Preparatory School

Manchester High School for Girls

Empowering girls *since 1874*

MHSG is a proud school of firsts and has been since 1874. Our Pre-School and Preparatory School provide a colourful, academic, vibrant, inclusive and nurturing environment for Manchester's youngest girls.

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Welcome

Pupils thrive in a warm, friendly and lively space. Encouraged to take part in all that is on offer, girls develop a love of learning and are fully prepared for their secondary education in a safe and supportive atmosphere where pupils and staff get to know each other well.

The stimulating curriculum is taught by dedicated class teachers, and we take full advantage of Senior School specialists for subjects such as PE, Music and Modern Foreign Languages.

We make sure it is great fun too – themed days, visiting speakers and excursions all help to contextualise learning and bring lessons to life. From stepping back in time at National Trust properties, to celebrating Chinese New Year; from encouraging the next generation of innovative computer coders, to inspiring budding artists at the region's finest galleries, pupils are encouraged to become active learners through play and hands-on exploration.

Teaching is also enhanced by a wide range of extracurricular activities including a variety of sports clubs, ballet and street dance classes, Zumba and Chess. There are choirs, orchestras and string ensembles, and pupils can access individual Speech and Drama tuition and Music lessons. Our PSHE and wellbeing programme supports pupils as individuals as they build confidence, self-belief and the skills to succeed. These first steps on their personal development journey are engaging and appropriate to their age, delivered through activities such as the MyHappyMind programme – mindfulness for little ones.

At Manchester High School for Girls, we recognise the importance of strong links between home and school and provide many opportunities for parents to visit and find out about their daughter's progress – from regular parents' evenings and written reports to our relaxed and informal 'Dine with your daughter' lunch date.

> *"Leaders in the early years actively promote children's wellbeing, ensuring that the school values, such as innovation and compassion, are to the fore. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants deliver engaging activities and leaders are diligent in ensuring that children have a range of opportunities, in well-equipped areas both indoors and outside. As a result, children settle and progress in a secure, and purposeful environment within an atmosphere of happy engagement."*
>
> **Independent Schools Inspectorate, April 2024**

MHSG's Pre-School

Little Ivies, *Where Potential Begins to Climb*

3-4 years old

Leadership in Early Years education requires both courage and clarity: courage to challenge convention, and clarity about what young children truly need to thrive.

The introduction of a pre-school nursery for three- and four-year-old girls, represents exactly that kind of bold, values-led leadership that is at the heart of everything we do at Manchester High School for Girls. We are a school proud of firsts, and this is the first time in our history that we are extending our education to three and four-year-old girls.

As an organisation that believes so passionately in girls' education, this represents a deliberate evolution for MHSG: one that places girls' confidence, voice and identity at the very beginning of their formal educational journey.

The Early Years are not a prelude to a successful education; these years are the vital foundation. Between the ages of three and four, children develop the cognitive, social and emotional frameworks that shape how they see themselves as learners. For girls, this stage is particularly significant. Evidence from early years practice consistently demonstrates that girls can begin to moderate their behaviour, language and leadership in response to social dynamics far earlier than is often assumed.

An all-girls pre-school is therefore not a statement of separation, but of intentional design—creating an environment in which girls can develop without constraint or stereotype.

One of the most profound impacts of an all-girls early years setting is the development of voice. In mixed environments, girls can learn to wait, to soften their responses, or to step back from leadership. In an all-girls pre-school, every contribution is made by a girl. Language becomes richer, confidence grows more quickly, and leadership behaviours are normalised rather than exceptional. These early experiences shape how girls participate in learning for years to come.

The academic offer is ambitious and developmentally informed. Early literacy, numeracy and problem-solving are approached through pedagogy that reflects how girls engage most deeply at this age: through carefully planned play and purposeful exploration. Girls encounter early STEM thinking, reasoning and creativity without limitation or label. This is education that assumes capability from the outset.

Critically, our ambitious curriculum is broader than academic attainment. Outdoor learning is embedded as a core component of provision, recognising its essential role in developing resilience, independence and wellbeing. Through regular outdoor experiences with skilled teachers, girls learn to explore, take managed risks and build confidence in themselves and their environment—skills that underpin both academic success and personal growth as well as developing their understanding of the world around them.

Our pre-school offer is further strengthened through specialist provision in Phonics, Music and enrichment, such as Acro Dance, a blend of ballet and age-appropriate gymnastics, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to offering our youngest learners the very best start to formal education.

