

GUNNERSBURY CATHOLIC SCHOOL



PROSPECTUS



Gunnersbury Catholic School:

Enabling achievement
of the very highest



A welcome from our Headteacher



As Headteacher of Gunnersbury Catholic School I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you.

Over the last ninety years we have provided a truly outstanding Catholic education for children in West London and beyond. As we embrace the ever changing opportunities and challenges of the 21st century, the traditions and values of Gunnersbury Catholic School at our formation in 1932 are still very apt and remain evident within the school today. Pupils at Gunnersbury Catholic School continue to experience an education that develops all aspects of their person and encourages them to strive for higher things, *Ad Altiora*.

Gunnersbury Catholic School is a thriving, vibrant and caring learning community within which pupils are stretched intellectually and foster a love of learning, whilst feeling valued, happy and safe. Our approach to learning and our knowledge of how boys learn has enabled academic achievement of the highest order. In addition to facilitating academic success, life at Gunnersbury provides the platform, challenge and expertise for our students to grow spiritually, develop morally and socially, enhance their sporting talents and to further their artistic gifts. Expectations of all pupils are high and our school has a reputation for being a happy, friendly, stimulating and caring environment in which everyone is given the opportunity and support to complete their studies successfully and to reach their full potential. A noted feature of the school is the friendly atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect, and the supportive relationships among all who work there.

Within our Catholic school we have been able to create a unique environment. Ours is a school within which students take pride in succeeding, where the pupils strive to achieve the very highest and where there is an unrelenting desire to do even better. At Gunnersbury Catholic School successes and achievements in all spheres are proudly celebrated by the pupils.

I hope that this prospectus provides you with an insight into the quality and breadth of education that is experienced by the pupils within Gunnersbury Catholic School. An education that develops highly qualified, confident, rounded young Catholic adults, who are prepared for the opportunities and challenges that await them as they take up their place in this ever-changing world.

An exceptionally important decision lies ahead of you – determining the best secondary school for your child. To assist you in this decision I would like to invite you to visit Gunnersbury Catholic School on any of our open days.

I look forward to meeting you.

With kind regards

Kevin S. Burke M.A.
Headteacher



Gunnersbury Catholic School Mission Statement

Gunnersbury Catholic School strives to educate all its pupils within an environment where the Catholic traditions of learning, truth, justice, respect and community are promoted.

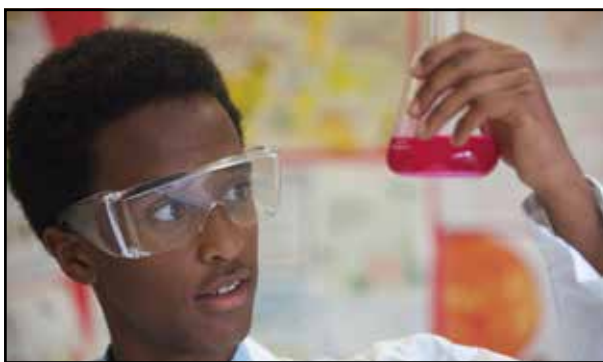
So as to realise our mission, Gunnersbury works towards three aims:

- to build a community based on Christian values
- to maximise the potential of each individual within the school in academic, personal, physical, social and spiritual terms
- to produce young men and young women who will take those values beyond school to promote a better, more just society

We seek to achieve these aims by:

- demonstrating fairness and justice in all school systems
- promoting relationships based upon respect, tolerance and understanding throughout the school
- creating a partnership in learning which identifies and develops the talents of each individual
- learning, living and celebrating our Catholic tradition

As part of the mission of the Archdiocese of Westminster to educate young people, we see our task as a shared endeavour, a partnership between school, home and parish, working together for the benefit of all students at Gunnersbury.



Mission and ethos



*“Gunnery provides
an outstanding education”*

OFSTED

The origins of

Gunnersbury date back to 1919 when Fr William Roche began teaching 15 boys in a small hall adjoining St John's Church in Brentford. Each pupil paid school fees of 2/6d per week. Pressure on space spurred on the search for larger, permanent premises and the Gunnersbury Avenue site was secured and the opening of Gunnersbury Catholic Grammar School took place on 21st January 1932 by Cardinal Bourne. Father Joseph Warren became Head of the new school of 105 boys in a building finished at a cost of £8,827. Rapid growth of our school was enabled through the bequest of £15,000 in 1934. This sum was left in the Will of Mr Patrick Murphy, former Chairman of the Brentford Board of Guardians.

