



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Accolade

Using your voice

A focus on oracy

*Express
yourself*

*Develop
understanding*

*Be the best
you can be*

*Build
confidence*

*Achieve
more*



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Introduction

Welcome to our latest issue of *Accolade*. In this issue we focus on student voice. Student voice is incredibly important here at St Mary’s. Our school’s ethos and values are based on the life and work of Mary Ward, who by all accounts, knew her own mind and campaigned actively for what she believed.

As part of our commitment to providing a holistic education, one of the strands of our school strategy on which we have been focussing this year is the quality of the student’s learning through oracy: the ability to speak eloquently, articulate ideas and thoughts and influence others through talking. Oracy also requires the ability to listen to others and to have the confidence to express one’s views. Oracy is also key for cognitive development: when students discuss, they make new connections and what is already known is reshaped and improved, indeed new understanding is considered. Powerful knowledge is acquired through active participation in the classroom rather than passive listening to the teacher.

Why oracy matters for girls

A training in oracy is especially important to girls because of the way in which girls and women often speak differently to men and the fact that evidence shows that girls, even in single sex settings, are reluctant to speak out and are more likely to fear being ‘put on the spot’.

Oracy in action at St Mary’s

All of us have our own thoughts and opinions about school life and in order for our school to reflect those beliefs, we each need to speak up and make our thoughts known. There are many avenues for student voice at St Mary’s, and many examples of student voice in action within our student body. We hope you get a flavour of some of this activity within this issue.

Kate Latham
Assistant Head: Enrichment and Partnerships

Disagreeing well!

In our, often polarised, world, the ability to listen, as well as speak out, has arguably never been more important. We value formal debating opportunities at St Mary’s, where students learn to listen to each other with respect and to disagree well.

Our Senior School debating society is a living embodiment of these values. Clubs are run by sixth formers. Upper club (Year 10 and Year 11) is run by Vanya C., and Lower Club (Years 7-9) is run by Amelie A. Both clubs are well attended, with over 20 students consistently taking part.

Here are some of their highlights from the last year:

- Our Sixth Form team competed in the English-Speaking Union Mace debate over the issue of digital manipulation in advertising content.
- Our Key Stage 3 debating team competed in a MACE-style debate against Sancton Wood. Our team comprised: Year 7s: Olivia K. and Clara C.; Year 8s: Hannah F. and Kelly L.; Year 9s: Tuppence J-K.; Charlotte M.; Sam P.; Emme M., Erin M.; Amy M. and Leen A. As opposition, they debated the following motions: This house believes that there should be a congestion charge for motor vehicles driving in central Cambridge: they proposed the second debate: This house would make it compulsory for all 18-year-olds to do a year of community service.

We asked our Sixth Form students – Vanya and Amelie, about their experiences in debating, here are their thoughts:

“Debating encourages confidence and self-belief in members and instills in them the courage to question and think critically about the world in which they live. We want to leave the debating club with the skillset we need to own the space that our ideas occupy and voice our thoughts unapologetically and with articulacy and poise.”

Student standout moment:

“In our Debating Tournament in which both clubs joined together for a celebration of their hard work over the past year. It was lovely to see how all members developed in confidence and fluency and thrived off the competitive element rather than being made nervous by it. It was also inspiring to invite an external guest judge to see all the hard work put into the event!”

What plans do you have for the future?

“As Vanya and I are heading off for university this September, our time debating at St Mary’s will very sadly come to an end at the end of this academic year. However, having seen the tenacity, enthusiasm, and dedication of our members, we are sure of a very bright future indeed for both clubs.”



‘This ability to engage in positive dialogue helps our students to avoid name calling and ad hominem attacks that have often become a common part of public discourse – both on, and offline.’



Community Scholarships scheme - to amplify student voice at St Mary's

'Student Voice' is a whole school commitment that we've made to expressing and listening to the views of each other. At St Mary's, we recognise the self-worth and value there is to be gained from students feeling heard and that this can be an immensely powerful tool for future change.

