




Fitzharrys School

Aspiration • Opportunity • Integrity





'Leaders have planned a comprehensive approach to develop pupils' character.'

Ofsted

Ethos & Vision

Aspiration • Opportunity • Integrity

These three words capture what we stand for, what we provide for our students, and what we want them to demonstrate and embrace at every point during their time at Fitzharrys.

Aspiration – We want each student and member of our community to achieve what they are capable of. This means aiming for their very best in every lesson and every opportunity. Staff work hard to ensure students know just how much they can achieve, alongside providing the support and know-how to help them meet their goals. Our focus on a vibrant and engaging curriculum, allied with nuanced support, enables our students to aim high and achieve great things.

Opportunity – To hit their high aspirations our students need opportunities. This comes in three clear forms: in the classroom, super-curricular, and extra-curricular. Students' primary opportunity is through their engagement with, and learning from, their lessons. This learning allows them to access knowledge, skills and perspectives that help them achieve their potential. Our super-curricular activities allow subjects to enhance what is taught in the classroom with events, trips, and activities that secure their understanding in different contexts. These, alongside our extra-curricular activities, such as Duke of Edinburgh awards and school performances, provide opportunities that educate, widen horizons, and build self-confidence.

Integrity – We want every student to develop and build this key characteristic whilst at Fitzharrys. Trust, decency, sincerity, and truthfulness are core values not just for life at Fitzharrys, but also for life in our community and for when our students leave school. Not only do our staff model this key quality, but they also work with our students to ingrain integrity in how they approach every task, encounter, and challenge they face.



Welcome to Fitzharrys School

There is real warmth in the welcome you receive when you join Fitzharrys, underpinned by a strong sense of ambition, pride and belonging.

I am very proud to be the Headteacher of Fitzharrys, a fantastic school where students have a wide range of opportunities to develop, thrive and achieve. Our superb team of staff are committed to helping every student reach their full potential, working with care and expertise to provide personalised challenge and support. We want our students to be the very best they can be, and we do everything we can to make that happen. This is evident in the enthusiasm, focus, and achievements of our students. Great teaching and learning are at the heart of what we do, complemented by a wide range of experiences and exciting opportunities in and out of the classroom.



Our ethos is centred on Aspiration, Opportunity, and Integrity. These principles underpin the education we provide, equipping our students with the knowledge, skills, and resilience they will need to succeed in their future endeavours.

We are always keen for people to come and visit us. Meeting our staff and students will give you a real insight into what our great school has to offer. Contact us to book your visit, or to arrange a phone call or online meeting.

Best wishes,
Will Speke
Headteacher

Quality • Opportunity • Collaboration • Ambition • Community



Fitzharrys is part of the Abingdon Learning Trust, a family of schools rooted in local communities.

Our vision is a bold one:

'To nurture curiosity and fuel a passion for learning – shaping confident individuals and resilient communities, stronger together and ambitious for the future.'

For our students, this means opportunity rich education; the chance to experience new things – in sport, music, science, languages, computing, and the arts; through trips and visits delivered by authors, engineers, university lecturers, employers, actors, musicians, politicians – authentic learning experiences. We endeavour to make the connection between what our young people are learning and the potential it has to change their lives in the future, preparing them to take their place as active, caring, compassionate and understanding citizens in the 21st century.



I am extremely proud of the ethos and community in our schools, shaped by Abingdon Learning Trust. We believe in the power of young people to change the world; they just have to be shown how.

Julie Tridgell
Director of Secondary Education

Aspiration

We want our students to achieve their very best, to develop a wide range of skills and in-depth understanding. Our strong results, high attendance, and positive working atmosphere show the impact of our collective ambition.

We have high aspirations for our pupils, and this means high expectations and standards. Our focus is on students developing academically and as positive participants in the community. Attendance levels at Fitzharrys are high because students enjoy coming to school. Our students are encouraged to aim for 100% attendance as there is a clear link between excellent attendance and high achievement. Students come in each day with a positive approach to learning. They are keen to participate in lessons and set challenging goals for growth.