In 1935, Father Warren retired and Father Robert McCliment became Headmaster. At this point the House system began to encourage friendly competition. The first houses were Bourne and Pole, followed by Warren and Roche. (At present we also have Newman and Dunstan Houses).

Under the leadership of the now Canon McCliment, the school flourished as an Aided School in 1939 and then as a Voluntary Aided School in 1949. Thousands of boys from Ruislip, Uxbridge, Harrow, Wembley, Hayes, Richmond, Acton, Hounslow and Ealing travelled to the Avenue site. In 1955 soccer was superseded by rugby

as the main winter sport and Gunnersbury's First XV became known as formidable opposition.

After the retirement of Canon McCliment in 1957, Father Alex Groves led the school into the 1960s. The school operated as a split site from 1972-1984, far longer than planned. The original idea was that a new purpose built school be opened on The Ride site in Brentford to accommodate the newly enlarged comprehensive school. Father Chapman retired in 1977 and Michael Bovill became the first lay Head. It was under his leadership that Gunnersbury became a single site school again.

The new millennium saw a dramatic building programme which has greatly improved the experience of Gunnersbury students. Firstly a new Music Centre which accommodates a thriving Music Department, followed by a new purpose built Sixth Form Centre that has enabled the school to expand its highly successful Sixth Form and most recently our provision for the Arts has been greatly enhanced through the construction of the John Heffernan Stage. Our recently opened sports complex in addition to our new STEM facility provide further fantastic opportunities for our students.

Gunnersbury continues to follow in Fr Roche's footsteps developing well educated, rounded, successful Catholic young adults who strive for the very highest, Ad Altiora.



History and traditions

*“The commitment and contribution to the
Common Good is outstanding”*

Westminster Diocesan Inspectorate



Gunnersbury's long-standing reputation as one of the top performing and leading comprehensive schools in the country is no accident and we remain strongly committed to academic rigour. The school's examination results are first rate. Each year our GCSE results are amongst the very best in the country.

Young people are growing up in very demanding times and the content and format of examinations is ever-changing. Gunnersbury provides a rigorous broad based education. We ensure that the qualifications your child obtains are ones that are highly valued by universities and employers. We also offer a wide range of opportunities to equip your child with the necessary skills and attributes that will make them confident young adults, as they pursue their future careers.

Teaching is challenging, innovative and tailored to suit the individual, combining the best of traditional methods with the very latest mobile technologies. Lessons at Gunnersbury are characterised by variety, dynamism and healthy competition. We are committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum to develop students creativity and independent thinking beyond public examination requirements. In the lower years, all pupils study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate sciences, computer coding and programming and a Modern Foreign Language.

We are committed to academic excellence. Our curriculum, teaching methods and dedication to striving for excellence inspire a lifelong interest in learning and achievement for everyone in our community. Teachers and support staff are tireless in providing challenging and diverse learning opportunities. We recognise that every individual has a unique learning style, with different strengths and needs at various stages of their school life. We ensure that each student has access to facilities and resources to achieve his hopes and aspirations.

Academic life at Gunnersbury bristles with opportunity. Intellectual curiosity is nurtured through stimulating lessons, academic clubs and societies and strong co-curricular provision. We work in close partnership with Imperial College to offer students an exciting range of opportunities to develop their passion for the sciences, mathematics and engineering further; these include the UK Biology Olympiad, lectures delivered by world-renowned scientists and researchers and hands-on masterclasses at Imperial College's state of the art laboratory facilities at their South Kensington campus. We make no excuse for being ambitious for all of our pupils. Success in examinations provides future choice for each of our students, it secures a range of possibilities and avenues.



Academic success

“Gunnorsbury Catholic School has proved itself to be leading the field in improving GCSE outcomes for its students”

Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust

VRAI



As a Catholic school, we believe and celebrate

God's presence in everyone and everything. Our Catholic ethos creates an atmosphere of warmth and trust that encourages our pupils to develop to their full potential feeling relaxed, secure and confident. Respect and consideration for others is a prerequisite in everything we do and we teach our youngsters that the greatest reward in life is to enrich the lives of others.

