



**Old Palace of
John Whitgift School**
Independent Girls' School



The Palace Group

Aiming High

Realising Your Academic Potential



2017

The Palace Group
An introduction to our
provision for the most able



What is the Palace Group?

Students who have been identified as having exceptional academic potential are invited to join the Palace Group.



The Palace Group includes:

- Students who have been awarded Academic or Music Scholarships at 11+
- Students who have demonstrated exceptional ability in lessons and assessments
- Students who have been awarded Academic Scholarships or Exhibitions at 16+

This booklet outlines the specialist provision we provide for our most able students. Please contact our Palace Group coordinator Miss Chloe Reid if you would like further information.

Mentoring

Personalised guidance

All students in the Palace Group have a **staff mentor** who meets with them regularly to support them in their academic and personal development.

The one-to-one or small group format of the mentoring programme means students' progress is monitored and personalised guidance can be given. The mentoring programme is also an excellent preparation for interviews and for the tutorial teaching style favoured by top universities.



The mentor will:

- get to know the student's academic interests; encourage her to talk about what she is particularly enjoying at school, what her future plans are, what she is reading, what extra-curricular activities, PoDs, trips or events she is involved in and what extension work she is doing.
- Promote lectures, workshops, extra-curricular activities, trips and events related to her academic interests.
- discuss any concerns she may have about her studies and guide her to think through strategies for addressing these issues – is she doing too much? Afraid of making mistakes? Not challenging herself?
- encourage her to undertake a Palace Group Project (a self-directed research project on a topic outside the curriculum). This might result in a presentation, a piece of writing, a poster or even a musical composition, a play, a work of art or a dance.

In the Classroom

Intellectual challenge – every lesson, every day

The expert teaching staff at Old Palace are committed to providing a challenging curriculum for the most able.

Teachers are aware of the Palace Group students in their classes and differentiate tasks so that they are intellectually stimulated.

Tasks which require problem-solving, creativity, higher-level thinking and advanced subject knowledge are built into lessons and homework. Larger-scale projects, such as the Science Crest Award, develop students' ability to carry out independent research.

Our whole-school Assessment Criteria take into account our high expectations of our most able students. In order to achieve the top grade (1) for academic achievement on their reports, students are expected to demonstrate:

- A consistently outstanding standard of work
- Excellent conceptual understanding
- Completion of a significant number of extension tasks
- Ongoing independent background reading
- Excellent retention of learning over time
- The ability to apply learning in a new context

- Confident use of higher-order thinking skills
- Concise, eloquent and accurate written responses
- Well-structured, logical and thorough work

Crown stickers in students' exercise books indicate where a student has successfully completed an extension task, enabling parents to see the frequency with which their daughter is choosing these tasks.

Points of Departure

The curriculum is just the beginning

Targeted at Palace Group students, our vibrant programme of lectures and workshops (known as “Points of Departure” or PoDs) stimulates new interests and motivates students to explore beyond the curriculum.

These take place at school during the lunch break and are led by teaching staff and visiting speakers.

Recent PoDs have included:

- What We Owe to The Athenians
- Economic Development in Ethiopia
- The Art of Conducting
- Monks, Masters and Medicine Jars
- Diderot and the Enlightenment
- Matrices in Three Dimensions
- The Ethics of Shakespeare

Palace Group students are encouraged to attend as many PoDs as possible, including those which are targeted at an older age range (for example a Year 8 student attending a PoD for GCSE students).



Palace Group Projects and Presentations

A chance to be heard

Palace Group students are encouraged to undertake a Palace Group Project, an independent research project on a topic of their choice.

The process provides rich opportunities for Palace Group students to develop their research and presentation skills which are highly prized by universities and employers.

Recent Palace Group Projects have included:

- The Golden Section in Mathematics and Art
- The Perception of Beauty
- Henri Poincaré: a polymath
- Feminism Around the World
- The History of the Greenwich Meridian

Palace Group students are invited to share their research at our Palace Group Presentation Events in front of an audience of staff and students. These seminar-style events give students the chance to learn from their peers and discover new areas of interest whilst developing their public speaking skills.