To help amplify 'Student Voice' and empower our pupils to stand up and become the future change-makers we know they can be, we recently launched a new internal initiative – creating a range of 'Community Scholarships' for existing students. The new Scholarship posts available include Debate; Inclusivity; Eco; Mary Ward; International; Digital; and Student Voice.

There are two positions available for each scholarship category; one in the Lower School (Year 7-9) and one in the Upper School (Year 10-13) – with scholarships held for one year. The main expectation for scholars is vibrant and consistent participation in the committees and/or clubs associated with their category.

Encouraging our students to find their voices, and understand the world around them, is central to everything we do at St Mary's. From the moment they start with us, our students are taught to dream big and strive to reach their full potential. Supporting and challenging them in equal measure, we encourage them to believe anything is possible and nothing is out of their reach.

Over the past few years we have placed extra emphasis on oracy and public speaking skills – an area affected nationwide by the pandemic. We have always encouraged our girls to speak out on topics of importance to them – teaching them to communicate confidently, clearly, creatively, and with compassion. Through our new scholarships, students will be able to further enhance their speaking, listening, collaboration and negotiation skills, within a supportive environment.

History has shown, time again, that if girls are given the right skills and opportunities, they can become the 'changemakers' we need for a better world. Our school's foundress, Mary Ward, was centuries ahead of her time with her vision of what women were capable of and her steely determination to fight for female emancipation and empowerment. Centuries on there are almost 200 Mary Ward schools around the world – a living legacy to her foresight and determination that has ensured the best start for thousands of girls worldwide.

Today Mary Ward's vision remains as important as ever - inspiring female students to stand up and let their voices be heard. Worldwide, girls (and women) continue to break down barriers posed by stereotypes and exclusion. We must ensure St Mary's girls are among them – expressing their ideas and opinions and speaking out to further the causes they are passionate about. Our scholarships will help them build confidence in this important area – becoming young women of conscience, who will go on and make a difference in the world.



'Each Community Scholarship is linked to a respective Student Voice committee and will give chosen students the chance to spearhead the issues that really matter to them, whilst also learning and honing vital oracy skills.'



Our student committees raise their voice



There are many avenues for student voice at St Mary’s including the collective voice of students that have a shared passion or interest and take action through one of our various committees. Here is a brief account of their recent highlights:

4.1 Student Council

Main student council is a place for the whole school student body to come and shape school policy.

This year our students have been proud to advise on a wide range of issues:

- Our new HEART house points.
- The development of House activities.
- Input into judging new house logos following the inhouse competition.
- Solutions to help reduce noise in the refurbished dining hall to support neurodiverse students.
- Allocation and redesignation of student lavatories during our building works.
- Inclusive sports uniform developments as well as new eco blazer design.
- How to encourage more talk in lessons and the development of talk guidelines.

4.2 News from the committees

4.2.1 International Committee

Our International Committee aims to celebrate students’ diverse experiences and cultures. It provides a space for us to discuss international-related school issues and opportunities to organise activities. For instance, the Lunar New Year assembly and tea ceremony and the decoration of the Cortile were held to celebrate Chinese culture. These included activities such as paper cuttings, calligraphy and red lanterns, providing students with a hands-on

experience to learn about Chinese customs and traditions. We also planned activities to celebrate International Women’s Day; a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about global issues, including gender inequality, reproductive rights, and violence against women, and celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women throughout history to the present day. One example is when the Committee led an assembly for International Women’s Day; their focus was this year’s theme: “DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality” because women and girls remain underrepresented across the creation, use and regulation of technology. Our members talk about why the International Committee matters to them:

Gaby C.:

“I joined the International Committee because I believe I can interact with people from multiple ethnicities and understand their cultures, such as knowing different languages and practising unique cultural activities and festivals, thereby improving my interpersonal skills, and building up my social network. Moreover, I can learn how to value teamwork spirit in the international committee. This allows me to work with the committee with different backgrounds, develop advanced social skills and learn to collaborate with individuals who have different perspectives.”

