Every child. Every day.
Every child. Every day.

Balancing traditional values with an energy to move forwards, The Cathedral Grammar School is the start of something extraordinary.

Our school is a place of ambition alongside preparation. We are committed to providing a balance of tradition and rigour while being curious and adventurous every day. Supported and encouraged by a culture of nurturing, knowing and growing, our students advance on their educational journeys with a solid foundation of academic success and a well-rounded character.

Our students learn from the best right from the start. Every year level benefits from the expertise of our high-calibre specialist teachers across multiple subjects. With individual attention, every child’s strengths are identified and built on, and support provided where and when needed. Our distinct school structure is designed to best suit the different learning styles of both girls and boys at different ages.

Creativity and culture play a big role here, with our unique relationship with the ChristChurch Cathedral Choir and over 250 individual music and speech and drama lessons enjoyed every week as part of the itinerant music programme. We’re also a proud sporting school, offering a wide range of activities for student participation because here at Cathedral Grammar, we recognise physical education and sport as an important part in developing well-rounded young people.
Welcome to The Cathedral Grammar School

No other full primary, independent preparatory school in Christchurch has a history as rich or as long as ours. We take huge pride in the varied, successful and happy lives of the boys and girls who have experienced Cathedral Grammar over that time.

Yet for all this history and individual and collective achievement, it is to the future we always look. While we cannot claim to know exactly what sort of world our children will inhabit in 25, 50 or 75 years time, one thing is certain: it will be a world that requires the best possible early physical, intellectual, creative, spiritual and social development of our young people, today.

We prepare children for life in an environment of nurturing, knowing and growing. This means Cathedral Grammar is a safe place for students to experiment and express themselves as they discover the joy of knowledge and what the learning journey can truly mean. Students here know they’ll be supported as they find their own path because they are encouraged to seek and try different ways and approaches.

We tell them it’s ok to try, and fail, as long as you try again, because every day is another chance to learn. And with values at our core, hearts and minds come first, and we always respect others’ views.

We are proud to be guided by the Anglican values and ethos of, Faith Hope and Love, that have formed the foundations of our school since 1881.

They say the secret to getting ahead is getting started. With our combination of strong Christian values and high-calibre staff, we look forward to the opportunity of providing your child a school experience rich in tradition and modern in outlook - preparing every individual for an ever changing world.

Scott Thelning
Principal
Our distinct offering

What sets us apart

Our school structure supports how different ages and genders learn

The Cathedral Grammar School is an independent school providing high quality education for pre-school, primary school and intermediate aged girls and boys.

Our school structure is unique among New Zealand schools and designed to ensure students have the opportunity to make the most of their formative school years. Children learn in different ways at different ages. At Cathedral Grammar, our students learn in both co-educational (mixed) and single-sex learning environments at times when this best suits their learning styles.

In Pre-School and the Junior School (new entrant to Year 3) children learn in a co-educational environment.

Students in Years 4 to 8 attend either our Boys’ or Girls’ Preparatory Schools. Allowing students the best of both worlds, single sex classes offer the opportunity to target and deliver the curriculum in the most effective and interesting style possible, while social skills are developed by sharing break times and extra curricular activities in an open, mixed environment.

This unique structure offers you choice in the selection of a school to best suit your family’s needs and greater flexibility around entry points and times along their academic journey.

A unique and special history

No other full primary, independent preparatory school in Christchurch has a history as rich or as long as ours. We are defined by our intrinsic relationship with the iconic ChristChurch Cathedral. Established as sister institutions together in 1881, our school’s original purpose was to educate the choristers of the ChristChurch Cathedral Choir and prepare them for higher learning.

This tradition continues today with Cathedral Grammar being one of only two choir schools in the Southern Hemisphere, and the ChristChurch Cathedral Choir the only professional choir for boys in New Zealand. Being a part of this unique group provides them with superb training in music with world-class directors and performers.

Values and our Christian spirit

We believe a well-rounded character is just as important as academic success and people often comment about the charm, confidence and character of our students when they visit the school. This is a reflection of our dedication to the Anglican faith and our students being at the heart of our school. Our students see Christianity being lived every day in many ways, including our core values of Faith, Hope and Love together with our guiding pillars that infuse and bind together our curriculum and community.

Healthy pastoral care meets the wide variety of needs of the students to help sustain a loving, caring group of individuals who nurture and support one another. And it doesn’t stop there. Our Anglican character goes beyond the students with many considering the family-based community spirit a highlight of our school culture.
As a community of students, parents and staff, we are committed to fostering the development of the whole child through these values and pillars each and every day.

