



# THORNHILL COLLEGE



Prospectus 2024



# Welcome to Thornhill College

A warm welcome to Thornhill College which has been educating young ladies in Derry City and beyond since 1932. We enjoy the advantage of an excellent location on a spacious site with state-of-the-art facilities. Thornhill College is a safe and inspiring place to learn, where children are respected, their talents nurtured and they thrive. Adults and children work towards this goal together. As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, Thornhill College is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted.

We are a college renowned for academic excellence and want to promote the holistic development of all our pupils from Year 8 until the threshold of young adulthood. This involves fulfilling their emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs which are met by a highly qualified and dedicated staff. Our Mercy Ethos permeates all aspects of life where a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment will provide a multitude of opportunities to enable your daughters to be the very best they can be and realise their true potential. As a listening school we value the partnership we have with parents, as we aspire to facilitate the best learning experience for each child as they embark on their seven-year journey with us.

We are a community which recognises the uniqueness and individuality of each pupil in our care and will actively promote their many gifts and talents. The welfare of every girl is paramount to everything we do as we want every pupil to be happy and to develop meaningful relationships. Promoting emotional resilience and well-being will equip pupils with skills for life so that their aspirations for their future can be a vision that becomes, one day, a reality.

We are very proud of our school and our pupils and look forward to showcasing what Thornhill College has to offer when you visit on our Open Day.

**Principal**  
**Ms Sharon Mallett**



## Making the Right Choice

We understand that choosing the right school for your child is such an important decision and one that takes much thought and deliberation. So why should you consider Thornhill College?

We are proud to say that we offer excellent teaching, outstanding achievements, and fabulous facilities. Pupils and staff work together in an environment which is conducive to enjoyable, relevant learning and which equips our students for the modern world.

Our school aims to educate girls to live confidently, become women of vision, hope and compassion whilst maximising their individual learning potential. We place an emphasis on the attainment of high academic standards, alongside seeking to establish clear, moral, and spiritual guidelines for all our students.

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## Our commitments to you



The care and welfare of all central to our planning



A continued focus on academic excellence



Clear and regular communication to help parents/carers stay informed and connected



High expectations from all for all



## Making the Transition

In Thornhill College we endeavour to make the transition from primary to secondary level education as smooth as possible for both parents/carers and children alike.

Our induction programme has been designed to be an enjoyable and informative experience for all and to ensure that every student settles into their new school with ease.

### **Our induction programme consists of:**

- A Parent/Carer Information Session
- A Year 8 Summer Scheme Programme
- An Induction Day at the start of the school term
- Class Buddies to support each form class
- Ongoing Support

### **Parent/Carer Information Session.**

Parents/carers you will be invited to attend a Year 8 Information Session in May before your child starts at Thornhill College. This session will provide you with essential information about how we can work together on the next stage of your child's educational journey.





## Year 8 Induction Day

The Induction Day takes place at the very start of the new term and will allow your child to meet their class and form teacher. They will be guided through the important information they need to get started on their educational journey and engage in activities to further develop friendships with their peers. This Induction Day is a very special day as it will mark the beginning of their Thornhill College journey!

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## Year 8 Class Buddies

Our *Year 8 Class Buddies*, who are members of our Junior Prefect Team, will be on-hand to welcome and offer support to your child as they begin the first day in their new school. These same buddies will assist each form class during their first few weeks at Thornhill College by accompanying them to their classes, to the canteen/lunch rooms and to the buses/carpark at the end of the school day until they are confident enough to do these on their own.



## A Caring School

In Thornhill College we are committed to providing outstanding Pastoral Care. The welfare of each girl is central to everything we do. Placing considerable importance on the well-being of our pupils is fully integrated into our daily routines, curriculum and extra-curricular activities. It permeates all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of staff.

**We believe that when pupils feel safe and cared for, they will achieve their full potential. Therefore, the emotional health and well-being of all is promoted and we collaborate closely with parents/carers to ensure this.**

**We operate a Year Group system within three schools - Junior School (Years 8-10) Middle School (Years 11-12) and Senior School (Years 13-14).**

**We strive to provide a system of wraparound care and so each form class is cared for by their Form Teacher, Head of Year and Head of School.**

**We have a dedicated safeguarding team including a designated teacher for child protection who works closely with our staff and a range of agencies and counsellors to support the well-being of our pupils. Our safeguarding ethos is visible and lived throughout the school.**



## A Supportive School

Thornhill College strives to achieve a fully inclusive learning environment to allow all pupils to make outstanding progress. We have a holistic approach to learning to ensure each pupil has access to the full curriculum and facilities. We understand that each pupil is unique, and our Learning Support Team work tirelessly to adopt a personalised approach to support pupils in a wide variety of settings. We work closely with pupils, staff, and parents/carers to provide additional support when needed.