Within our daily routine, we rightly place a particular emphasis on Religious Life and our Leadership and Chaplaincy Teams work with many local parishes and organisations to promote an active and varied Christian life for the school and wider community. Service is an integral part of a Gunnersbury education and the curriculum allows students to participate in a range of community volunteering activities. Providing a wonderful opportunity to learn and understand issues affecting people in local, national and global communities is a way for our pupils to use of their God-given talents to help others.

At Gunnersbury we encourage all pupils to explore their vocation to be the person that they can be and want to be. We want our pupils to be confident in their own abilities, with open minds, and aware of their duty to

care for others, society and the wider, modern world. With a shared vision that everyone is equal and made in God's image, we work each day to ensure a common sense of belonging, enabling our students to take pride and ownership in their faith and in their community. We celebrate our faith together every day in prayer, action and good work. Gospel values are central to all of our school life: we practise forgiveness, reconciliation, trust, honesty and mutual respect, secure in God's love for us.

We are very proud of the care our students show for others. The charity work that pupils undertake is an active and visible way of learning to serve. Through the act of service we promote amongst pupils a greater sense of responsibility for their own actions, work, behaviour and thus increase their self-discipline.

As a Catholic school we have a specific mission that goes beyond providing an outstanding education. Essentially this means our most important aspect of our work is the development of kind, responsible, emotionally rounded young adults, who have a deep understanding of their Catholic faith and beliefs. In this respect, we have been judged by the Catholic Inspectorate to be 'outstanding' in all areas of our provision.



Spiritual development

*"The experience of Catholic worship
and the commitment and contribution
to the Common Good are outstanding"*

Westminster Diocesan Inspectorate





The co-curricular programme is central to the all-round education that Gunnersbury provides. Our students enthusiastically embrace this exceptional range of opportunities, developing their resilience, team work and leadership skills along the way.

We also see this as a vital part of encouraging our pupils to grow further and faster to occasionally take them completely out of their comfort zone. A multitude of clubs and societies flourish at Gunnersbury. These include local and national competitions, opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, enabling our pupils each year to pit their determination and skill on white water activities, rock climbing or getting up on

stage to perform in front of their peers and parents in one of our many productions.

The sporting opportunities available at Gunnersbury play a central part in the curricular, co-curricular and social life of the school. All pupils take part in an extensive range of sports and physical education. The aim is to provide the opportunity to play sport at a high level but also to inculcate the benefits of regular exercise and the skills required for enjoyment of such activities in the future.

Gunnersbury students can look forward to a horizon of opportunity beyond their academic learning. These activities can be pursued through subject based



Beyond the classroom

*“Students give of their best,
academically and personally”*

Westminster Diocesan Inspectorate

events, such as theatre visits, exploring the Jurassic coast, or trips to the World War battlefields and the Science Museum and quickly expand into a range of opportunities such as photography, Trinity Guildhall Speech and Drama, cookery and visits further afield to Canada, the USA and Iceland.

Our technology department not only provides students with the basic food skills for life, but also allows their creativity to take them to higher skill levels including competitive cookery and participation in the Young Chef competition. Similarly, taking part in the annual Eton College Engineering Challenge and BAA Young Engineers Challenge gives pupils a forum to shine, where their creative thinking talents produce winning results.

The vibrant and purposeful atmosphere in our specialist art department gives a clue to the energy and commitment students show when working in this subject. Our annual Art Exhibition routinely showcases work of an extremely high quality. Similarly, whether in the practice rooms, music classrooms, or on the stage, pupils work hard to master new musical skills.

We hold that a central responsibility of our mission is to discover, encourage and nurture the distinct abilities of each and every Gunnersbury pupil. Through the growth of their exceptional talents, our students thrive and fulfil every aspect of their vast potential. Gunnersbury is a school where every individual aims for the highest, Ad Altiora, in all that we do.



We pay close attention to understanding the motivations, strengths and ambitions of each of our pupils, from the day they start until the day they leave us. The maintenance of a close three-way partnership (student-parent-school) is vital to this process. The genuine support of Gunnersbury students for one another and the mentoring of younger pupils by older pupils are much-cherished traditions of our school.

