



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL **PROSPECTUS**

2023



ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL





WELCOME FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear students and parents/carers,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to find out more about our remarkable school. From high academic standards to excellent behaviour; aspirational goals and strong traditional Catholic ethos; St Mary's offers an education that treats its students as individuals, teaches them respect for themselves and each other, and encourages them to emerge into the wider world as well-educated, rounded, ambitious, and confident young adults.

Founded in 1851, the school is one of the oldest Catholic state schools in the country. With just eight students on its very first day, the school now has an unbroken record of service of educating generations of families from the local, and now global, community.

With a curriculum that is broad and balanced, we offer students the opportunity to participate in a wide range of enrichment activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Academically, St Mary's provides a high standard of education, with students achieving above their expected target levels and progressing to post-16 education, with many going on to higher education, including Oxbridge and Russell Group universities.

We pride ourselves on our diverse and harmonious school community, where students feel safe and well cared for, including those with special educational needs (SEND) and speakers of other languages who are beginning to learn English.

We look forward to sharing more information with you, either through you visiting our school website, or by arranging a visit to see our school in action in person.

Patrick Shields
Headteacher

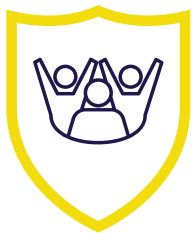
St Mary's Catholic High School is a deeply caring community. Its pupils and staff live up to their core values of being welcoming, serving others and working hard.

Ofsted - November 2021

AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic High School is a Catholic school which, together with home and the church community, provides a Christian environment in which students and staff are challenged to achieve their full potential - intellectually, socially and spiritually. The School also strives to inculcate in all its community a respect for the dignity of others as well as a sense of their own personal worth.

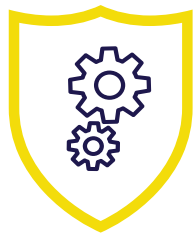
OUR CORE VALUES:



WELCOME



HARD WORK



SERVICE

Mission Statement

St Mary's Catholic High School is a caring community which has Christ at its centre. The School aims to promote mutual respect and understanding of each other and the environment, to develop the full potential of the individual, and to provide equal opportunities for all.

In pursuance of these goals, we offer every member of the school community opportunities to study the impact of the Gospel message of love through all the subjects in the curriculum and to reflect on these through a genuine experience of worship and prayer.

In order to maintain a high standard of education, we provide an atmosphere where good communication can take place, nurturing a pastoral dimension that offers appropriate support to all within the school community.

We foster links with the wider community in order that the Gospel message can be lived practically with all people caring for others and making a positive contribution to the advancement of humanity.

Pupils derive great benefit from attending this highly inclusive school where pupils feel safe and secure.

Diocesan Inspection, December 2021

THE WHOLE STUDENT



All are welcome at St Mary's, regardless of ethnic or religious background. The core values of hard work, self-respect, respect for others and morality are universal and we embrace that universality, combining them with academic excellence, allowing us to offer a first-class education to all.

The pastoral care provided by the staff to their pupils is outstanding and staff go the extra mile to ensure each individual can flourish at the school.

Diocesan Inspection, December 2021

Our aim is to produce fully rounded young adults, not simply for their own sake but because our experience shows us that employers, colleges and universities are interested in vocational experience and a range of life skills. High grades alone are not the answer to a successful career, or indeed a successful life.

The student is at the heart of everything St Mary's plans for and delivers. Our pastoral care is well thought through and well delivered, from teaching our students to cope with the stresses and strains that life can throw at us, to learning budgeting skills. We want to guide students on to the right courses that will set them on the right track for their futures as successful, fulfilled, well-rounded and happy young people.

Pupils of all ages learn about careers and the world of work, which helps them to prepare for the next stage in their lives.

Ofsted, November 2021



The school's vision is to help students feel safe, happy and secure enough to make good choices about their futures. This underpins everything we do. We operate a culture of accountability in the whole school community. If a student has an issue, then they report it, fully confident that it will be dealt with, and the appropriate action will be taken.