'I am very impressed by the quality and attentiveness of the teachers. My son has made great progress.'

Parent

Our teachers are passionate about their subjects and teach our students with expert knowledge and understanding. Fitzharrys staff consistently share this love of their subjects and work hard to ensure students reach their potential. Students share this desire to learn, improve and succeed, creating a culture where learning is at the heart of what we do.

At Fitzharrys, we praise and reward students, not only academically but across every area of learning and personal development. This is of vital importance in growing each student's confidence in their own abilities and encouraging further success.

We are proud of our students and recognise the effort and progress they make across all areas of school life in a variety of ways. These include special achievement assemblies; giving out Fitzharrys Awards, which are based on our school values; and Subject Awards, which reward exceptional performance in a subject or an area of school life.


We also give House points and 'praise postcards' to students to ensure they are rewarded for effort and achievement in and out of class, as well as for contribution to the community and participation in events. Our four Houses are a well-established part of life at Fitzharrys, promoting leadership, friendly competition and community, with every student, staff member and governor belonging to either Dragon, Griffin, Pegasus or Phoenix. Sports day, inter-House competitions and termly House assemblies are focal points for our House system.





'Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They ask skilful questions and plan activities which capture pupils' interest and curiosity.'

Ofsted



‘Leaders have high expectations for pupils’ learning and behaviour. As a result, pupils learn in a calm and purposeful environment.’

Ofsted

At Fitzharrys, we believe that students should be given every chance to foster a life-long passion and deep understanding of every school subject they are taught.

We feel that a broad and balanced curriculum with clear intent and precise implementation will feed their aspirations and lead to excellent outcomes for all.

Students begin their time at Fitzharrys with a three-year Key Stage 3, where they are taught a broad range of subjects, including significant time in the core subjects. The wider curriculum includes opportunities for theory, practical and performance-based experiences through Art, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Drama, Food & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Mandarin, Music, Philosophy & Ethics, Physical Education, and Spanish.

We also offer a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme. It aims to help improve the ways our students learn, relate to others, grow socially, choose healthy lifestyles, and become independent citizens playing a positive role in society. Alongside this, our curriculum incorporates a series of Wider Learning Days in which students develop confidence, leadership, independence, and teamwork through a series of exciting challenges.

We regularly review, update, and adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Where appropriate, we will adapt our provision for individual students (for

‘The school has made significant improvements over the last few years – it is a great place to learn.’

Parent

We believe that continuing with these subjects for three years, before narrowing their subject choices for Key Stage 4, allows them to truly experience and value all subjects regardless of previous learning.

Students will go through a comprehensive and supportive Options process in Year 9 where they will be able to explore interests, career, and further study choices before making well-informed decisions. Communication is key, so we work with students, families and the staff that know them best to ensure they make the best selections for a positive and successful future.

Our Key Stage 4 students work towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification as part of their GCSEs. This means they follow a core offer of English, Maths, Science, a Humanities subject, and a Language (for those taking the separate Sciences) to develop essential knowledge and skills. Combined Science students can opt to not take a Language. Students can then specialise within a diverse range of subjects based on their interests, enthusiasms, and experiences at KS3. Subjects currently on offer include Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Food & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Music, Performing Arts, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Sociology, Spanish, and Statistics. We also maintain opportunities for learning outside of the classroom so that students have access to subjects for which they have not opted.

example, those with SEND) to meet their needs while maintaining ambition and preparing them for their next steps. Fitzharrys is proud to be a fully inclusive school, valuing and celebrating the diversity of all our young people. We aim to enable every student to achieve their full potential and have successfully developed cultures, policies, and practices that include all learners.



Opportunity

Fitzharrys students receive an exciting and enriching education both in the classroom and beyond.

From Year 7 to Year 13, students enjoy a wide range of trips and experiences that help bring learning to life. These opportunities positively contribute to our students' personal development and wider outlook on the world around them.

