

THE SCHOOL

George Watson's College is one of the country's best co-educational independent day schools. Despite its size, everyone remarks that it has a small-school 'feel': the close-knit and friendly relationships amongst all its constituents are a hallmark of the School. Its motto – *ex corde caritas* (Love from the Heart) – is central to its values as it seeks to sustain what is described as 'The Watson's Family'.

This tangible sense of togetherness is significantly enhanced by everyone being on one purpose-built site, which is located in the attractive residential district of Morningside, to the South West of the centre of Edinburgh. Edinburgh itself is the second strongest city economy in the UK, outside of London, with the highest percentage of graduates and professionally qualified adults in the UK and over 25% of school age children attending fee-paying schools. Watson's is proud of its independent status and, whilst remaining true to its Scottish roots, seeks to sustain and develop an international perspective. The curriculum is adapting to the innovations inherent in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence and the new Scottish National Qualifications.

The School welcomes a wide range of academic ability, and has very high academic standards, with 90% of pupils going on to Higher Education and a large proportion of pupils achieving outstanding success. Watson's also has excellent facilities, and offers a huge range of courses as well as extra-curricular activities. In addition, it has particular strengths in Sport, Music, Drama, Outdoor Education, Technology and in Support for Learning. The School is very well resourced with a campus-wide IT network.

The Principal, Melvyn Roffe, took up his post in 2014. Leadership of the Senior School is delegated to Gordon Boyd, Head of the Senior School, and the Senior School Leadership Team (SSLT), including three Deputy Headteachers and three Assistant Head Teachers. A similar structure exists in the Junior School.

The Senior School

Leadership of the Senior School is by SSLT and a large group of Heads of Academic and Pupil Support Departments. Our leadership model enables Heads of Department to shape the character of their department within an overall ambition for the Senior School and George Watson's College as a whole. Heads of Department play an essential role in the development and implementation of practice in all aspects of the Senior School, notably in improving curriculum design, pupil support and learning and teaching.

Our work with pupils and amongst ourselves is characterised by good relationships which, in turn, creates the context for better learning. We aim to be an inclusive school and to find ways to recognise and celebrate our diversity. We have achieved Gold Status as a Rights Respecting School and we have been awarded Gold Level by LGBT+ Youth Scotland.

Approximately four-fifths of pupils in the Senior School have progressed there from the Junior School. On arrival, they have a carefully worked out induction programme which includes a residential experience together in the first term.

In S1 and S2, a diverse and stimulating timetable balances challenging academic progression with a variety of learning experiences, including in two foreign languages. Pupils study many of their subjects in their form classes but are set in English and Mathematics. This enables them to progress at a pace that provides the appropriate level of challenge and provides them with an opportunity to mix with the rest of their year group.

From S2 pupils discuss their personal targets and study options with teachers, through to their key certificate examinations, and we ensure that they choose subjects and levels that match their abilities and aspirations.

At Watson's we are proud of the exceptionally broad range of certificate courses we offer. Available at various levels of certification within the national qualifications framework, our extensive provision includes subjects across the spectrum of arts, sciences and social sciences, with a notably wide selection of languages, including Mandarin Chinese.

It is important that we prepare pupils for the increased independence they will require after school. A programme of study skills encourages independent thought and enquiry. Throughout their time at Watson's, pupils make confident use of our outstanding IT facilities and our Library.