



Press Release

30th April 2026

Chelmsford County High School for Girls commemorates the 119th anniversary of the foundation of the school

Today, we commemorated the 119th anniversary of the foundation of CCHS. We held special assemblies this morning to share readings and reflections, to enjoy music, and be thankful that this school was opened in 1907.

2026 also marks the 110th anniversary of the first CCHS alumna to complete her university studies – Winifred Picking, Girton College, University of Cambridge, in 1916. Indeed, colleagues at Girton College are also marking this anniversary with us today, through their social media channels.

Winifred was the eldest daughter of Emily and Harry Picking, who both led a village school. Winifred's time at CCHS was distinguished by academic success and being appointed school captain, all of which led her to Cambridge. Her name appears several times on two of the Honour Boards we still have up in the original school building.

After Cambridge, Winifred dedicated her professional life to public service. She was a city alderman, chair of the former Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Education Committee and served on the United Cambridge Hospitals Committee for 20 years. Winifred was a county councillor between 1937 and 1974, and served as a governor at Addenbrookes Hospital when the board was formed in 1948. Indeed, she became the hospital board chair in 1966, after a ten-year term as vice-chair. She was also national chair of the British and Foreign School Society – now known as the Educational Opportunity Foundation. And, she also had a rich family life, with her husband and three daughters. Her public service in Cambridgeshire was rightly recognised with the award of a CBE in 1974. What a wonderful life; full of achievement, service and recognition.

To remember and honour Winifred Picking, the original school hall in our Vernon-Harcourt building has now been named, 'Picking Hall'.

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For more information or images, contact Mrs Rachel Packer on 01245 245729 /
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Notes to editor:

About Chelmsford County High School for Girls (CCHS)

Chelmsford County High School for Girls (CCHS) is a proud girls' school community. CCHS was formally opened on 1st May 1907, with 76 inspiring students on roll, to provide girls with an academic education. By 2026, there are 1,273 extraordinary girls and young women, representing cultures and traditions from the world over, who are part of our ambitious grammar school community, committed to excellence in girls' education and empowerment.

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