SEN provision is a key priority in Thornhill College and is embedded in all teaching and learning. The learning experience is further enhanced through our tailored Learning Support lessons which provide an opportunity for Key Stage 3 pupils to develop Literacy and Numeracy skills.

Our Learning Support room serves as a sanctuary for pupils fostering a secure and nurturing environment where students can explore, grow and overcome challenges. Within its walls, a sense of belonging flourishes, allowing individuals to express themselves without judgment. The Learning Support team provide tailored assistance, building the confidence and resilience of each pupil.



## A School Of Faith

As a Catholic school, we understand that parental preference for Thornhill College implies a commitment to the school's Christian ethos and to the Religious Education programme provided in this college. However, the school welcomes pupils from other faith traditions and will make the necessary arrangements to accommodate a person's faith commitment.

Grounded in the Mercy tradition of education, we see religious faith and practice as something which is an integral part of the whole school experience of our students and we aim to foster and promote faith development throughout the entire curriculum and school community.

Our lived Mercy Ethos is also exemplified through the faith-based programmes. Pupils are given opportunities to take an active role in the Ambassador of St Paul Award, Pope John Paul II Award and the Year 13 Mercy Group. These opportunities uphold our unique history and the value that Mercy has to both individuals and our wider community.

**The Mercy Moments Awards are awarded to pupils demonstrating and living out our Mercy Values of: Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Justice, Hope and Joy.**

## Our Oratory

We are privileged in Thornhill College to have a beautiful Oratory located in the heart of the school building. The Oratory is used for Mass and services for class groups or simply a quiet space where any member of our school community can go to reflect, pray or just take time to be quiet in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.





## Rewarding Excellence

In Thornhill College we strive to model positive behaviours and build strong relationships. We encourage students to demonstrate high standards of respect, co-operation and organisation in both their behaviours and academic work. To that end we are committed to recognising and rewarding their motivation, efforts and achievements. Pupils are recognised and rewarded in the following ways:

- **Junior School Reward Steps**
- **Personal acknowledgement**
- **Oral and written feedback**
- **Displays of work**
- **Sharing of work with parents/carers**
- **Positive comments**
- **Certificates**
- **Postcards**
- **Personalised letters home**
- **Positive phone calls**
- **Pastoral/subject noticeboards**
- **Attendance awards**
- **Appointment to posts of responsibility**
- **School website**
- **School Twitter account**
- **Nomination for participation in prestigious competitions and projects**
- **Achievements celebrated in assembly**
- **Local media coverage**
- **Prize-Giving ceremonies**

At Key Stage 3 a structured reward system is in place called **Junior School Reward Steps**. Pupils have the opportunity to gain points for a wide range of categories including excellence in class, charitable endeavours, courtesy and kindness. We believe that every student should receive recognition and reward as they progress through the year.



# Staying Connected

Communication between pupils, parents/carers and teachers is an integral part of our school practice and we do this in several ways.

## The Daybook

The individual daybook will be used by all pupils to record homework, receive comments from teachers and to ensure that there are clear lines of communication between home and school. The daybook will be regularly monitored by form teachers and parents/carers are required to sign it weekly.

## Monthly Newsletter

Each month a vibrant and informative newsletter is shared with pupils, parents/carers and staff. It is used to showcase the wonderful talents and work of our school community whilst also celebrating the outstanding achievements of individual pupils and groups.

## Thornhill College App

SIMS App is used as another method to communicate with pupils and parents/carers. Information and notices are posted regularly via the app to keep everyone up to date with all areas of school life. Pupil progress reports, which are communicated at various stages throughout the year, can also be accessed through the app.

## Parent/Teacher Meetings

We recognise that parents/carers play an active role in their child's education and welcome the opportunity to meet personally with parents/carers to discuss their child's progress.

## Social Media

Social Media - We use Twitter and Instagram as a means to keep our school community informed about events and to acknowledge the daily achievements of our students. Many departments and pastoral areas also have their own accounts to share the outstanding work that pupils are engaging in.