Charmaine H.:

“Joining the International Committee gives me insights on other cultures from people with diverse backgrounds. The sense of global citizenship can be

established from being a part of the international committee. It can help me learn more about the global situation across the globe. Moreover, holding activities is something that I enjoy, and as an International Committee means that I have a manifold of opportunities to try and plan activities for my schoolmates and have fun. I get to collaborate with my teammates, and we certainly relish it!”

Kasey Y.:

“The United Kingdom is a multicultural country. It is significant to understand, accept and respect that everyone is unique and celebrate what makes us different in terms of race, ethnicity and cultural background. Joining the International Committee enables me to learn more about other cultures, traditions, and perspectives. Through organising various activities, I have further developed valuable skills, including leadership, teamwork, communication and problem-solving. It is easy to be someone who always takes from the community, but it is crucial to give back.”

“By immersing ourselves in cultures beyond our own, we can exchange our values and demonstrate kindness to build a harmonious society.”
Kasey Y.

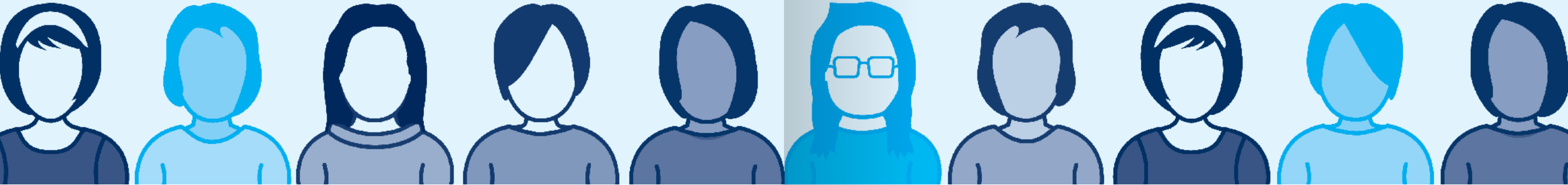
4.2.2 Inclusivity Committee makes an impact!

This year the Committee has focused on working with the operations team to reduce noise in the dining hall for neurodiverse students; a student comment box to maximise opportunities for everyone to make suggestions and the adoption of the Halo Code.

Sara I. explains:

We are proud to have adopted the Halo Code. The Halo Code is a set of guidelines signed by workplaces and schools which protect black students and staff with natural hair and hairstyles associated with afro-textured hair. It aims to ensure that no member of our community is discriminated against due to their hairstyle or natural hair. By adopting this code, we hope to create an environment free from racial prejudice and discrimination where everyone’s characteristics are celebrated, and all are welcomed into our community. We believe that everyone should feel safe and comfortable as well as proud to show their identity.

- Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity (EDI) Governor, Dr Amineh Hoti, attended the first session of the school year; she was delighted to witness the love and care that students have for each other. Conversation focused on the integration of day girls and boarders.
- Alongside our International Committee, they put together ideas for October’s Black History month which included a thought-provoking assembly on hair discrimination and the launch of a poster competition on this year’s theme, ‘Time for Change: Action not Words’.
- Lynn M. advocated for the Halo Code to be adopted with regards to respect around hair culture and in November this was endorsed by both school leadership and governors. The Committee subsequently considered how to market its adoption.



4.2.3 Eco Committee

- The Committee has been working with the catering team to find plastic free alternatives to condiments and plastics.
- The Committee has been developing plans for our exciting new sensory garden project which will also form work towards our Healthy Living topic for the Eco School Award. The Committee has been working with the gardeners, Ms Hutchison and the Gardening Club to create a quiet and relaxing place for our community and a place for us all to be able to reconnect with nature through our senses. New log seats and a circle of seats have been crafted near the outdoor classroom as well as a bug hotel out of a bookcase and a little greenhouse for seedlings based on different senses.
- Throughout the year the Committee has been running hugely popular eco-craft workshops