Visits include a trip to France to try out language skills, fieldwork on the River Thame, museum visits, theatre trips, a variety of galleries, our biannual ski trip to Italy, and our annual netball and football tour of the Netherlands. These opportunities are open for all students, with a special fund for those with financial difficulties.

A key trip and formative experience for Fitzharrys students is our Year 7 annual camp held at Youlbury. Students' confidence and teamwork blossom as they conquer challenges including the 3G swing, archery, abseiling, Jacob's ladder, fencing and so much more. It is an impressive showcase of all the great qualities Fitzharrys students develop during their first year. Year 7 camp happens during Fitzactive week, our annual extra-curricular event in which Year 8 and 9 students participate in further horizon-expanding activities, such as running a wellbeing café, rewilding projects, creating murals, and upcycling.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) inspires and enables our students to embark on a journey, push personal boundaries and gain wonderful, lifeshaping experiences along with a great sense of achievement. Fitzharrys students have the opportunity to take part in Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards. The highlight for many is the camping and expedition elements at stunning locations such as the Ridgeway, Brecon Beacons, and the Peak District.

Humanities trips to Devon, Dorchester, London, Lulworth Cove, and the Mini factory in Oxford, help to bring concepts and learning to life.

Cultural experiences are central to school life at Fitzharrys too. Our Languages department hosts

several events across the school year, such as cheese tasting, cooking tapas, and salsa dancing, while the cast and crew of our annual whole school musical experience the camaraderie of theatre culture.

Through activities and events such as these, Fitzharrys develops the whole student, supporting the great teaching and learning taking place in every lesson.





'My daughter loved year 7 camp. It was a really formative experience. She came home brimming with confidence.'

Parent



‘Both our children settled in quickly and have had numerous opportunities to get involved with various extra-curricular activities and enjoy school.’

Parent

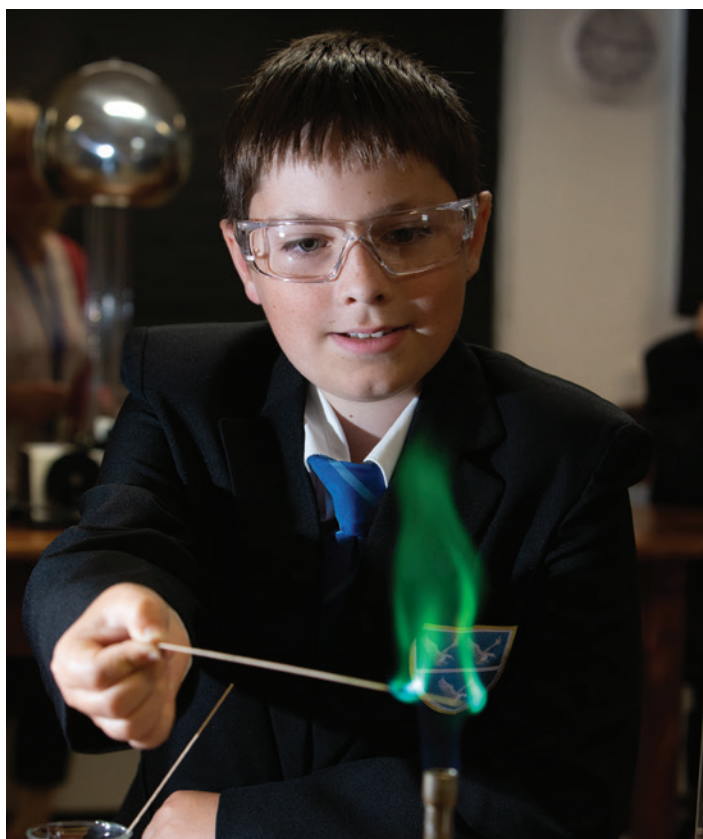


We have well-established partnerships with Abingdon School, Radley College, and other local secondaries as part of the OX14 Learning Partnership, where students work together and mentor each other. Our students regularly take part in collaborative projects in Science, English, Maths, Geography, PE, Drama, and Languages. This has led to students presenting Science projects at the Royal Society and performing Shakespeare as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival. Oxbridge application training, lectures and science events occur throughout the year.