Emotionally and socially, the benefits of our all-girls pre-school are equally profound. Girls aged three to four are developing empathy, friendships, and self-regulation. An all-girls pre-school creates a strong sense of belonging and psychological safety. Relationships are nurtured in an environment that values kindness, cooperation, and mutual respect. This emotional security directly supports academic readiness, enabling girls to take risks in learning, make mistakes, and persevere.

The symbolism of ivy, long associated with Manchester High School for Girls, offers a powerful metaphor for this work. Ivy grows slowly but purposefully, anchored by strong roots that allow it to flourish over time. The pre-school represents those roots: the starting point of girls' education, where confidence is established, identity is affirmed, and potential begins to climb. With strong foundations in place, girls are equipped to grow with resilience, ambition and integrity throughout their educational journey and beyond.

Mrs Ruth Anderson
Pre-School Lead

Why has MHSG started a pre-school?

We are a proud school of firsts, and this is the first time in our history that we are extending our education to three and four-year-old girls. With strong foundations in place, girls are equipped to grow with resilience, ambition and integrity throughout their educational journey and beyond. As an organisation that believes so passionately in girls' education, it is an understandable and deliberate evolution for us to offer a pre-school at Manchester High.

Are places term time only?

We will operate five days per week term-time, only. Core hours will be from 8:30am to 3pm. With wrap-around care, your daughter can be booked into the Breakfast Club from 7:30am and join After-School Care until 6pm.

Will there be holiday clubs available?

Currently, the Pre-School will provide term-time only care. However, holiday clubs will be considered if there is sufficient interest from parents.

What will be special about the Pre-School at Manchester High?

The Manchester High School for Girls' Pre-School will provide a nurturing environment for our youngest children. As you would expect from Manchester High School for Girls, the Pre-School will also provide an academic setting with early phonics and numeracy skills teaching as well as a range of specialist teaching. The Pre-School will offer a fantastic foundation for starting Reception.

How many children will be in the class?

There will be a maximum of 16 girls in the Pre-School class.

Will food and snacks be provided?

All food and snacks will be provided. Morning snacks will include a piece of fruit, a bread-based product and milk. Snacks and lunches will be provided for children in the Pre-School environment, fully supervised by the girls' teachers and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Will my daughter's teachers and carers be first-aid trained?

All staff will be paediatric first-aid trained. Furthermore, all staff will follow our policies relating to eating so that girls are safe. All statutory guidance regarding supervised eating and Early Years' Nutritional Guidance policies and procedures will be followed.

When can we visit

Please contact our Admissions Team (0161 224 0447) if you would like a tour of our Early Years' facilities. You would be very welcome to come and meet us. Please contact our Admissions Team for more information.

Will there be automatic progression from Pre-School through to Reception?

There will be automatic progression available. All girls who begin with us in Pre-School will be welcome to progress through to Reception.

Are there boys in Pre-School?

There will be no boys in the Pre-School. This is because we are committed to a girls-only education from the youngest age.

Where do I park to drop off my child and collect her?

You will be able to reach the Pre-School by driving down Grangethorpe Road and turning left into the Preparatory School car-park. Only Pre-School parents will be permitted to park here so that you can walk your child safely to the Pre-School classroom.

How do I know how my daughter is getting on?

Good communication between parents and the Pre-School staff is hugely important. As a result, each child will have a key worker with information shared daily through our online platform, 'Seesaw'. This platform will be used to send parents regular photographs and observations from the school day. Your daughter's key worker will provide you with daily information, too, including information on the activities in which your daughter has been involved as well as the food she has eaten. Furthermore, there will be termly parents' meetings to share progress, celebrate opportunities and milestones and to discuss next steps.

Is there a Pre-School uniform?

Girls will be expected to wear plain black tracksuit bottoms with an MHSG branded sweatshirt and a plain purple t-shirt. We would like all girls to wear sensible black shoes and bring to school trainers for physical exercise and a pair of wellington boots for playing outside! A warm black coat will be needed but puddle suits will be provided, as will aprons, for messy play. In the Summer, girls can wear the Prep School dress or black cycling shorts and t-shirt.

Are the teachers experienced and what qualifications will they hold?

Staff working with our EYFS pupils are suitably qualified and experienced and once your daughter has been accepted, we will provide further details of the Pre-School teacher and other members of the team, together with their qualifications and extensive experience.

How will my daughter be nurtured and prepared for main school?