4.2.4 Wellbeing Committee

- The Committee worked hard ahead of the official launch of our Wellbeing Room in October which is being used for a variety of activities every lunchtime.
- The Committee undertook in-person Mental Health Ambassador training in November with the Safeguarding Alliance which included activities and discussions to develop their understanding of mental health and wellbeing and triggers for poor mental health amongst students. There was a strong focus on the importance of self-care, particularly for Committee members who will be helping to provide peer support for others. Committee members identified their strengths individually and as a team, acknowledged current successful wellbeing practices in school and areas for development, formulated an action plan with strategies to further promote positive mental health and wellbeing at St Mary's, and considered ways to engage with parents/guardians, the Senior Leadership Team and governors on this important topic.

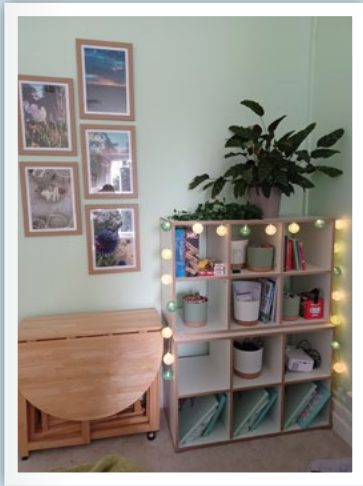
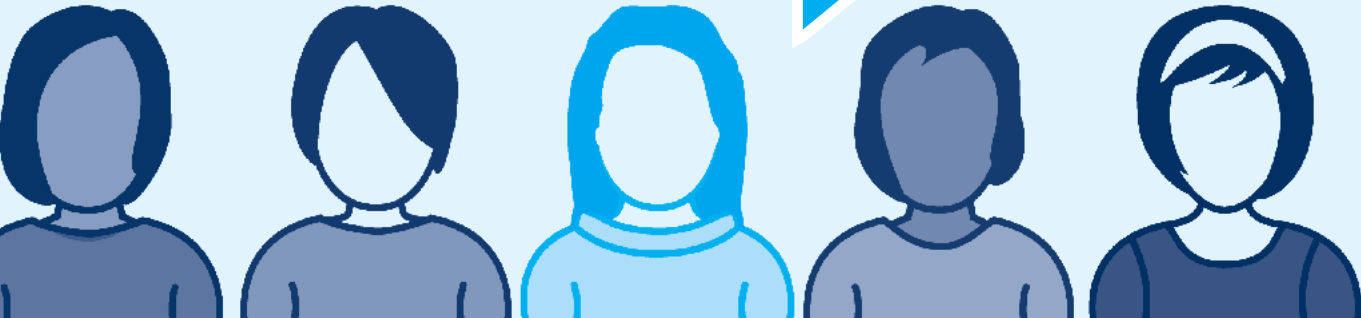
4.2.5 Digital Committee

- Our Year 8 students have been engaged in extremely lively discussion on various topics including the ease of use of the school portal; what information is helpful regarding sports fixtures; the reliability of social media and what makes it hard to find work or notices about school.

4.2.6 High Performance Learning (HPL) Committee

- Students have been considering how best to research effective learning behaviours and want to further educate the community on how HPL can transform learning potential.

'There was a strong focus on the importance of self-care, particularly for Committee members who will be helping to provide peer support for others.'



The Wellbeing Room is used for a variety of activities every lunchtime



Student voice *in Action!*

Eco Award – with Distinction!
After a year of hard work and dedication from the St Mary’s Eco Committee overseen by Mrs Whiting, the school was awarded the Green School Flag with Distinction.

Year 13 student, **Siyu L.**, was shortlisted for the **University of Oxford’s John Locke Essay Prize**. She wrote on one of the Law subjects: Should “hate crime” be punished more severely than the same crime with different motives? To put her achievement in context, last year the John Locke Institute received more than 4000 entries from 101 countries.

Grade 8 LAMDA Gold Medals with Distinction were achieved by: Harper A., Ellen A., Medeea G., Amelie S. Medals with Merit: Amelia A., Lucy S. and Olivia W.