Fitzharrys students excel in national and international competitions, including the UK Maths Challenge, and the Magistrates' Court Mock Trial Competition. Our Engineering Club students designed and built an electric Go Kart which they are racing in the national Formula 24 Greenpower Challenge, with hopes of progressing to the international stage. Students in our Eco Club have won several prizes for their gardening produce at the Abingdon Horticultural Society Show, and our Young Researchers group have presented at conferences at Oxford University and in London regarding reducing our carbon footprint.

We provide fantastic arts opportunities as we know a strong arts education is a vital key to developing creativity and critical-thinking skills. Students attend theatre performances, and our young performers and musicians play in theatres and concert halls in Oxfordshire and beyond. Our budding filmmakers have premiered their debut films at the Amey Theatre, working with the Abingdon Film Academy. Avid readers enjoy participating in the Carnegie Book Awards Shadowing programme with peers from all six senior schools in Abingdon.

Fitzharrys students also excel in the sporting arena, and we encourage sporting success by supporting students who play or perform at county, national and international level, including in Athletics, Football, Rugby, Swimming, and Tennis. Fitzharrys students have had the opportunity to watch the England Rugby Union team train, visit Wembley Stadium to see the women's FA Cup final, be trained by England Netballers, and regularly train and support each other in after school clubs.



'Leaders' ambitions inspire staff to create the best possible provision for all pupils.'

Ofsted

Integrity

At Fitzharrys, we play an important role in every student's personal development. We are helping prepare young adults who will make significant contributions to the community. Integrity is a key quality that we work with our students to develop and enhance.

We know that interpersonal skills and wider behaviours play a key role in employment, further training, and wider life. If our students can be trustworthy, sincere, honest, and show integrity in their actions, then they can succeed as they move forward. All our staff look to develop this key quality and support students in their personal development. We are proud of the approach our staff take to helping our young people. They work in a variety of ways to enhance their skills, resilience, and self-belief. It is a privilege to see our students grow these key qualities while at Fitzharrys.

Our Pastoral team look after the physical and emotional welfare of our students, ensuring all children feel safe, happy, involved in the school community, and able to perform to their full potential. The form tutor is the first port of call for any worries. We know that communication between school and home is vitally important, so we hold a 'Meet the Tutor' evening early in Year 7 to build those relationships. Tutors are supported by Heads of Year, Deputy Heads of Year, and by our Assistant Head, Personal Development.

Our unique team of Student Wellbeing Managers (SWMs) are on hand to help with any difficulties

and for emotional support. Attached to particular year groups, this team has a wide variety of skills and experiences that make them ideally suited to resolving issues and ensuring that children always have a supportive adult that they can talk to. The team are greatly valued by students, staff, and parents alike. They make a significant contribution to the happiness and success of all the students in their care.

All teachers at Fitzharrys are passionate about supporting and challenging every student in their learning. They use a range of strategies to ensure no-one is left behind. Our comprehensive staff development programme gives teachers and teaching assistants the skills and understanding to empower Fitzharrys pupils.

Fitzharrys' pastoral care includes a focus on positive mental health and wellbeing. We know that adolescence can be a challenging time with lots of pressures from social media and other sources. We help our students develop strength, resilience, confidence, and healthy attitudes, teaching them to behave with integrity.

This focus on integrity ensures students leave Fitzharrys as empathetic and well-rounded members of the community, confident in their own abilities and ready to contribute positively to whatever they do next.



'We are impressed with how quickly and compassionately any issues have been dealt with since our daughter started at Fitzharrys.'

Parent

'Pupils' relationships with staff are built on mutual respect. They know that staff have their best interests at heart and as such they feel safe, happy, and cared for.'

Ofsted



Next Steps

Exploring careers and post-16 courses

Fitzharrys fosters the development of self-motivation, communication skills, problem-solving abilities and creative enterprise that will benefit and prepare students for their next steps in life.