Each girl will be assigned a named key worker who will play a central role in supporting her learning, wellbeing and development. This provision will ensure that girls receive the consistency of care as well as emotional security, supporting positive attachments and emotional development. By knowing the girl and her family well, the key worker will be able to respond sensitively to individual needs, interests and routines, ensuring that each girl feels safe, valued and understood. The key worker will also be responsible for supervising hygiene needs, including toothbrushing and toileting.

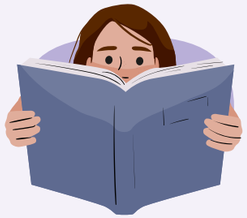
Who will be leading the Pre-School?

Our Head of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Mrs Ruth Anderson.

How will my daughter be prepared for pre-school?

Two Saturday 'Stay & Play' events are organised for parents and girls interested in starting Pre-School or Reception the following year. The first of which is in the Autumn Term, followed by another in the Spring Term. Those girls who go on to accept a place are offered further settling in opportunities during the school day during the Summer Term.

MHSG's Preparatory School



Why choose Manchester High School for Girls' Preparatory School?

Because here, girls lead from day one. In the Manchester High School for Girls' Preparatory School, we believe there is nothing more powerful than a girl who feels seen, heard, and inspired—and that is exactly what our single-sex environment provides. Every part of our Prep School is designed with girls in mind: from the classroom to the playground and beyond, it is a place where they are free to explore, take risks, grow in confidence and find their voice.

In the Preparatory School, leadership is not left for later—it starts early. In our girls-only setting, every voice is heard, and every girl is encouraged to involve herself in purposeful endeavours. From joining a variety of school councils to taking on Head of House roles in Year 6, our pupils shape their school, speak up for others, and make a difference. As a Unicef Rights Respecting School with a Gold Award, our girls have demonstrated that leadership is not just about responsibility but about empowerment.

Our expert teachers know each girl as an individual, nurturing warm relationships that motivate and support our pupils in achieving their very best whilst maintaining an open mind about their future opportunities. With the freedom to enhance the curriculum through enrichment and creativity, teachers ensure that lessons come alive—sparking curiosity, ambition, and a lifelong love of learning. In our Prep School, the possibilities for our girls are endless—and we would love for you to see it for yourself. Come and take a tour, or join us for an Open Day and discover an environment where your daughter could flourish..

Mrs Samantha Gibbons
Head of Preparatory School

The Curriculum: Where Bright Futures Begin

Our Prep School is a place where curiosity is fostered, confidence grows, and potential is unlocked in preparation for their education in the senior school.

From day one, girls are immersed in a dynamic, hands-on curriculum that balances academic rigour with creativity, collaboration and fun. Whether it is Outdoor Learning in Reception, History and Mandarin in Key Stage 2, or celebrating festivals from around the world, girls are encouraged to think big and explore widely.

Taught by passionate teachers and supported by Senior School subject specialists, pupils gain a solid academic foundation – ready to tackle the challenges of school with resilience, ambition and a love of learning that lasts. Enrichment goes far beyond the classroom: themed days and weeks, visiting experts, day trips and residentials, sports fixtures, music, drama, languages and a vibrant extracurricular programme all help our girls discover what excites them.

In the Preparatory School, parents are partners in every step of their daughter's journey. Open, honest dialogue matters—and we make that easy. From bi-annual parents' evenings in the autumn and summer terms and written reports at Christmas and at the end of the academic year to concerts, lively performances and our weekly bulletin and social media platforms, there are plenty of chances to share in the magic of school life and celebrate every success, big or small.

By Year 6, our girls are not only well-prepared for the next stage in their education, but are also flourishing: articulate, capable and ready to make their mark. We extol the mantra of 'becoming' and encourage the girls to approach their futures with a 'can-do' attitude and an open mind.

The School Day

Reception – Year 2

Pupils may start their day from 7.30am in the Key Stage 1 Hall for Breakfast Club, where supervision is free and parents pay only for breakfast items. From 8am it's time to move to the Key Stage 1 playground for girls to socialise before heading into class for registration at 8.45am.

Girls enjoy two assemblies during the week at 9am plus three form sessions. Then it's time for timetabled lessons before Snack and Story Time at 10.05am offering a healthy, school-provided snack and milk. Playtime follows at 10.25am before lessons from 10.40am.

Lunch is served in the Dining Room from 11.45am with our Reception girls eating first, followed by a range of lunchtime clubs or playing with friends. School ends at 3.25pm with wraparound care supervision continuing until 4pm. After-school care is available until 6pm for an additional charge, ensuring a safe and supportive end to the school day.

