





EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN

In an ever-changing world, in school and beyond, our priority is to prepare our students to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Our role is to enable and inspire all students to achieve the very best they can academically and to help them develop the transferable skills needed to build successful futures.

We have developed a G.R.E.E.N. vision for the school based on core values of: Growth; Resilience; Energy; Empathy and Newness. These values are the foundation of our school's ethos and we believe these are qualities which will enable everyone in the school community to thrive in all aspects of their lives. They are embedded in the life of Walthamstow School for Girls and they reflect our school motto *Neglect not the gift that is in thee*.

As you read through the pages of this prospectus, we hope you will enjoy finding out more about the experience of being a student at our school and what G.R.E.E.N. means to us.



WELCOME

We are all very proud of our school and our community of students, staff, parents, carers and governors who work together to provide an outstanding learning environment.

Every one of our 900 students is valued equally as an individual with different gifts and talents, reflecting our commitment to the school motto.

The school has an exceptional track record of academic excellence and of supporting students in making progress from Year 7 to 11. These achievements come through a combination of high expectations, inspirational teaching and learning experiences which equip the girls with the skills to become confident and independent learners. We offer strong pastoral support and regular monitoring, target setting and dialogue with students and parents or carers. In terms of examination performance, the school is consistently amongst the top performing non-selective schools in the country.

The girls take great pride in their school. They recognise the high quality of the education they receive and the rich programme of extra-curricular activities on offer and they enjoy being part of our community. Staff, likewise, recognise what a special place this is. Our teaching and support staff are of the highest calibre. They are well-qualified, experienced and often stay at the school for many years.

Consequently, students are taught by specialist teachers who know them well and find the environment rewarding and fulfilling.

The school's uniqueness and success has been recognised by OFSTED inspectors, who described it as: 'an exceptional school'. Research shows that a single sex environment empowers girls to realise their potential. Our students are encouraged to express themselves, to be creative, to have high aspirations and to challenge stereotypes. There is a strongly anti-discriminatory ethos at this school.

Our responsibility is to prepare our students effectively for further education, careers and future lives. I want the young women who leave this school to have well-balanced perspectives, good interpersonal skills, a strong sense of morals and justice, and a desire to play an active part as citizens in 21st century society.

Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds, with many races, religions, cultures and languages represented. We celebrate our diversity and welcome the opportunities it gives us to learn from each other.



Our home-school partnerships are very strong. For the girls to maximise their potential, it is vital that parents or carers and the school work productively together and there are many opportunities, formal and informal, for dialogue. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you would like to arrange an appointment to visit. If you do decide to join us, I look forward to working with you.

Meryl Davies, Headteacher

LEARNING FOR LIFE

‘This is a place that proves with the right teaching and school culture, anyone can thrive. The strong academic atmosphere, which is backed up by a great pastoral system, means there’s no reason any girl should get left behind.’ THE GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE 2016

Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching and learning are at the heart of our school. Our teachers enjoy their profession and aim to give students a love of learning.

One of the school's strengths is the quality of the staff we are able to attract and keep. Well-qualified graduate teachers make lessons stimulating and challenging.

A variety of teaching methods are used: one-to-one, paired and group work – depending on the subject and topic. Teachers also review how they teach, to cater for individuals' preferred learning styles, so that all girls can achieve their best.

Some classes are taught in mixed ability groups, others in sets by ability. Regular assessment ensures each student's progress is reviewed and girls can expect to be moved depending on the progress they make.

In Year 7, students have a 'G.R.E.E.N. Building Learning Power' lesson each fortnight to help them develop life-long learning skills.

Home Learning

All students are expected to complete home learning, which is set daily in line with the school's home learning policy. The amount and type of this work varies according to the year and subject.

All girls receive a home learning timetable, which is included in their planner, indicating what is expected of them. Parents and carers are asked to check that their daughter is recording and completing this additional work and to sign the planner once a week. It will also be signed weekly by the form tutor.

Regular completion of these tasks extends and reinforces learning, as well as teaching important skills: self-reliance, effective organisation and meeting deadlines.

Assemblies

Assemblies are an important opportunity for students to meet, reflect and celebrate together as a year group or larger group. They are carefully planned to be suitable for students of all faiths and none, forming a key part of the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education programme.



ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR ALL

‘Thank you so much for all your hard work in teaching, inspiring and supporting our daughter who has taken advantage of all the creative opportunities. We’re so proud of her achievements.’ PARENT

The school motto, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee*, underpins all the school’s work. Every girl is expected, encouraged and supported to achieve her very best academically. Girls work with enthusiasm and interest in classrooms where there is a calm atmosphere suitable for learning. The broad and balanced curriculum ensures that all girls are equipped to continue their education, having achieved the best possible examination results in a wide range of subjects.

The Curriculum

In Key Stage 3, all girls study the same balanced range of subjects. Details of these can be found on the school’s website.

In Key Stage 4, all students study the core subjects and they have the opportunity to personalise their learning by choosing from a range of optional subjects according to their talents and interests. Girls are given individual guidance and support on making important choices about their future. Further curriculum details are available on our website.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum provision is regularly reviewed and may be revised slightly from year to year to meet the needs of particular year-groups or in response to government requirements.

Religious Education

In Key Stage 3, this is taught as part of the Humanities curriculum. At Key Stage 4, RE is taught as a separate subject.

Sex Education

The Governing Body believes that all girls should receive appropriate, timely sex education and no girl should face changes to her body in ignorance. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from any part of this programme should make a written request to the Headteacher.

Examination Results

The school achieves results which are consistently well above the national average at Key Stage 4 and we are recognised for the excellent progress made by students in the five years they are with us. The results our girls achieved in the most recent examinations can be found in the pocket at the end of this prospectus and on our website.





'There's a safe and energising spirit within our school.'

STUDENT





STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

‘Staff work hard to inspire students to embrace the school motto
Neglect not the gift that is in thee.’ OFSTED

In January 1890, a circular stated that a ‘school for girls’ was to be opened in Walthamstow, described as a pleasant suburb on the borders of Epping Forest. Hoe Street was almost a country road, with a few houses on either side and meadows in which were sheep, cattle, hawthorn and wild roses.

After a period in the late 20th century as a grammar school, then as a senior high school for 14-18 year-olds, in 1986 the school once again became a ‘school for girls’ between the ages of 11-16.

School uniform was introduced in 1910 and from that day to this the colour has been green, though the styles have changed.

In 1925, the Greek Theatre was opened by the renowned actress, Miss (later Dame) Sybil Thorndike. It still plays a very important part in the life of the school as a unique performance space, play area and outdoor classroom.

Today, Walthamstow School for Girls continues to offer a high quality education for all girls, through both the formal curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular enrichment activities.

The school itself is a unique blend of the traditional and the forward-looking, embodied in our listed buildings and recently built modern facilities. The original oak-panelled Hewett Hall bears the names and achievements of the early students, while the Norris Hall provides a contemporary theatre-style auditorium.

Walthamstow School for Girls is a place of high aspirations and achievement. Our students travel extensively to participate in enterprise and public speaking competitions, music and drama performances and sporting events.

The school has specialist status in Mathematics and Computing. The school was also awarded an additional specialism in Applied Learning, which enabled us to expand the range of courses students could choose to study.

The school has won many national awards, most recently for being one of the top non-selective schools for high attainment and for value-added progress nationally. We were awarded one of four national *Times Educational Supplement* High Aspiration awards in 2015 and we are one of the few state schools featured in *The Good Schools Guide 2016*.

We are a Fronter Gold Champion School in recognition of our innovative work in technology. We have International School status, hold the Diversity Award kitemark and are proud to be a Stonewall Champion school. As a partner in the Waltham Forest Challenge and a Leading Edge school, we foster excellent professional links and we hold a quality mark for continuing professional development.

Our Food Focus group, allotment and other initiatives have ensured that we are known in the borough as a truly ‘green’ and healthy school. Even the school blazer is made from recycled bottles! We are a Food for Life National Flagship School and have been awarded Green Flag status.

We are a long-established school, but our focus is firmly on the future success of our students. Our school motto is as relevant today as it was in the last century and along with our G.R.E.E.N. values ensures that students continue to receive a progressive and forward-thinking education in a fast-changing technological world.



Walthamstow School for Girls is known locally as 'the green school' which inspired us to develop a G.R.E.E.N. vision that embodies our shared ethos for the school community of students, staff, parents/carers and governors. Our G.R.E.E.N. values also reflect our school motto 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee' and provide students and staff alike with the tools to achieve their best and be prepared to challenge themselves in a safe and supportive environment. Here we have set out the core values which underpin our G.R.E.E.N. vision.

