

Colfe's School

Colfe's is one of London's oldest schools. It can be traced back to the 15th century but took its name from Abraham Colfe, Vicar of Lewisham, who re-founded the school in 1652. In his will he entrusted the care of the school to the Leathersellers' livery company, which governs the school to this day.

In 1977 the school returned to independent status after 25 years as a voluntary aided boys' grammar school. For some twenty years now, Colfe's has been fully co-educational, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls: over 1040 pupils in all, from age three to 18. There is a five-form entry to Year 7. The Leathersellers' Scholarship programme enables us to select up to 12 scholars each year on fully-funded bursaries for direct entry to the Sixth Form. In so doing we draw on strong working relationships with a number of local comprehensive schools.

Colfe's old site in Lewisham was destroyed in the Second World War. In 1963 it moved to its present campus, which is a remarkably green and open space for outer London, with two additional large sports grounds nearby. All parts of the school from Nursery to Sixth Form share the site. The facilities are excellent: the school has just doubled the size of the Pre-Prep and Nursery and added a whole new building to house the Sixth Form Centre, Mathematics and Religion & Philosophy depts, and *Roebucks*, a vibrant café.

Colfe's is proud of its 360-year history but not burdened or defined by it. It is a very much a school of the present day. The teachers are relaxed (without being casual) and professional (without being stuffy about it). The pupils are a more diverse mix than in some competitor schools, and they settle into Colfe's because it is full of 'people like them'. Colfe's doesn't try to force them into a single mould – there is no recognisable 'Colfe's type of pupil'. They are lively and (just as it says in the prospectus) willing to have a go; they may forget to polish their shoes from time to time – but never on parade for the Combined Cadet Force, which is one of the most popular activities in the Senior School.

Locally and nationally the school enjoys a strong and growing reputation for all-round quality and innovation. In the last five years academic results have gone from good to excellent, and Colfe's Tougher Minds programme, which teaches pupils to concentrate and plan, won the TES Education Initiative of the Year award in 2014. Entrance is selective.

Over 60% of university entrants gain places in Russell Group institutions, including Oxford and Cambridge; 80% enter their first-choice university. GCSE results are typically around 55% A*/A; A-level results are consistently above 80% A*/B. Art, music and drama are strong throughout the school. Competitive sport has a high priority: Colfe's teams have won national netball competitions in recent years and two recent leavers have played rugby for England at U16, U17 and U18 level. Pastoral care is outstanding, based on a house system with mixed-age (vertical) tutor groups.