Academic Enrichment

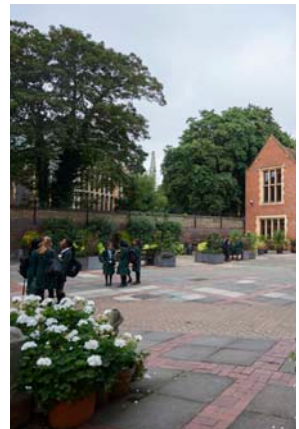
A chance to take your passion further

Our full programme of academic enrichment is targeted towards the interests and abilities of Palace Group students.

These opportunities supplement the classroom curriculum and take students beyond the requirements of examination specifications to study topics in greater depth.

Recent opportunities have included:

- IGGY Membership (an international network of gifted students)
- UKMT Mathematics Challenges
- Science Challenges
- Peterhouse College Cambridge Christopher Marlowe Competition
- Poetry Writing Competitions
- ESU "Performing Shakespeare" Competition
- "Joutes Oratoires" French Debating Competition
- Interschool Classics Quiz
- Music Composition Competitions
- Teaching Latin at The Minster School



Extra-Curricular

Opportunity to specialise and try new things

There are more than 120 clubs and societies on offer at Old Palace, where students can pursue their existing interests or try something new.

For Palace Group students these are an opportunity to meet like-minded students, spend more time pursuing a passion and discover new areas of interest.

A small sample of the extra-curricular activities available:

- A Level and Oxbridge French Club
- Advanced Flute Choir
- Advanced Maths Club
- Biology Society
- Carnegie Book Award Shadowing
- Chamber Music
- Chemistry Society
- Chess Club
- Classics Club
- Classics Film Club
- Creative Writing Club
- Critical Thinking Club
- Dance Company
- Debating Society
- Economics Society
- Engineering Club
- Feminism Society
- French Film Club
- History Society
- House Drama
- Indian Dance Company
- Inter-House University Challenge
- Italian Film Club
- Law Society
- Linguistics Club
- Medical Societies
- Oxbridge Science
- Philosophy Club
- Piano Trio
- Poetry Reading
- Polyphonic Choir
- Problem-Solving Club
- Public Speaking Club
- Russian Club
- Science Magazine
- Scratch Computing Club
- Senior Orchestra
- Spanish Film Club
- String Quartets
- Student Investors
- The Palace Players
- Trio Sonata Group

University Preparation

Personalised guidance every step of the way

In the upper school thoughts inevitably turn to students' individual aspirations in relation to higher education; Palace Group students are supported carefully through this process.

Particular attention is given to the additional requirements of the top universities such as admission tests, interviews and essay submissions. Students have the opportunity to gain the level 3 EPQ (Extended Project Qualification), which is highly regarded by universities.

Students who choose this option develop their academic writing and research skills through carrying out a substantial piece of independent research under the supervision of a member of staff, preparing them for university-level study.

Support offered to Palace Group students includes:

- GCSE results analysis and tracking
- Personalised extension work and reading lists
- Visits to Oxford and Cambridge University open days
- Peterhouse and Corpus College essay competitions
- UCAS application mentoring with specialist staff
- University admission tests (BMAT, HAT, LNAT, CAT etc.) preparation classes
- Mathematics STEP papers sessions
- Timetabled Law and Medicine preparation lessons in Year 12 and 13
- Personal Statement guidance and examples
- Interview guidance and multiple mock interviews with experienced staff
- Our series of Higher Education Information Evenings (recent topics have included Oxbridge and Medicine)





**Old Palace of
John Whitgift School**

Independent Girls' School



Aiming High



Old Palace of John Whitgift School

Old Palace Road
Croydon
CR0 1AX

Telephone: 020 8688 2027

Email: schooloffice@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk

www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk



THE
WHITGIFT
FOUNDATION

1596