# Curriculum Across all Key Stages



- Art & Design
- Citizenship
- Computing
- Drama
- Employability
- English
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics
- ICT
- French
- Irish
- Spanish
- Mathematics
- Music
- Personal Development & Social Education
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Science
- Technology & Design



- Art & Design
- Biology
- Business
- Communication Systems
- Careers Programme
- Chemistry
- Child Development
- Digital
- Technology
- Double & Triple Award Science
- Drama
- English Language
- English Literature
- Food and Nutrition
- French
- Further Maths
- Geography
- Health & Social Care
- History
- Irish
- Learning for Life and Work
- Maths
- Music
- Personal
- Development and Social Education
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religious Education
- Spanish
- Statistics
- Technology and Design



- Applied Health & Social Care (Single and Double Award)
- Applied Life & Health Sciences (Double Award)
- Art & Design
- Biology
- BTEC ICT
- Business Studies
- Professional Business
- Services
- Careers Programme
- Chemistry
- Drama & Theatre Studies
- Digital Technology
- English Literature
- Enrichment
- Geography
- Government & Politics
- History
- French
- Irish
- Spanish
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Psychology
- Religious Education
- Statistics
- BTEC Travel & Tourism

*Other subjects can also be accessed through the Foyle Learning Community. Further information about curriculum provision is available from the school on request.*





## Fabulous Facilities

In Thornhill College we are truly blessed to have such outstanding facilities to enhance the educational experience of our pupils. Many of these are used as part of our extra-curricular provision too.

# Extra-curricular activities

A wide range of activities and clubs are available to students in Thornhill College and at the start of the academic year we encourage every year 8 girl to take part in at least one of these. Each year this list is updated to take account of the interests of our students.

Getting involved in activities either at lunchtimes or after school is a great way to meet new people, enjoy an activity they are interested in or to take up a new interest. Engaging in extra-curricular activities not only broadens pupil perspectives but also assists them to strike a healthy work/life balance.

**Year 8 Netball**  
Tuesday after school

**Year 8 Drama Club**  
Wednesday 3:45pm  
Assembly Hall

**Cross Country Training**  
3:45-4:45pm  
Mon & Wed  
September - March

**Film Club**  
Every week over first lunch on a Tuesday

**Year 8 TD Club**  
TD Department  
Wednesday after school

**Eco-Club**  
Every Wednesday  
Geog Rm 4  
12:45-1:10pm

**Breakfast Club**  
There is free tea & toast available every morning from 8:30am in the Canteen

**Homework Club**  
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday  
3:45-4:45pm

**Debating & Public Speaking**  
Wednesday after school  
English Rm 2

**Athletics**  
Mondays & Wednesdays  
3:45-4:45pm  
March - June

**Year 8 Gaelic Team**  
Thursday after school  
3:40-4:45pm

**Céilí Club & Reelrobits**  
Every Monday & Wednesday in the Gym  
12:55-1:15pm

**Library**  
Available before school, at breaktime and lunchtime

**Year 8 Choir**  
Monday  
3:40-4:40pm



## Outcomes

*"Pupils continue to achieve very high outcomes in public examinations at key stage 4 and post-16." ETI*



# A Successful School

In Thornhill College we believe it is important that our students are provided with opportunities to “Live Life to The Full” and to celebrate all of their achievements. Our students and staff work hard to achieve high outcomes in all aspects of school life.

**We are extremely proud of the outstanding outcomes achieved in the 2023 external examinations.**

<b>GCSE</b>
<b>Percentage of Pupils achieving 7+ A*-C grades including Maths and English</b>
<b>2022-23</b>
<b>100%</b>