G

Growth: *encouraging a 'growth mindset', which involves effort and perseverance*

Based on the work of Professor Carol Dweck, having a 'growth mindset' is about believing that we can improve by adopting a positive attitude to learning. We learn not by judging ourselves, but by becoming growth-oriented individuals. People with a growth mindset are motivated to improve, they reflect on their progress and think about how they could do even better. For our students this is about effort, practice and not giving up.

R

Resilience: *accepting that making mistakes and facing challenges are a part of learning*

On any learning journey there will be obstacles to overcome. With resilience, we can break through any barriers. The key is not to be fearful and to accept mistakes and challenges as a normal part of learning. With our students we use 'the learning line' diagram as a symbol of the experience of learning: the challenge, the uncertainty, the climb, the breakthrough and consolidation to help us understand where they are in the process.



E

E

N

Energy: *demonstrating a focus and enthusiasm for learning in the broadest sense*

Energy is at the centre of our vision and encourages focus and enthusiasm for learning from everyone. It encompasses the positive attitude to learning we want to see in our students and is demonstrated in our approach to teaching, as well as in parental/ carer involvement and the commitment of our school governors. Energy helps to provide the spark for creativity and supports all our G.R.E.E.N. values.

Empathy: *promoting self-awareness, an understanding and respect for others in the community*

We promote community spirit in many dimensions. Learning to understand and share the feelings of others is an important part of growing up. Students are encouraged to develop self-awareness as well as an understanding of others. They learn respect for others despite any differences, whatever they may be. None of us are alone on our learning journey and through collaboration, making the most of each other's strengths and aptitudes, we can all achieve more.

Newness: *being open to new ideas, techniques, technologies and challenges*

The ability to be inquisitive and not afraid of new concepts is vital in today's world. Our school community is keen to embrace the new and unfamiliar; to learn about new ideas and techniques and to accept the challenge of new technologies. We encourage students to step outside their comfort zones to engage in deeper learning and we support teachers to take the risks necessary to teach new things and use new approaches leading to higher achievement.

RESPONDING TO STUDENT NEEDS

‘Inclusive care for individuals lies at the heart of the school’s ethos and culture.’ OFSTED

Support for Learning

Girls are supported in their learning according to individual needs. Our Language and Learning Development faculty ensures that students with special educational needs are assisted by teachers and learning support assistants, as appropriate, to make good progress.

We work in close liaison with partner primary schools so that we have relevant information before students transfer to the school. Parents and carers are fully involved in the faculty’s work and are informed of their daughter’s progress at all stages. Specialist teachers support students for whom English is an additional language. Booster classes help girls to maximise their achievement, while literacy and numeracy classes provide additional support with basic skills and the core subjects.

The progress of all students, including the most able, is monitored carefully. A wide range of in-class and extra-curricular activities is provided to extend and challenge the most able.

Care and Guidance

We believe that happy girls will be successful girls. Our pastoral system supports our students’ academic and social experiences. In Year 7, each girl is placed in a tutor group, under the leadership of a year group Student Progress Leader. Usually, girls will remain with the same personal tutor until they complete Year 11.

The tutor is an important person in a student’s life, getting to know each girl individually and meeting with their tutor group twice daily. Tutors record students’ attendance and punctuality, as well as helping them to resolve any minor difficulties they might experience. The tutor monitors each student’s progress towards the achievement of academic targets.

The school has a qualified counsellor to support any girl whose personal life is undermining her chances of success and provides learning mentors to help those students who have a barrier to learning.





AN INSPIRING PLACE TO LEARN

‘I love the mix of old and new buildings – and the school grounds have so many different places to explore.’ STUDENT

The buildings and facilities make a stunning learning environment for our students. The £18 million rebuild project, completed in 2010, dramatically extended and enhanced our accommodation. We have state-of-the-art facilities in Science, Technology and Performing Arts, as well as a fantastic dining hall, two assembly halls and social areas. Facilities include:

- ◆ Eight Science laboratories
- ◆ Purpose-built sports hall and multi-use games area
- ◆ Top of the range lecture theatre
- ◆ Two Drama studios
- ◆ Two specialist Music classrooms, two recital and four practice rooms
- ◆ Spacious library and Learning Resources Centre
- ◆ Redesigned Technology workshops
- ◆ Five top-of-the-range ICT suites
- ◆ Specialist Food Technology, Textiles and Art rooms
- ◆ High specification networked PCs and laptops

Situated in beautiful landscaped grounds, the school's outside space encourages play and creativity as well as quiet reflection and study. Unusually for a London school, Walthamstow School for Girls is surrounded by mature trees and lawns. The paths wind around pretty garden borders creating a series of intimate and varied spaces, from the pond area to the raised terrace, from the play areas to the Greek Theatre. Our allotment area invites students to learn how to grow fruit and vegetables, some of which are then used by our chef. The girls really make the most of their lovely surroundings, come rain or shine!



NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT

'Few schools in similar contexts do as well as this school to prepare students so well for life.' OFSTED





DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL YOUNG WOMEN

'It's a great school to work in and the well-being of students is central to the school's ethos.' STAFF SURVEY

Our role is to educate tomorrow's women to be confident, articulate and able to discuss and debate intelligently. Through a range of activities and opportunities, girls are helped to develop their leadership qualities, their sense of community and global responsibility as citizens.

Every girl in the school has the chance to participate actively in the life of the school. Students present assemblies, perform at school and in the community, fundraise for charity and host school events.

Our well-established School Council includes elected representatives from each tutor group who meet with senior staff to decide on a programme of activities and to debate issues relevant to school life and the wider world. Girls also invite guests to speak on a range of current issues.

Effective careers advice is essential. Young women need expert guidance, up-to-date information and good decision-making skills to make individual choices, rather than opting for stereotypical paths.

They need to know where their choices will lead and to become familiar with work-related skills. All girls currently go out on work experience and have a professional interview – many have individual interviews with trained Careers Officers.

We reward students for their excellent achievement and hard work through an established merit and awards system. Girls' successes are celebrated publicly with the school community and personally at various ceremonies. After Year 11, students are invited back to school to celebrate their examination achievements at the annual Presentation Evening.

We believe that extra-curricular activities extend students' interests in the wider world, develop self-confidence and deepen their subject knowledge. There are many opportunities beyond the timetabled lessons for girls to pursue their individual gifts and talents.

Activities on offer include clubs for multimedia, origami, ICT, languages, sport, gardening, engineering, debating and so on. Music and performing arts rehearsals take place at lunchtime and after school.



Sporting activities, clubs and matches are organised by the PE staff. Educational trips – locally, in London, throughout the UK and abroad – are also a feature of school life. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is now well-established and helps broaden students' experiences.

Our Learning Resources Centre is open daily before and after school. We are fortunate to have two librarians who help the girls with individual research skills and support teachers by providing further learning materials.

OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

‘The school has identified and nurtured talents I didn’t even know existed in my child!’ PARENT

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The girls feel confident, secure and happy when teachers and families support each other. We expect families to support our school policies and to sign the Home-School Agreement.

Before starting at the school, all successful applicants are invited to meet a member of staff who will introduce them to the life of the school and explain what changes to expect. This programme continues throughout the girls’ first half term.

The student planner is an essential tool in the three-way communication between student, home and school. A daily point of contact, it contains details on uniform, timetable and the school day, home learning arrangements and expectations. Parents and carers can use it to send notes to their daughter’s tutor and to teachers.

Consultation evenings are held every year, which parents or carers are expected to attend with their daughters. Additionally, termly progress reports are sent home. Parents and carers are welcome to discuss their daughter’s progress at other times by appointment. The Headteacher also holds a weekly ‘surgery’ by appointment.

The school newsletter, *The Greensheet*, comes out weekly and is sent electronically to parents or carers and students. It contains reminders of important dates and details of all events taking place at school. Once a term, we publish our *Greensheet Plus* with more news of the girls’ achievements.

Reaching out to the World

Our school enjoys strong links with local primary and secondary schools, as well as further and

higher education institutions, through its Specialist School projects, and as part of the Challenge Partners programme.

We are committed to our work as an extended school, for instance, our community ICT projects which are aimed at parents and the local community. Our Community Liaison Officer coordinates links with community groups, promotes local clubs, activities and opportunities to our students, and helps with lettings.

We have an active Alumnae Association for past students and our current students are involved in a wide range of community and charity-related initiatives. We have links with schools in other parts of the world and have raised over £30,000 to support the rebuilding of a school in Pakistan following the floods.

‘There is a positive environment for girls that creates drive and ambition.’ PARENT







NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE



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