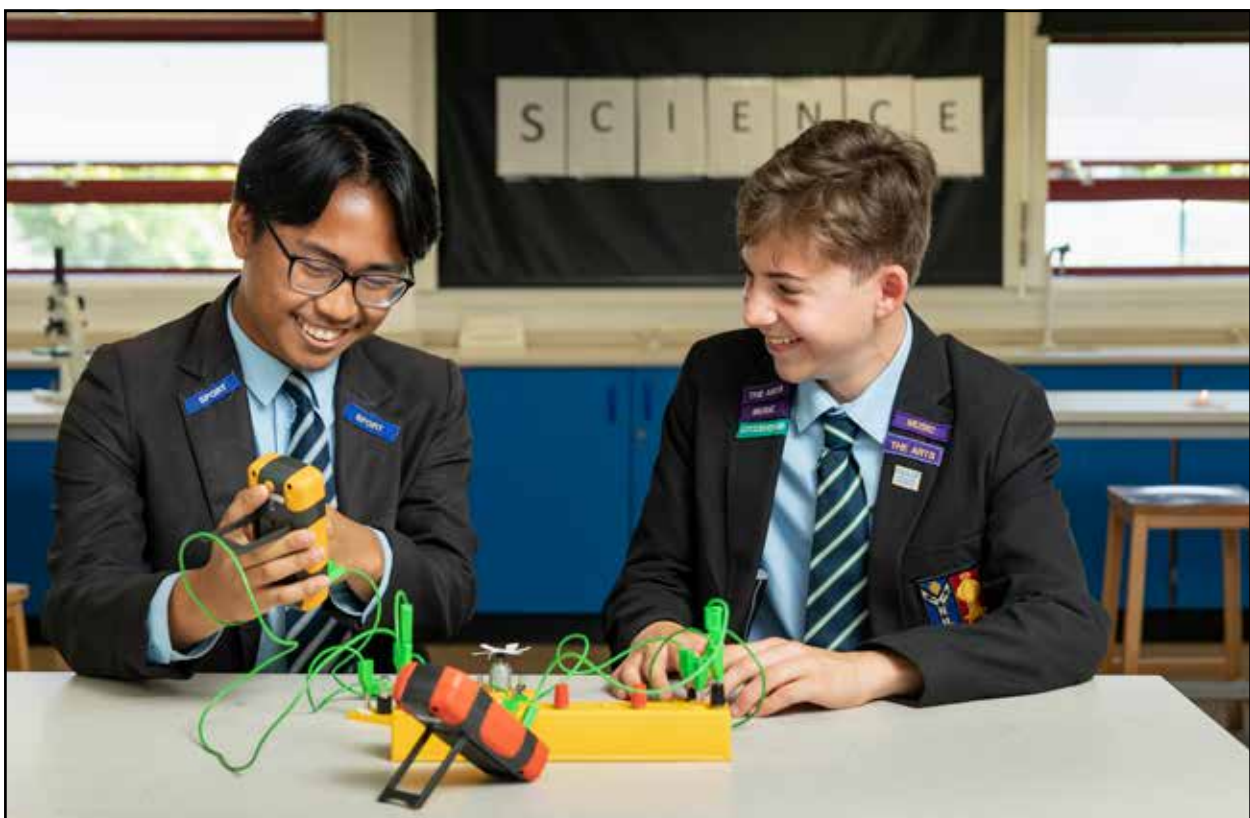
In each year group, pupils are in the care of their Form Tutor who has a crucial role to play in the provision of pastoral care. Form Tutors provide pupils with a point of daily contact, monitor pupils' work and welfare, and act as a channel through which information passes to and from pupils, parents and teachers. The fostering of positive, constructive relationships between home and school is seen as crucial. Students are encouraged to be fully involved in school life and reach their full potential. All pupils are closely monitored by their Form Tutor and there is time each day for the Form Tutor to offer support and advice when needed.

Every pupil is assigned to a House, when they join Gunnersbury. These are Bourne, Roche, Newman, Warren, Pole and Dunstan – named after key people who have shaped the school's history. These people's lives and achievements represent that which we expect

of each other: honesty; tolerance; compassion; drive; a thirst for knowledge; a willingness to sacrifice and a belief in scholarship. Everyone has a part to play in the life of their House and the contribution of an individual is valued. There are opportunities to represent the House in music, games, debating and a variety of other activities.