Our curriculum reflects, instils and manifests these in all aspects of learning, as do our 12 core virtues reflected in our graduate profile.

Our values

Faith, Hope and Love

The Christian values of Faith, Hope and Love together with our four guiding pillars, govern and inspire all that we do at The Cathedral Grammar School.

Guiding pillars

Everyone matters
Te amorangi ki mua, hapai

Do the right thing
Me tika tō mahi

Think, try, reflect
Titiro whakamuri, kokiri whakamua

Fearlessly aim high
Whāia te iti lahurangi, ki tī ūohu koe me he maunga teitei

The Cathedral Grammar graduate has...

Commitment – Herenga
When we display commitment we are focusing our energy and efforts on a particular task with perseverance.

Creativity – Wihanga-Tanga
When we display creativity we experiment and produce new ideas. We are willing to think ‘outside the box’ and to take risks.

Courage – Māia
When we display courage we are standing up for what we believe in.

Curiosity – Pākiki
When we show curiosity we are inquisitive about things. We express a desire to learn, understand and make sense of the world.

Empathy – Aroha
When we display empathy we are aware of the feelings and emotions of others.

Excellence – Hiranga
When we display excellence we are giving our best to any task we do or any relationships we have.

Generosity – Ohaoha
When we display generosity, we are giving and sharing without the intention of receiving recognition or reward in return.

Honesty – Pono
When we display honesty we are being sincere, open, trustworthy, and truthful.

Integrity – Tapatahi
When we display integrity we consistently choose to behave in a manner that shows strong moral and ethical principles. We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Resilience – Manawanawā
When we are resilient we have the capacity to recover from difficulties and adapt well to life-changing situations, stressful conditions and personal setbacks. Developing resilience is crucial if we are to be equipped for a world where failure is accepted as a part of growth and learning.

Respect – Whakaute
When we display respect we are honouring people and caring about their rights. Treating people with respect gives them the dignity they deserve. Being respectful is reflected in the courtesy with which we treat one another, and in the way we speak.

Unity – Kotahitanga
When we display unity we willingly interact with a variety of people, treating others fairly and equally.
Learning conditions to thrive in

Specialist teachers share their passion for learning

We believe our long history of high academic and cultural achievement is a direct outcome of employing high-calibre staff. Many of our teachers endorse their knowledge with extra qualifications in particular curriculum subjects.

In many primary schools, one teacher teaches all subjects. At Cathedral Grammar, we introduce specialist teachers at every year level for particular subjects. Dedicated specialist teachers take students for science, technology, hard materials, digital, food and engineering technologies, art, physical education, religious education and music.

An extensive range of independent music, speech, singing and drama teachers are available to complement the school teaching staff.

More teacher time with smaller classes

In addition to our unique school structure, small class sizes are designed to allow students maximum interaction and attention from their teachers. More individual attention ensures their strengths can be built on and learning enhancement offered where needed. Teachers also have more opportunity to use flexible instruction techniques to suit the needs of each individual.

Junior School
Year 1  16 students
Years 2–3  20 students

The low student to teacher ratio ensures each new entrant is closely monitored and feels secure in a family setting as they begin Junior School.

Preparatory Schools
Years 4–6  24 students
Year 7–8  24 students
Here, it all begins

At our Pre-School we balance play with stimulating young minds, all the while fostering values and instilling foundation skills for lifelong learning.

Our play-based approach ensures children have authentic learning experiences to discover their world.

Our purpose-built centre and playground invites each child to be curious, investigate and explore. Numeracy and literacy is woven naturally into the programme. Trained, experienced teachers and a low teacher/child ratio ensures each child’s skills, strengths and interests are nurtured.

As part of The Cathedral Grammar School your child will enjoy the benefits of specialised facilities, subjects and teachers. These include art, physical education, yoga and chapel. We have strong links with our Junior School which ensures smooth transitions into the school environment. Being in the heart of the city, every advantage is taken to explore the wider world on our doorstep.
An exciting and happy place to discover and explore

The first years of school are crucial for laying the foundations for a lifelong love of learning.

At our Junior School, we inspire young people to learn within a happy, secure and caring atmosphere, where each child’s strengths are allowed to develop to their fullest. Students are given the opportunity, encouragement and skills to achieve their personal best in all aspects of the school curriculum, and to contribute towards their development as confident, happy members of the school community.