Year 13 student, **Amelie A.**, successfully submitted an article on Virginia Woolf’s “Mrs Dalloway” to the **English & Media Magazine** which was described by the editor as being “very well written and full of interesting ideas about the topic.”

Spanish A Level students, Eloise S., Erin McA., Inara L., Isabelle M-S. and Jana S. created a padlet: <https://padlet.com/streeter2/el-d-a-internacional-de-las-mujeres-v4gteccmexm8fh0p/slideshow/wish/2505347489> to celebrate International Women’s Day

Siena B., Charlotte B., Freya C., Anne-Marie C-P; Emily C., Isabel C., Orla D., Sophia D., Arianna F., Grace G., Tabitha H., Shalome K., Bianca L., Tabitha P., Hannah P., Laura R., Isabella R., Elizabeth R., Mariella R., Anna S., Isla T., Cecelia V-F. and Clemmie W. achieved their Grade 6 LAMDA Bronze Medals with Distinction and Alexa B., Beatrice L. and Natalia P with merit.

The Cell, a Sixth Form student-produced medical magazine, included articles written on: the importance of sun protection by Tabi B.; the pandemic prognosis by Reem S.; Secrets of the Incas: the unknown story of the Inca skull surgeons by Natasha L.; Around the world medical advice and practices by Alice W.

Year 12 students, Reem S. and Alice W., set up a healthcare society. They have invited guests who are involved in the healthcare sector to speak with students.

Diya S. achieved 1st place in the Junior Latin prose category of the Year 8 Classical Greek & Latin Reading Competition. Anna W. also competed and read very well.

Keep abreast of the latest news on our social media channels or through our website.

Classics Reading Competition

Upper Sixth student, Imogen C., and Year 11 student, Bianca L. took part in the **annual Classical Association’s Intermediate and Senior Latin and Greek Reading Competition** in November at the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge. The competition is a highly prestigious and unique event, providing a rare opportunity to hear spoken Latin and ancient Greek. All demonstrated impressive oracy skills, delivering the passages with fluency and accuracy, communicating the sense of the passages superbly. They performed to a large audience of students and teachers from various schools; no easy feat to undertake! The students should be extremely proud for exhibiting their enthusiasm for Classical subjects by regularly attending training sessions and dedicating time to practise the delivery of the passages. Bianca performed in the Latin and Greek Intermediate prose categories, and Imogen in the Latin verse category. Additionally, Lower Sixth student, Marina B-R., entered the online competition, competing in both the Senior Latin verse and Senior Greek prose categories. She was awarded 1st Prize for both categories entered.



‘All demonstrated impressive oracy skills, delivering the passages with fluency and accuracy,’

Maths Challenge results

Elizabeth G. was placed highest in the school for her result in the Senior Mathematical Challenge 2022; her score earned her a place in the Andrew Jobbings Senior Kangaroo 2022 follow-on round.

Diya S., Year 8, not only won Best in School and a Gold certificate in the Maths Challenge at the end of the Summer Term (ie when she was in Year 7); she also received a Merit in the Maths Challenge Kangaroo, the follow-on round from the Junior Maths challenge.

The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust (UKMT) Intermediate Mathematical Challenge results: 109 students from years 9-11 took part in this internationally recognised hour-long, multiple choice challenge, designed to make students think and to promote a love of problem solving through encouraging mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting generally accessible

problems yet which still challenge those with more experience. Of the students who took the challenge 60 have been given certificates for reaching particular boundaries: 24 Bronze, 21 silver and 15 Gold. This is a clear development from last year where we entered 60 students and gained 18 Bronze, 9 Silver and 6 Gold. All students below the Bronze threshold will receive a certificate of participation. The top pupils in the country progress onto the Pink or Grey Kangaroo rounds of the competition, depending on their school year with the top 1500 candidates being invited to compete in the Caley, Hamilton or Maclaurin Olympiad. Ten of our students have been invited to take part in a variety of follow-on stages; last year, 7 had follow on invites. Particular congratulations to Jane S., Nancy Y., Cadee C. and Claudia F. who gained the best score in their year groups and especially Nancy Y. who was awarded best in school. We applaud these outstandingly strong results in Mathematics.