Inside the School Day Years 3 -6

Our juniors may start their day from 7.30am in the Key Stage 1 Hall for Breakfast Club, where supervision is free and parents pay only for breakfast items. From 8am girls can socialise on the Junior Playground before registration at 8:45am.

The timetable is a mix of engaging lessons and four assemblies each week, with a nutritious mid-morning snack provided by the school. Lunchtimes, from 12.25pm to 1.25pm, are full of choice. There are clubs and activities for those who want to get involved, or time to relax with friends.

Afternoon lessons run until 3.25pm, with wraparound care until 4pm and After-School Care available until 6pm. Extra-curricular activities take place at lunchtime and after school, usually finishing around 4.30pm, while Homework Club for KS2 runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Sports training and fixtures may extend the day until 5pm.

Extra-curricular Activities

So much more than lessons

Life at Manchester High Prep is bursting with opportunities beyond the classroom. Our lively and varied extra-curricular programme is designed to spark curiosity, build confidence and help girls discover what they love. Whether it's building robots, mastering chess, perfecting taekwondo moves or creating mini masterpieces in art club, there's something for every interest and personality.

First goes and second tries

From ballet and sport to LAMDA drama, hammer beads and Roots and Shoots eco club, pupils are encouraged to try new things, develop hidden talents and have fun along the way. Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils thrive in our outdoor learning sessions, while Key Stage 2 girls enjoy weekly Enrichment—anything from First Aid and DIY to giving back to the local community through a gardening project.

Our optional Discovery programme inspires all ages to explore life beyond school—posting a letter, climbing a tree or curating a nature table. These simple yet powerful experiences help young minds grow in independence, resilience and wonder. Because here, learning isn't just something that happens in a lesson—it's a whole way of life.

Performing Arts

At the Prep School, Performing Arts is an exciting and integral part of school life. From their very first days in Reception, girls are encouraged to take to the stage with confidence and creativity.

Inspiring Happiness, Confidence, Tenacity and Ambition

Drama

From Key Stage 2, all pupils enjoy integrated Drama and oracy activities as part of the curriculum, building key performance and presentation skills in a fun, collaborative environment. The younger years sparkle in our much-loved Christmas Nativities, with children from Reception to Year 2 performing in year group productions. The performing journey culminates in a vibrant Year 6 Production – a highlight of the school calendar and a chance for our oldest Prep pupils to shine.

LAMDA

Pupils in Key Stage 2 also have the opportunity to take weekly LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) lessons with specialist teachers. These popular sessions help build confidence in public speaking, verse and prose, and acting. Pupils taking part showcase their talents in an annual Spring performance, with many achieving impressive LAMDA examination results.

Music

Music is thriving across the whole of the Prep School. A remarkable number of pupils from KS1 upwards take up instrumental lessons and regularly perform in our popular half-termly Twilight Concerts. As they progress, KS2 pupils take part in larger musical events including the Christmas Concert, Spring Concert and Summer Musical Showcase.

Choir is a popular option, with rehearsals taking place bright and early one morning each week from 8:30am. Budding musicians can also join a variety of musical ensembles and the Prep School Orchestra, all of which provide pupils with the chance to rehearse and perform as part of a team.

Dance

Complementing dance lessons which are part of our sports curriculum, optional dance clubs in Zumba and Street Dance offer our junior pupils another exciting avenue of expression and movement. Street Dance members even get to join their senior counterparts on stage at the annual Dance Concert—an energetic and uplifting celebration of rhythm and performance.

Whether it is through drama, singing or instrumental music, every girl in the Preparatory School has the chance to take the spotlight and grow in confidence through the Performing Arts.

Sports

From their earliest days, Prep pupils are encouraged to explore sport, movement and teamwork. Sport at MHSG Prep is about more than physical activity; it is about building confidence, resilience, leadership skills and a sense of belonging.

Facilities for First Steps and Big Ambitions

Our Prep pupils enjoy access to MHSG's outstanding sports facilities. These include an all-weather floodlit astroturf, netball and tennis courts, a climbing wall, dance studio, a swimming pool and a dedicated sports hall. These spaces give girls the chance to try a wide variety of activities in a safe and inspiring environment.

Clubs, Matches and Shared Adventures

Prep girls can take part in a rich variety of sports, from gymnastics, ballet, football, street dance and swimming to hockey, rounders, tennis and taekwondo. A plethora of matches and tournaments give them the chance to represent the school in netball, hockey, cricket, football, waterpolo and more. The girls are taught PE by specialist teachers with a wide range of specialisms across the team. Whilst many girls are active outside of school, we work hard to ensure all girls enjoy PE.