Leaders ensure that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to be effective citizens.

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As part of the holistic approach at St Mary's, we teach our students that their general behaviour is on a par with their academic goals. We have a consistent whole school approach with clear routines of behaviour, well communicated social norms and familiar routines bringing a sense of calm. The key emphasis in our approach to behaviour is to allow young people to self-regulate, so they develop the skills of capable adulthood.

Our school has a non-teaching team dedicated to pastoral support along with our safeguarding team. We can put in place measures to support young people experiencing difficulties. This team of staff has a range of expertise covering areas including bereavement, anxiety and exam pressures and work closely alongside other members of staff.

The good behaviour of pupils contributes to the good learning attitudes of the pupils which together creates a harmonious Catholic community where everyone is respected no matter whatever their background. This in turn supports the clear mission of the school which is to welcome, serve others and work hard.

Diocesan Inspection, December 2021

CATHOLIC LIFE

St Mary's Catholic High School is rooted in the teachings, rituals and ethos of the Church. Whilst being truly catholic, we welcome and nurture pupils of all faiths and backgrounds. The Governors and staff at St Mary's Catholic High School are committed to building and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the School, developing every individual and allowing them to grow in God's spirit.

Collective worship is an essential part of life at our school. It affords our students and staff the opportunity to nurture, develop and celebrate their faith. In addition, it offers students and staff the chance to explore and understand the core values at the heart of our school's mission statement and promotes a shared language of beliefs to help continue to build our inclusive community.

Pupils respond positively to the school's strong Catholic ethos and outstanding pastoral care provided to each pupil by the staff of the school.

Diocesan Inspection, December 2021

In addition to marking the major liturgical events and seasons of the year, special Masses are also held, including a Welcome Mass for new students and their parents/carers and a Leavers' Mass for Year 11 students and their parents/carers.

Student led House and Year Group assemblies are held each week, following the school's themed liturgical calendar. There is a wide variety of observation depending on the time in the liturgical year, e.g. Lent and Advent. Other regular areas of focus include assemblies and liturgies based on Remembrance, Holocaust Memorial Day, Mental Health Awareness, and other themes.

In addition, outside speakers from various charities and organisations, such as CAFOD, are invited to present assemblies, often linked to special projects or fundraising.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

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SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



To encourage our students to consider their place in the wider world, we serve our school community in a number of ways. These activities are fundamental to Catholic education and core to Catholic discipleship. We encourage students to participate in a range of activities that embody our distinctiveness as a Catholic school and empower the young people in our care through Faith in Action initiatives.

Throughout the school year, we invite and encourage our pupils to pray for, and to actively support, those in need. We send food parcels, particularly at Christmas, through local charities such as Croydon Commitment. We raise money for a wide variety of charities and engage in other appeals and events that take place as need arises. We are proud of the generosity shown by the school community.

In addition to fundraising, students regularly have the opportunity to meet with those in positions of responsibility in our community, giving them the chance to discuss current issues and to question policy and practices. In recent years visitors have included: local Croydon MPs, the Shadow Chancellor, business leaders, representatives of national charities, and others.

When a student puts on the St Mary's uniform, they represent our school and we encourage them to be of service to the community both today and in the future.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships, how to respect others, to value democracy and the rule of law, and to stand up against discrimination.

Diocesan Inspection, December 2021

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at St Mary's Catholic High School, both within the classroom and beyond, intends to awaken curiosity in our students about the world around them, and is designed to be delivered in a motivational and engaging way that is inclusive and accessible to all.

We seek to educate the whole person through a curriculum based on Christian principles and centred on the needs and aspirations of our students, their parents, and the wider community. We strive to develop strength of character and confidence by stressing the pursuit of success, concern for others, and respect for each student's individual talents.

Whilst examination outcomes are important, we recognise that there is more to school than just this, we therefore aim to offer access to a range of high-quality enrichment activities which aims to broaden students' horizons beyond the classroom.



Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They take pride in their work. They behave well. Low-level disruption is not tolerated.