Junior School successes

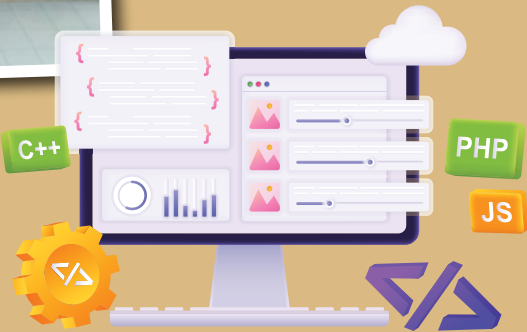
Oxford University Computing Challenge 2023: Following the outstanding successes of our Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 girls in the ‘Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge 2022’ in November, four of our Year 6 girls (who achieved scores in the top 10% nationally) were invited to participate in the online ‘Oxford University Computing Challenge 2023’ in mid-January. This is an invitation-only challenge for talented UK students to produce fully programmed solutions to computational thinking problems within strict time constraints.

They were also joined by five Year 7 and Year 8 girls who were invited to participate as a result of their exceptional performances in the OUCC competition whilst at the Junior School. The Year 7 and Year 8 girls were supported remotely via Teams and email by Mr Andrew Severy throughout their preparations, before coming back to the Junior School to participate in the Challenge itself. Nationally, 6,338 students participated in the ‘Junior’ age category (Years 6&7) and 9,564 students in the ‘Intermediate’ age category (Years 8 &9), and we are delighted that all of our girls achieved superb scores. In addition, special congratulations to Kiana S. in Year 7, who was presented with a ‘Merit Award’, putting her in the top 11% of entrants nationally.

This was an extremely impressive achievement in the context of all of those entrants already having had to qualify in the top 10% nationally, and 8% of ‘Junior’ entrants across the country scoring 0 points, in what is an immensely difficult challenge. We are also delighted with our girls’ overall performance compared to National Results. Once again, the girls have demonstrated their resilience, perseverance, and enthusiasm by competing under pressure at the highest level. All of their hard work during the preparations for the competition really did pay off and they should be extremely proud of what they have achieved.



‘Once again, the girls have demonstrated their resilience, perseverance, and enthusiasm by competing under pressure at the highest level.’





Our Community *in Action!*

‘Sister Act’

This was our first musical production since the acclaimed performance of Chicago in 2019. Over 100 girls auditioned and every one of them was involved- this is part of our remarkable, inclusive and empowering ethos. Our singers, dancers and musicians rehearsed intensively, ably supported by our committed team of performing arts staff. The four-night run was a foot-tappingly joyful and highly professional production in every respect: the acting, singing, dancing of the soloists and chorus, their accents and comedic elements, the live band, choreography and costumes, set design and lighting. As one of our governors and former parent put it,

“It was a total blast from start to finish! Really joyful, fun, great messaging, all strong but many truly outstanding performances, imaginative staging and costumes, great music...I could go on. It was really good and very enjoyable - because you could see that the girls were also having a ball! Super high standard. Congratulations to all.”

Boarders’ Concert

Head Boarder, Miranda Q., orchestrated the whole event with her Prefect team: student leadership and service at its very best. Our boarders have many talents which included superb piano playing by Charlie L.: both a solo performance of “Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence” and accompanying Christine W’s excellent cello performance of “The Swan”. Christine performed again with Elizabeth G. on violin in a duet rendition of “Schlinder’s List”. Duet singers, Emily H. and Selina W. performed with moving conviction in Mandarin, as did Lara P. and Lynn M. in English with their rendition of a Rhianna song. Superb dancing in a variety of traditions included: Pia O.’s modern ballet solo full of inspiring leaps and twists; Jessica C.’s grace-filled and beautiful traditional Asian dance; Maine P., Susan D. and Miranda Q.’s fun Korean dance in dungarees; a rumbustious foot-tapping African-influenced dance performed by Lynn M. and Skylana O.; and vibrant and group dances: “Afterlike” performed by Bonnie P., Jessica C., Emily H., Ruby W.u, Nancy Y. and Trinity S. and an equally popular “Dance Extravaganza” performed by Gaby C., Elizabeth G.o, Charmaine H., Becky I., Catherine J., Sally M., Hei Y- M. and Victoria Y. Every boarder movingly joined in with the flag-waving finale song.