First Goals, First Teams, First Confidence

Every success, from the first match to the first goal, builds skills that last a lifetime. Pupils learn the value of teamwork, develop perseverance and discover their own strengths. At MHSG's Preparatory School, sport is another way we help girls grow into confident, capable individuals who are ready to take on new challenges.

Residentials, day trips and visitors to school

Our Girls Go Places

In the Preparatory School, learning does not stop at the classroom door. From the very start of Reception, girls step into a world of discovery, whether it is exploring our extensive grounds with magnifying glasses in hand, meeting a ship's captain, or hearing about the celebration of Eid from a classmate's family. In all year groups, each term brings a new adventure: immersing themselves in the space dome at Jodrell Bank, marvelling at animals in Chester Zoo, or diving into ancient history through immersive history days. Authors, scientists and other inspirational guests regularly visit to spark curiosity and questions.

Full of firsts

From Year 3, girls take part in an annual residential, designed to build confidence, independence and resilience. Carefully planned itineraries combine outdoor adventures in Derbyshire and the Lake District with cultural experiences in Edinburgh or York. By Year 6, pupils have a rich collection of shared experiences and the confidence to embrace unfamiliar settings with curiosity and joy.

For girls in Years 5 and 6, the journey can extend further with an optional overseas trip in the Easter Holidays, which might include skiing in Norway or exploring France and Disneyland Paris. These experiences broaden horizons, challenge comfort zones and open doors to new possibilities.

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

Wellbeing at the Heart

In the Preparatory School, wellbeing is not an add on, it is at the foundation of everything we do. We know that happy girls flourish, and that is why pastoral care sits at the core of school life. Our dedicated teachers and teaching assistants know each girl as an individual, creating a warm, supportive environment where every girl feels seen, heard and valued.

Through our MyHappyMind programme, alongside a rich PSHE and RSE curriculum, girls learn how to understand their emotions, build resilience, and develop strong, healthy relationships. Leadership opportunities and charitable initiatives not only build confidence but also boost wellbeing; we recognise that there is real power in having purpose and helping others.

For those who need a little extra support, our experienced Learning Support team offers therapeutic interventions tailored to individual needs. Whether it is tackling worries or celebrating strengths, we take a child-centred approach, because we believe that true wellbeing comes from feeling secure, empowered and ready to take on the world.

Wrap-Around Care

We understand that modern family life is busy, which is why our wrap-around care offers flexibility and peace of mind, supporting not just our pupils, but their families too.

Morning care runs from 7:30am to 8am and is free of charge; girls are welcomed into the Key Stage 1 Hall where they can enjoy a healthy, nutritious breakfast (paid for via ParentPay) before being handed over to Prep staff for the start of the school day.

After-school care is available every weekday from 3:30pm to 6pm, providing a relaxed, friendly space where girls can unwind and enjoy a high tea of sandwiches, crudités, fruit and a sweet treat. There is plenty to keep them happily occupied including crafts, dressing-up and books to full access to our outdoor play equipment. While homework is not completed during after-school care, our twice-weekly Homework Club for Key Stage 2 pupils offers a focused, supervised option beforehand, helping busy families strike the right balance.

This continuity of care, which is calm but fun and stimulating, supports our whole-school commitment to wellbeing. Girls feel safe, settled and cared for from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave, thereby thriving in every sense.

Next Steps

We love meeting prospective students and their families who are considering a Manchester High education.

Open Events

We run a number of Open Events each year. These provide an excellent opportunity to tour our facilities, meet current students and our inspirational teachers.

Book your place at:
manchesterhigh.co.uk/admissions/visit-us

Or scan the QR code

How to apply

We welcome applications via our online application portal for all entry points.

Please visit
manchesterhigh.co.uk/admissions/apply

Or scan the QR code

Fees and Bursaries

Our website provides information about our current fees as well as information about Bursaries and Scholarships

manchesterhigh.co.uk/admissions/fees-financial-assistance/

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact our Admissions Team at **registrar@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk** or call **0161 224 0447**.

www.manchesterhigh.co.uk

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THE SUNDAY TIMES SCHOOLS GUIDE 2025 TOP 5 INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE NORTH WEST

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FINALIST 2026 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR AWARDS IN ASSOCIATION WITH schoolblazer

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