

18th September 2026

Fitzharrys School Receives Outstanding Recognition for its Research Community and Culture

Fitzharrys School has been recognised at the prestigious Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) Awards 2026, receiving a highly commended award for their outstanding work on their Research and Community Culture.



Fitzharrys School was recognised for creating a culture of student research. The school has had significant growth in its research, with judges being impressed by the breadth of research, and by the novel approaches students have taken. The research projects were noted for going beyond the usual project scope, including attempts to tackle challenging research questions, with brilliant examples of student-led research in action. It was noted that this has only been possible because of the ongoing dedication of staff in supporting the students.

Fitzharrys School Staff comments:

“I am passionate about wildlife and conservation, and as the school makes improvements to its grounds (planting trees, wildflower meadow, and bugs

hotels), IRIS gives a fantastic opportunity for students to engage in research and measure an increase in biodiversity.”

Mr Steve Johnson, Science Teacher

“IRIS has been an invaluable team to support us developing research skills in our students. We have groups in year 9, 10 and 12 completing research on projects ranging from the size of glaciers in Iceland, to making esters with ionic liquid catalysts. My favourite part is taking our students to the IRIS conference which shows exactly them how a professional research conference is organised, and gives them the opportunity to present and discuss their results. Several students have then decided to pursue a career in STEM research.”

Dr Severine Ouvry, second in Science and project lead

‘It is wonderful to have the superb work of our students recognised. They deserve this award for the fascinating research they do, all outside of their lessons. This is part of an excellent culture of research in our Science faculty. The teachers have further raised aspirations and interest amongst our students.’

Mr Will Speke, Headteacher

IRIS comments:

“At IRIS, we believe young people should not just learn about science and its role in society, but help shape it.

At a time when the curriculum review is asking how education can become more relevant, inclusive and responsive to the future, we believe research and innovation should be part of every young person’s education, so they can see themselves as the problem solvers our future depends on. Congratulations to all our IRIS award winners this year.”

Dr Jo Foster, Director, Institute for Research in Schools

About IRIS:

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) is a UK charity that wants to change the culture of UK education so that every young person can take part in real research.

IRIS supports schools across the UK to connect students with real research, helping them build confidence, curiosity and a clearer sense of where science can take them.