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Everything we do is underpinned by our Christian faith and our belief in quality of opportunity for all. Students' starting points in life, and their social and economic status, should not define their endpoints

ENRICHMENT

Extracurricular activities are of utmost importance in the lives of student's at St Mary's They aim to boost our student's confidence to interact socially with others; extend their social networks; and provide them with new skills and abilities. Above all, they offer an important space to have fun and relax away from the pressures of formal schoolwork.

Enrichment activities on offer include choirs, football, basketball, art, netball, film and culture, science, computers and gaming, cricket, Duke of Edinburgh, baking, debating, chess and more!

Staff provide a very wide range of extracurricular and enrichment activities for pupils.

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What are the benefits of enrichment activities?



Academic performance is improved.

Students who participate in extra activities get better grades. This is because of the skills they learn from participating in different activities. Students learn organizational and time management skills whilst improving self-confidence.



Time management skills are improved.

Students who participate in extra activities learn time management as they juggle their availability between academics and extra activities. They learn how to keep themselves engaged in free time, giving rise to greater productivity across the board. Whilst time management plays an important role in exams (how to write full answers in the time available), it is also a skill that will be used throughout life.



Learn new and useful skills.

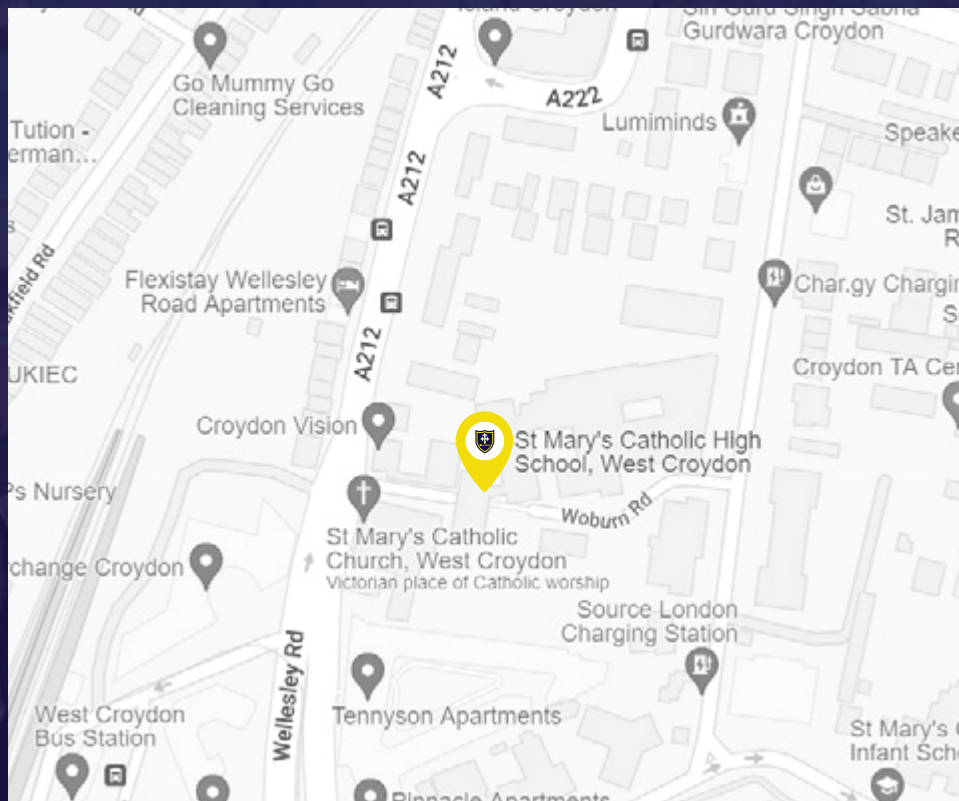
Students who participate in sports and other enrichment activities learn new skills that are useful in all areas of school life. These students are likely to have better leadership, teamwork, social and time management skills and prove to themselves, time and again, that they can grow and build relations with others.



Sense of Commitment.

Students who participate in extra-curricular activities learn how to value the importance of commitment; both their own and that of others.





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