Fitzharrys School is fully committed to ensuring that all our students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to manage their learning and career aspirations, and to helping them become independent and productive adults who can achieve their full potential.

Through a planned programme of activities including Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), and Employability Skills, Fitzharrys School seeks to help all students take their place as qualified and responsible adults within society.

Careers-related activities, CV and application writing, and interview practice are features of our PSHE curriculum. Students meet with employers and people from a wide range of career areas during Key Stage 3 to broaden their knowledge of the variety of opportunities in their future working lives. An enterprise project in Year 9 brings additional opportunities and insight into the world of business and entrepreneurship.

All students are prepared for and take part in work experience in Year 10. They play an integral role in the process, from identifying possible placements to liaising with employers. Our students return with a fresh perspective on the world of work.

Every Year 11 student has an individual careers interview with an independent specialist advisor. They also receive information and guidance about pathways leading into our sixth form, onto a college course, or into an apprenticeship.



Our Sixth Form

We want our students to be ambitious in their career choices. JMF6 Abingdon – our joint Sixth Form with John Mason School – offers specialist teaching, high-quality careers advice, a caring and knowledgeable pastoral support team, and many opportunities and experiences designed to help students realise all of their aspirations.

We are very proud to provide a fantastic post-16 experience in JMF6. We pride ourselves on being a friendly and inclusive community. Our ethos is based on the principle that each student is an individual who is valued and whose talents are recognised and celebrated. This principle drives our tutorial programme to support students academically and personally, helping them achieve their goals.

Students at JMF6 can pick from a great range of around 30 subjects to study. They also enjoy a comprehensive programme of super-curricular and enrichment activities to develop collaborative and leadership skills including a range of academic and career-focused experiences. All students can participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and work towards the valued Extended Project Qualification.

Our students have a strong track record of progressing on to established universities, including Oxbridge, as well as to professional apprenticeships.

Full details on JMF6, including links to an individual prospectus, list of available courses, and admissions guidance, can be found on our school website.



Joining Fitzharrys

Whether you are moving up from primary to secondary school or considering an in-year transition, as well as feeling excited, it is perfectly natural to feel a little nervous. Here at Fitzharrys, we have a fantastic transition programme to make settling in simple and ensure that you are happy and confident about joining your great new school.

If you are moving up from primary school, you will receive a welcome letter from Fitzharrys as soon as your place is confirmed. This will let you know about some of the things you can look forward to before you start in September, including our transition information evening where you will get to meet other children who will be with you at Fitzharrys.

Our Headteacher and Head of Year 7 will visit Year 6 students at primary school. This is an opportunity to get to know you. It also helps us to organise the Houses and tutor groups so we can make sure you will have some friends nearby right from the very start of your time at Fitzharrys. You can ask us any questions you want, and we will do all we can to make sure that you are feeling really positive about the adventure ahead of you.

Everyone comes to Fitzharrys for Induction Day in June where you will start to find your way around the school, make new friends and meet our student Buddies: friendly faces who will be there to support you when you start secondary school. In the evening, you will come back with parents and carers to share all that you have done earlier in the day. Some of you will be

able to visit on additional days to help you feel extra confident about moving up to Fitzharrys.

All of this means that, come September, you will be ready to make a great start in your new school, feeling part of Fitzharrys from the very beginning and ready to make the most of all the fantastic opportunities that lie ahead.

Older students who may be moving into the area or wish to join Fitzharrys when the academic year has already started are very welcome to visit our school. You will have a tour with some of our students from your year group and have the chance to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to answer any questions. If you do join us, you will be assigned a tutor group and a student Buddy who will be on hand to help you out in those first few weeks.

Our excellent transition processes ensure you will settle in very quickly, allowing you to make a flying start.

We look forward to welcoming you to Fitzharrys School.



Fitzharrys School

Northcourt Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1NP

Tel: 01235 520698

email: office.4127@fitzharrys.school

www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk

 @fitzharrysschool

 @fitzharrys

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Registered office: Abingdon Learning Trust, Hendred Way,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 2AW