Class teachers teach the core classroom subjects, while specialist teachers take music, art, and physical education, with an emphasis on fine motor-skill development.

Our small class sizes mean we are able to foster self-esteem and a growth mindset while emphasising and rewarding high standards of achievement, presentation and behaviour, and there are various opportunities for learning-extension and learning-support programmes, music and speech lessons, and extra-curricular activities.

This all takes place in a modern classroom block with a roof top playground overlooking North Hagley Park including a slide to the green courtyard below! The building’s strong indoor/outdoor flow means constant engagement with the outside world, perfect for young children in a classroom environment.
Actively engaging individuals and meeting their specific learning needs

Unique in New Zealand, our Preparatory School has separate Girls’ and Boys’ School campuses. Single sex classes offer the opportunity to target and deliver our curriculum in the most effective and interesting style possible while allowing the flexibility to bring classes together.

Our Preparatory Schools are divided into two learning centres: Years 4–6 and 7–8. Our innovative Preparatory Schools pride themselves on being environments where every decision is based on research about how boys and girls learn and develop, and how they thrive, physically, intellectually, creatively, spiritually and socially.

‘Nurture, Know and Grow’ simply means providing an environment that prepares girls and boys for life. Every child is a unique individual ready to be challenged, grown and empowered to explore and discover their potential.

At Cathedral Grammar, Preparatory School students enjoy an education underpinned by a rich academic tradition, but one that also actively engages them through a future focused context. Our students are our future leaders. Cathedral Grammar children believe in themselves, know they can dream big, create, innovate, and make a difference in their own and others’ lives.

Developing a belief in what can be achieved, making a difference, changing the world

Students also participate in a range of optional subjects in the Hour of Power programme discovering new areas of passion and skill. Options include coding, digital music, future problem solving, languages, robotics, art and engineering.

In Years 4–6 at our Girls’ and Boys’ Preparatory Schools, class teachers teach the core classroom subjects, while specialist teachers teach music, art, religious education, and physical education. Teachers emphasise developing each child to believe that through perseverance and hard work, he or she can set and achieve goals.

Our senior students focus on making a difference by changing the world for the better. Our students receive specialist teaching in English, mathematics, science, technology, hard materials, digital, food and engineering technologies, art, physical education, religious education and music.

Our tailor-made Mitre Programme is designed to prepare our senior students for life after Cathedral Grammar. Mitre emphasises personal development, leadership, and service, culminating in an annual overseas Year 8 service trip.

Our Learning Enrichment programme provides the opportunity for students to participate in a range of areas outside the traditional classroom. We utilise our unique location to work with community resources and businesses in the CBD.
Facilities, activities and more

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Everything a child needs to start their extraordinary learning journey

Information technology

We invest heavily in information technology and e-learning tools as part of our commitment to preparing children for the future. In Years 1-4 we support and enhance student learning using a variety of electronic tools. From Year 5 all students bring a laptop to school. Teachers give explicit instruction on how to use a variety of tools and applications to enhance all students’ ability to access information, critically examine and respond to it, and use digital tools as creators themselves.

Extensive research, both in New Zealand and overseas, shows access to portable devices such as laptops leads to:

- Improved teaching and learning practices
- Increased student achievement, engagement and motivation
- Improved student writing and research
- Enhanced effective collaboration and communication

At Cathedral Grammar, we believe in having a balanced approach between the use of traditional tools of learning and modern devices; this helps students choose the best tool for the intended learning outcome.
Outdoor education

Classes from Year 4 onwards participate in a variety of school camps of increasing length. The central focus of our camps are personal development, service, and leadership. We seek opportunities to help students develop a respect and love for the outdoors, learn about sustainable practices, and face challenges head on.

In addition to our camps, all year groups enjoy rich learning experiences through a variety of outdoor education days, including farm visits, sailing, skiing, and beach education. Our unique central city location also allows us to engage with local businesses, the city council and secondary and tertiary educational providers.

Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded to students in Years 4 to 7 with academic, musical, sporting or choral aptitude, following an academic examination and instrumental or singing audition. Scholarship value varies depending on the type offered and individual circumstances.

Choral Scholarships

These scholarships are also available for boys who wish to become treble choristers in the choir of ChristChurch Cathedral.

We invite people to apply for scholarships that are available at Cathedral Grammar.