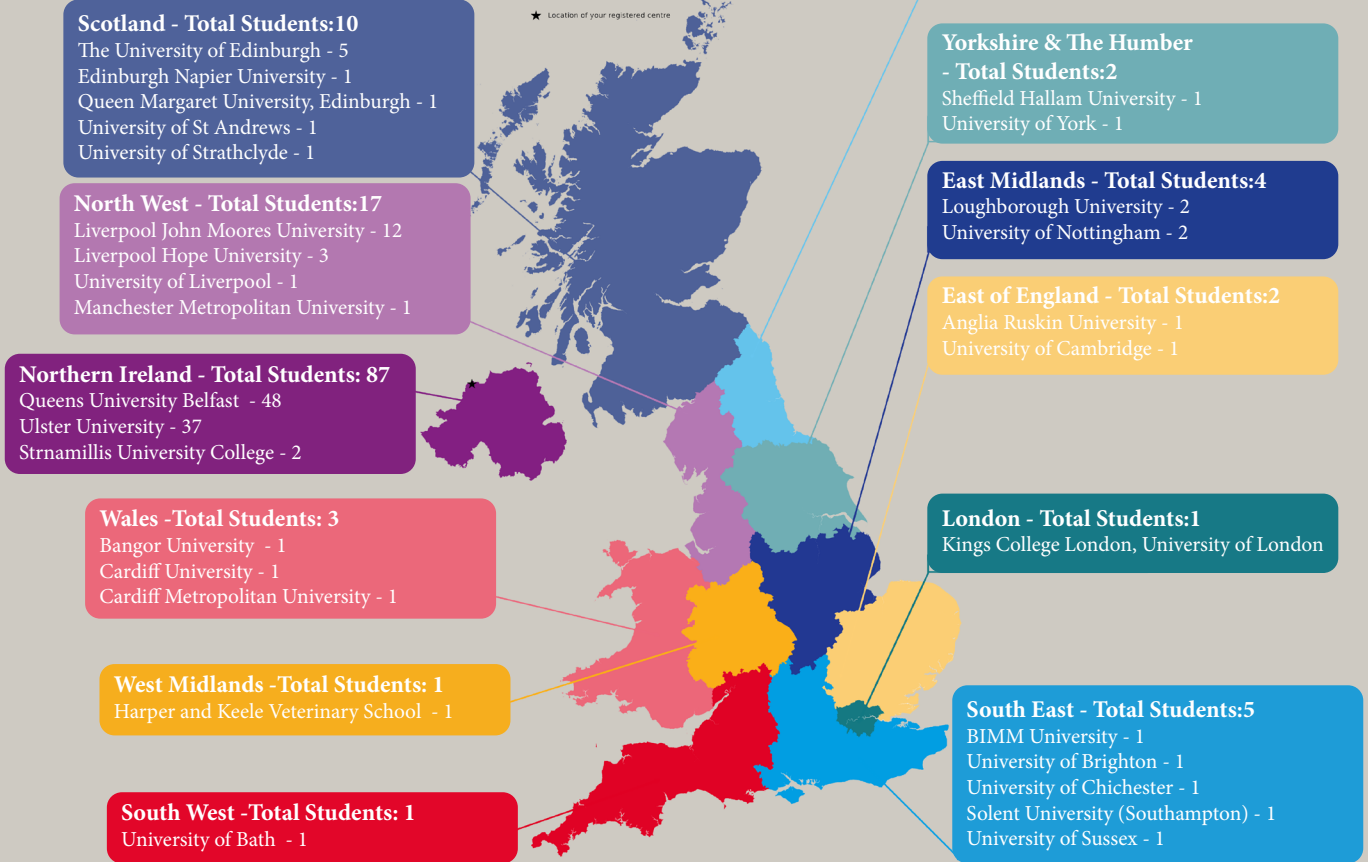
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<b>A Level</b>
<b>Percentage of Pupils achieving 3+ A levels at grades A*-C</b>
<b>2022-23</b>
<b>89.5%</b>

## The UCAS Destination Map Student progression in 2023 Thornhill College

This map shows the number of students accepted for each area, to UK universities and colleges, from our centre in the 2023 cycle.

Destination Map 2023. Confidential analysis.



## Leavers' Destinations

In Thornhill College we take great pride in the wide array of career pathways our students follow when they leave us, progressing into Higher Education, Further Education, Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA's) or employment. The vast majority of our Class of 2023 have taken places in third level education across Ireland, the UK and North America. A number of our students secured highly sought after places on Higher Level Apprenticeships, earning while they learn, with businesses including; CME Group, Deloitte, EF McCambridge & Co and E&I Engineering. This year one of our students is even pursuing her Haute Cuisine Chef Diploma at the prestigious Culinary Institute of Barcelona.



“As I sit in my new room at the University of Edinburgh writing this message to you all, I am overcome with a sense of appreciation for the school that prepared me so well for this next stage. Studying Medicine in this amazing city, has been an aspiration of mine for as long as I remember, and I reflect on how Thornhill nurtured my abilities to allow my dream to become a reality. “

**Emma Corns, Class of 2023**



## A Message from our Head Girl

My name is Mary Keogh, an honoured and privileged member of Thornhill College and current Head Girl. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as you begin to prepare for the next stage of your exciting journey at secondary school.