Pupils are supported in their academic study not only by their individual teachers and the Heads of Department, but also by their Form Tutor and Head of Year. A system of Headteacher Awards and merits points reward both individual pieces of outstanding work and continuous hard work and achievement. It is a central aim of our academic and co-curricular provision that pupils' efforts and achievement are recognised and celebrated.

In accordance with our mission statement, we provide a strong sense of wellbeing, belonging and security that affirms pupils in their dignity and worth, as well as helping pupils to achieve their full potential as a human person, physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. OFSTED have observed that 'a palpable feeling of respect and care permeates the entire site because staff and students consistently give of their best.'



Pastoral care

*“Pupils flourish
in a caring environment”*

OFSTED





Gunnersbury has a long-standing tradition of musical excellence, and music is at the heart of school life in every aspect – socially, academically and spiritually. Our Director of Music and his team are supported by visiting music teachers who offer individual tuition in piano, violin, guitar, saxophone, percussion, woodwind and voice.

The Music curriculum at Gunnersbury aims to provide a range of musical activity and experience with an emphasis on enjoyment, expression and development. Pupils extend their performing, composition and listening skills through singing, percussion and electronic keyboard work, as well having an introduction to music notation. We seek to support and encourage pupils' music-making. Individual weekly music lessons cover traditional classical instruments and more modern options, including bass, electric and acoustic guitar, percussion, and contemporary-style singing.

Apart from the joy that playing a musical instrument brings to those who play and everyone around them, there are other benefits that might not immediately come to mind. For example, both listening to music and playing an instrument can stimulate the brain; for a group or ensemble to make beautiful music, each player and section must learn how to listen to each other and play together, developing strong team skills.

The school maintains a strong choral tradition and our Chamber Choir sing a varied and challenging programme of music. The pupils make regular visits and concerts out of school, performing over the year at Westminster Cathedral, in addition to Mass at parishes across the Diocese. Our Concert Band and Jazz Band tackle both standard and contemporary repertoire and give regular concerts in school and in a variety of other local venues. Gunnersbury soloists have regular opportunities to perform at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

The school hosts formal recitals and informal concerts are regularly given by pupils; joint productions with our Drama department take place at Christmas and at the end of the summer term. Through our alumni, who have gone on to attend the Royal Academy of Music, we have developed masterclasses, with extraordinary musicians from the Academy.

We strive to achieve our intention that, upon leaving Gunnersbury, our former pupils will continue to pursue their love of music and performing. Gunnersbury seeks to further the musical talents of our pupils throughout their lives, so that they have the desire and capacity to play in bands and orchestras, or just to enjoy playing at home.



Music



“Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers provide stimulating and challenging lessons”

OFSTED

Sport is an integral part of a Gunnersbury education and success is achieved at the highest levels; our philosophy, however, is to enhance each individual's sense of belonging, achievement and self-confidence by offering a sports curriculum that develops strength, courage and competitiveness. We enjoy our many sporting successes yet we also pay tribute to the creativity and co-operative work of all our school teams, whatever the outcome. Self-confidence, teamwork and a sense of achievement are qualities readily transferable to other areas of young adults lives and all Gunnersbury pupils are involved in sport at some level.

Gunnersbury is very proud of our long tradition of opportunity and success in sport. Teams compete against schools drawn from a very competitive fixture list, supported not only by our in-house coaches, but also by external professionals, with whom the school partners. Gunnersbury is also very fortunate to have been designated an indoor rowing hub, accredited by London Youth Rowing Association and, as such, we are in a very privileged position to able to provide free rowing coaching to club members after school. Our close proximity to the Thames enables students to spend substantial hours on the water.

As well as striving to achieve excellence on the sports field, we also believe in teaching an understanding of the role of sport and physical activity in achieving an active and healthy lifestyle. Competitive sport across an ever increasing range of disciplines – athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket, cross-country, fencing, football, hockey, martial arts, rowing, rugby, running, table tennis, tennis – is of the very highest standard.

