



MEET THE HEAD

How long have you been at St Catherine's School?

I joined St Catherine's in 2009 as the deputy head and later became head of the prep school in January 2012.

What do you see as the school's main strengths?

We take enormous pride in providing an environment for the girls that is both nurturing and challenging in equal measure. We have hugely talented and committed staff, and the relationships between the staff, parents and girls are outstanding.

How do you ensure that every girl achieves her full potential?

From day one, we recognise that the partnership between home and school lies as the key to a successful education. Hence, we adopt an open-door policy for parents, who we hope feel warmly welcome at all times. We ensure that the girls are taken outside of their comfort zone and provided with activities that stretch and challenge them. Specialist teachers in PE, ICT and Music enhance the work of

NAOMI BARTHOLOMEW St Catherine's, Bramley

We talk to the head of the preparatory girls' school based in Surrey

the form tutors and the girls are taught by exceptional teachers, in superb surroundings. We also make time to pause and reflect during a busy week. Assemblies, form times and tutor group activities provide this chance to pause. Weekly chapel services also play a key role in the girls' education here.

What kind of feedback have you received from parents and pupils?

One of the comments that particularly stuck with me from a parent at a recent parents' evening was, "There is pure joy in the school." I agree with her wholeheartedly!

Can you tell us a bit about St Catherine's history?

Having opened to 11 boarders

and just six day students back in September 1885, St Catherine's soon grew in popularity. By 1890, the buildings were extended and in 1894, the chapel was completed and dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The words, 'Let us go on' from his address have been adopted as the school motto.

By 1945, there were 97 boarders and 155 day girls, and in 1949, the governors purchased Church House which forms the focal part



of the prep school. Decades of expansion, new buildings and the school's centenary celebrations followed. The Anniversary Halls, which house a large gymnasium and sports hall, along with an outstanding auditorium, were opened to mark 125 years. Last year, HRH Duchess of Cornwall agreed to be our patron; as the great-great granddaughter of Lord Ashcombe, one of the school's founders, she links the school's present to its past.

How do you see St Catherine's progressing in the future?

St Catherine's is a forward-thinking and dynamic school. My commitment is to continue to promote an education befitting of the strong traditions of the past and to build on our present success. We aim to ensure that the girls continue to love their time at school, flourish in their senior school and their life beyond. We are proud of what has been achieved and optimistic and excited about the future. **b**

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