributed to making our school a close-knit community."

NETBALL CAPTAIN

SPORT

We believe in the development of the whole child, the fostering of an 'active life' philosophy and the promotion of a lifetime investment in sport and physical activity.



Our playing fields and pavilion are situated two miles away at St Margaret's Place, off Summerhill Road, near King's Gate. Our facilities include two full-sized hockey pitches, which convert to a 400m running track in the summer, five tarmac tennis courts and a grass netball court. We also make regular use of the sporting facilities available at Aberdeen Sports Village and the Aquatics Centre among others.

Physical education from Nursery onwards introduces girls to a vast range of sporting activities. We enter teams for many competitions in many disciplines and have gained significant successes over the years. Sport inculcates self-discipline,

communication and time-management skills, team ethos and the resilience to accept disappointment with fortitude and victory with modesty. We value effort and sportsmanship as much as winning. We believe in the development of the whole child, the fostering of an 'active life' philosophy and the promotion of a lifetime investment in sport and physical activity.

Everyone takes part in Sports Day, some as very serious competitors in our championship races, others just for the sheer fun of participating with their friends. We hope that by fostering a love of sport we shall help our girls to continue with it through their adult lives.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

**We hope that all will benefit from a
St Margaret's education that is academically
Scottish but has a worldwide dimension to it.**

Whilst academic results and extra-curricular achievements are important, becoming a well-rounded, confident young woman is vital for success in later life. Form teachers throughout the school are the first source of support for each girl. Classes from 1 Junior to II Senior also have class prefects who act as friendly and less formal figures from whom younger girls can seek help and advice.

As an all-through school, St Margaret's is able to ensure a smooth transition and progression from junior to senior stages. New girls entering at I Senior find that the process is facilitated by an

induction day during the third term of 7 Junior; new entrants meet with girls already in school and establish friendships so that they already feel part of the whole school community by the time they begin their secondary school career.

Specialist guidance staff get to know our girls well and provide support during the important teenage years. The wellbeing of every girl is paramount; we wish to ensure that all of our pupils are happy in school and confident in their progress.

Higher education and careers guidance is provided by experienced advisers. Girls in IV Senior also participate in a careers programme, comprising external speakers and visits, and every girl in V Senior completes a week of work experience in a place of her choice.

Our ethos is a caring one: girls actively support one another and have teachers who will always do their best for them. We welcome girls of all nationalities and all faiths.

Aberdeen is a place where people from all over the world come to work, which gives us a real international flavour. Some of our girls are with us for many years and others for a shorter time, but we hope that all will benefit from a St Margaret's education that is academically Scottish but has a worldwide dimension to it.



"Starting St Margaret's in 7 Junior has been fantastic for my daughter. She has really benefitted from the input of so many specialist teachers, and the academic rigour is preparing her very well for secondary school."

PARENT OF
7 JUNIOR PUPIL





"St Margaret's girls are passionate about raising money for different charities, both international and causes closer to home. Throughout the whole school, girls work hard to raise awareness for their chosen charity. Over £12,000 is raised every year, which just goes to show the commitment our girls have to philanthropy."

CHARITIES CO-ORDINATOR

SENSE OF BELONGING

While supporting each girl to achieve her academic potential is at the heart of a St Margaret's education, it is only one aspect of the rich life of the school.

We promote physical and mental wellbeing through our extensive extra-curricular programme: talents and creativity are fostered through sport, art, music and drama. We give tomorrow's leaders a voice and a critical awareness of world issues through debating and Model United Nations. We foster compassion and care for others, near and far, through charity events such as the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and countless other fundraising activities. We offer physical challenge through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and overseas expeditions designed to develop cultural and global awareness.

There is a strong sense of belonging here. Girls and staff are proud to be part of St Margaret's and all that the school achieves. We celebrate our successes and support one another in times of need, consequently developing strong bonds of friendship.

When they leave, all girls can maintain friendships and their links with the school through the Former Pupils' Club, and our St Margaret's Connect online community. Parents and teachers are members of our very active Parent Teacher Association. Involvement in the many school events that are held helps our parents to feel part of our community.



At St Margaret's we aim to help girls develop into young women who are self-assured, resourceful and successful. Their experiences here will equip them to be future leaders able to make a difference to their chosen field. We are skilled at empowering girls and giving them the confidence to take on the world – and they do.



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