Good sports

Sport at Cathedral Grammar is about more than physical fitness. It teaches students the importance of teamwork and co-operation across multiple sporting experiences. It is also an opportunity for your child to push themselves and understand what they’re capable of achieving.

We are a proud sporting school with an array of young sportspersons of all talents and abilities, learning the value of physical education and competition. Over the years we have produced four All Blacks, including an All Blacks captain, Canterbury cricketers, a champion race driver, national age group swimmers and ice skating champions, and a USA men’s hockey team coach.

Students enjoy access to a range of sports and recreation activities at Cathedral Grammar. Artificial turfs provide year-round play for a variety of sports as well as two upper body strength playgrounds to suit different age groups.

Our Junior School students experience specialist coaching as part of their physical education programme with a focus on fundamental skills and fair play. Our Preparatory School students participate in rugby, football, hockey, netball and table tennis in the winter terms as part of the Primary Sports Canterbury winter tournament. As part of our summer sports programme we offer non-traditional sports in our Xtend programme. Experiences include blo-karting, rock climbing, orienteering, mountain biking, croquet, golf, tennis, mountain running, surfing and trampolining.

We are also very proud of our traditional sports exchanges and our highly competitive house competitions.

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The arts

Our school is a hive of creative and cultural energy and endeavour. Every week there are more than 250 individual instrumental music, speech and drama lessons in addition to the usual classes. Our school orchestra, stage band, and string and recorder ensembles produce an amazingly high standard for such young performers.

Our biennial Operetta involves every child in the school. In the alternate years the seniors from our Girls’ and Boys’ Prep Schools perform the STEAMM (Science, Technology, English, Art, Music & Movement) concert at the Cathedral. The School’s annual art exhibition features at least one piece of every child’s work, while the Year 7s wow audiences with their Wearable Arts Show.

The flurry of creativity that excites, challenges and engages every student from the get-go is a springboard to a dazzling array of creative outputs. More than that, it forms the foundation of a lifetime’s appreciation of, and involvement in, culture and the arts.

Mitre Programme and house system

Our Mitre Programme has been specifically created for our senior students with a focus on personal development, service and leadership. Senior students learn to develop their leadership skills through authentic service opportunities; they undertake activities to support local, national, and international charity organisations, host events and work with central city businesses. Students also fulfil leadership roles including house and sports captains, mentor leaders, and through the class buddy system. These roles engender a sense of family throughout Cathedral Grammar.

Every student at Cathedral Grammar will join one of eight school houses, each with its own colour, badge, flag and motto. Our houses build a close sense of community and belonging but there is always a place for friendly competition and teamwork through our various inter-house competitions.

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There aren’t many schools boasting a classroom block with a rooftop playground overlooking a park and a slide from the rooftop to a green courtyard below!

**ChristChurch Cathedral Choir**

Defined by our intrinsic relationship with the iconic ChristChurch Cathedral and our commitment to choral singing, we are proud to be one of only two choir schools in the Southern Hemisphere.

Based on the traditional choirs of the great English cathedrals, the choir is made up of up to 24 boys and 16 men, with a repertoire ranging from the 16th century to contemporary works. The choir sings at a range of events outside the Cathedral, in other centres, local, national and international, and on television and radio.

In addition to its regular commitments of three weekly Evensongs and two Sunday services, the choir also sings on special occasions, such as ordination services, funerals, recitals and recording sessions.

The choristers enjoy a number of recreational activities throughout the year to develop team spirit and camaraderie; a choir camp is also held in January before school starts. In addition to the choristers of the Cathedral Choir, some 100 students sing in the Chapel Choirs and the Junior School Choir.

**After-school care and clubs**

Our Junior and Preparatory Schools offer a range of creative and exciting after school club options each term, provided by specialist teachers and coaches, including cricket, robotics, drama, singing, tennis, art, yoga, football, karate, dance and chess.

Our Girls’ and Boys’ Preparatory students can utilise ‘Prep Room’ where they are supervised by a staff member through until 5.30pm and encouraged to complete their homework. For our Junior School students we have ‘Family Room’ available for after school care through to 4.00pm. Any students not picked up at 4.00pm are taken over to Prep Room.

**Thank you for showing an interest in Cathedral Grammar**

While this prospectus summarises many parts of the school, there is nothing quite like ‘being there’. With that said, please know you are welcome to visit us any time; we like nothing more than for prospective parents to meet the students and those who teach and inspire them.