Deciding which school is best for you can be a daunting experience. Seven years ago, I was in the exact same position as you and I was experiencing mixed emotions about leaving primary school, thinking that I would never be able to adjust to life in the big school. But now, looking back I couldn't be more grateful to my younger self who made the decision to choose this wonderful school. Thornhill welcomed each and every one of us with open arms into a nurturing and attentive environment which has allowed me to blossom into the capable, confident young woman that I am today.

I can safely say all the opportunities afforded to me by Thornhill and the vast pastoral and academic support networks that exist within the school environment have equipped me with all the essential skills as I begin to prepare for the next chapter of my life. Skills that you too will acquire during your time here. Not only has this school shaped me into the person I am today, but it has also provided lifelong friendships and memories which I will carry into the future. I can guarantee that if you decide to become a Thornhill girl and a member of our school family, you too will gain the same experiences and sense of fulfilment as I have.

Be excited for this new journey, for the new experiences such as trying on your uniform for the very first time or meeting new people. Remember that we will provide the warmest of welcomes in an environment where every member of staff wants the best for you, enabling you to thrive both academically and personally.

I want to wish you all the very best of luck as you progress into the next stage of your education.



My confidence has grown since I joined this school. I was delighted when I found out that my new school had a football team because I love playing the sport. There are lots of extra-curricular activities to get involved in and there is something for everyone. My favourite subject is History because I love my teacher and love learning about the past.

**Eva - Year 8**



My favourite subjects are Art, TD, Irish and Spanish. All my teachers are really kind and helpful. During lunchtimes there are many activities to take part in such as the Club Ceili, Spanish Club, French Club, Reelrobits and much, much more!

“Beidh am ar dóigh agaibh anseo i gColáiste Chnoc na nDealg”

**Mia - Year 8**



I am a member of the Junior Choir and I also take part in Cross Country. I enjoy both of them very much. Thornhill was a great choice of school for me and I am really enjoying being here.

**Caoimhe - Year 8**





# Admissions Criteria For Entry 2024

The Board of Governors has determined that admission to Thornhill College in 2024 will be by an Entrance Test. (SEAG Entrance Assessment)

In the event of the number of applicants being greater than the Admissions Number for the school, applicants shall be selected in the order of priority set down below, based on the information provided at the date of application.

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA 2024

The outcomes/results of the SEAG Assessment will be ranked as follows:

**Band 1, Band 2, Band 3, Band 4, Band 5 and Band 6. 1 1st preference applicants awarded Band in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.**

1. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 1 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
2. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 2 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
3. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 3 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
4. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 4 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
5. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 5 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
6. 1st preference applicants awarded Band 6 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.
7. In the event of oversubscription of places and there are more applicants with a particular Band than places remaining, then any available places will be allocated by the application of the following sub-criteria in the order of priority set down below:
  - (i) Applicants who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the College or who will be in the coming year.
  - (ii) Applicants who, at the date of their application, are the eldest child of the family to be eligible to apply for admission to the College. Eldest child of the family eligible to apply for admission as defined in DENI Circular 2022/15.
  - (iii) Applicants who, at the date of application, are a Child Looked After.
8. In the event of oversubscription after the application of sub-criteria 7 (i-iii), applicants will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter(s) of surname as entered on the pupil's long birth certificate in the order set out below:

**I N M C Mac W X A P Y H R G O B V D Q K S U T Z Mc L F J E**

This order was determined by random selection and witnessed by an independent adjudicator.

**NB: A FULL AND COMPREHENSIVE COPY OF THE COMPLETE THORNHILL COLLEGE YEAR 8 ADMISSIONS CRITERIA INCLUDING ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE NOTES IS AVAILABLE ON THE COLLEGE WEBSITE.**



## School Prayer

Lord, I give you praise and thanks  
at the beginning of this new day  
for all the blessings I have received in my life.  
Lead me to live fully in the present moment and  
enjoy all that is good around me.  
Help me to live our school motto,  
“Thy Kingdom Come”,  
and because you are with me,  
let me see you in all those I meet today.

I ask you to bless anyone in our community who is  
worried or in need of help.  
Teach me to show your concern and care for others.  
Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us.

**Amen**



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Principal

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