The school's aim is to provide the very best sports tuition to our pupils and the recent announcement of funding from the Department of Education to rebuild our sports hall will enable the continued provision of outstanding sporting opportunities, education and enjoyment, not only to current, but to future students.

Many of our sporting students go on to compete at county, regional, national and international level. Most recently: William De St Croix beat all-comers to be crowned the Under 15 National Rowing Champion at the National Junior Indoor Rowing Championship (NJIRC); David Adeleye is making great progress in his journey to be British Heavyweight Boxing Champion; Tariq Haffar is impressing at Leicester Tigers Premiership Rugby Club, as is Ashton Graham who is representing Harlequins; Toby Sibbick is starring in the English Football League at Burton Albion FC. Above all, sport is most definitely for all at Gunnersbury.



Sport

*“A culture of high standards
and behaviour”*

OFSTED



We prepare pupils for entry to top universities, colleges and professions. The range of destinations reflects the diversity of our pupil body and recognition of the importance of tailoring courses to the individual.

Within the Sixth Form, there are a wide range of 'A' levels available – Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Design Technology, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Philosophy and Ethics. The academic rigour of 'A' level study is supplemented by a programme of talks and visits. We have established links with continental schools, and visits to theatres, galleries, and conferences in the UK and abroad are frequent. An extensive and age appropriate co-curricular provision of societies and opportunities complement the formal academic courses and extend pupils' interest in learning and discussion, through activity beyond the classroom.

Inspired by the work of St Thomas Aquinas, we offer a bespoke programme of support that is open to all in our Sixth Form who aspire to Oxbridge or who aspire to a career in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine. Oxford and Cambridge look for candidates with a background in academically rigorous subjects; pupils who have had educational opportunities that have stretched them beyond the exam board specifications.

Our 'Aquinas Programme' has been designed to do just that, to nurture Gunnersbury's most able young men and women and to enable them to reach their potential in their chosen field. Our 'Aquinas Programme' seeks to empower participants to be confident, articulate, questioning and passionate about their studies. Those who take part will be guided and encouraged throughout the year by school staff and will receive expert tuition and support from colleagues working in the best universities in the country.

We have a long standing and close working relationship with Somerville College Oxford, Homerton College Cambridge, Imperial College, London School of Economics, Royal Holloway, UCL and King's College. These world leading institutions provide our Sixth Formers with access to a range of subject specific master classes and lectures, as well as mentoring programmes to support them in their work towards securing a place at the best universities.

Gunnersbury Sixth Form enjoys an enviable academic reputation, with outstanding annual results at 'A' Level. Our excellent track record in enabling former Aquinas scholars to secure a top Oxbridge and Russell Group place has shown us that these top universities and international companies want young people who are empathetic, resilient and self-determining. Our Sixth Form provision enables pupils to foster those qualities and attributes.



Moving on and beyond

*“The academic success
of our pupils places
Gunnery in the
‘top five percent of
schools’ in the country.”*

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for
School Standards



A sample of student destinations following their ‘Gunnorsbury journey’



Calan

London School of Economics
and Political Science,
Mathematics and Economics



Max

Imperial College London,
Mechanical Engineering



Beatrice

Oxford Brookes University,
Sport and Exercise Science



Damian

Cambridge University,
Engineering



Melissa

University College London,
Medicine



Fortune

Imperial College London,
Aeronautical Engineering



Precious

Duke University(USA),
Maths and Computer Science



Julia

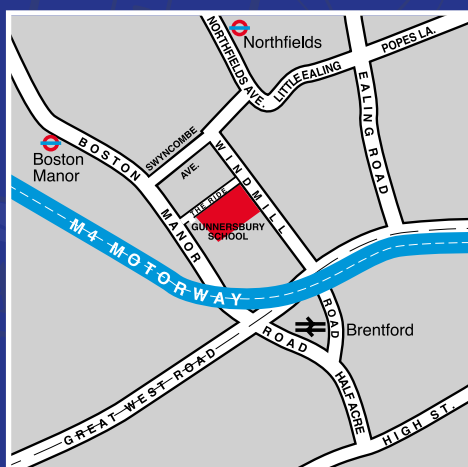
Cardiff University,
Medicine



Andrew

Oxford University,
Politics and History





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