Pre-prep Nativity

'The Christmas Storytellers'. Year 2 whose ideas are traditionally incorporated into the story of Christ's birth asked this year if the nativity play could be set in an enchanted wood and that their play include other Christmas stories: the Snowman; the Nutcracker; the Tailor of Gloucester; the Christmas Carol and the Wind in the Willows. Mrs Carol Kew's creative imagination and gift for story telling enabled the girls' ideas to come to fruition and create the magic of Christmas found in these Christmas stories and songs. It was excellent noting the Year 6 girls in control of the sound and lighting desk, ably directed by Mr Severy.

Fundraising

- The final total for the October Fun Run was £10,150 which enabled us to provide significant help to the local and international projects we had adopted for this event - including the next phase of building the Mary Ward school in Mbizo, Zimbabwe.
- 8S raised over £170 selling pains au chocolat and drinks over breaktime to raise funds for DEPPER, a charity which supports elderly and the disabled with emergency plumbing and heating repairs.
- Many Year 9s helped with the Christmas Giving Tree to support Jimmy's Night Shelter, a Cambridge based organisation that supports people experiencing homelessness. Daisy N. and Erin McM. were instrumental in setting this up this year.
- Victoria G. felt sufficiently moved in February by the Turkish/ Syrian earthquake which caused widespread destruction and left thousands of people homeless, injured and in need of urgent assistance. Believing that, as a community, we have a responsibility to help those in need, at short notice, she organised the Sixth Form to bake cakes, the sale of which raised £260 for the DEC appeal. Over the final two evenings of 'Sister Act' she organised donation baskets. With thanks to parent and staff generosity, she has raised a total of £550, with the support of fellow Lower Sixth students, Reem S. and Connie P.
- One of our parents, Rachel Duke, came in to speak to the Lower Sixth in a PER (Philosophy, Ethics & Religion) session about Meseret for Women, an Ethiopian women's charity that she runs. Being moved by the session, Anouk S., Sarah W. and others organised a cake sale which raised approximately £100.
- Fairtrade Fortnight was marked by a special assembly, presented by some of the Mary Ward Scholars who lead the running of the stall. They have opened for sales on an extra day each week as the excellent Fairtrade chocolate bars have proved so popular!
- We continue to support the Cambridge City Food Bank, a year group per month.





Creative Writing Showcases and Successes

In celebration of International Mother Languages Day in February and World Poetry Day in March, St Mary’s launched a poetry competition with the theme of ‘Our World; Our Words’. Students were invited to explore the theme in any direction they liked and in any language.

We were delighted to have received a wide range of entries in English as well as some in French, Italian, Spanish, Lithuanian, Korean, Mandarin, Khosa, and mixtures of languages. Many went on display in the Learning Resources Centre. There were two categories of prizes: 1. poems written in English; 2. poems written in different languages.

Key Stage 3 Poems in English

- First prize: *Who am I?* by Saffron L. (Year 8)
- Second Prize: *Holi* by Arshiya M. (Year 8)
- Highly Commended: *Planet B* by Imogen C. (Year 8)

Key Stage 3 Poems in different languages

- First prize: *Sei bella come una rosa* - in Italian - by Ines M. (Year 8)
- Second prize: *Friendship* - a poem in Mandarin - by Youshan H. (Year 9)
- Highly Commended (x2): *Humans*, by Niamh G. (Year 8); and *Aren't you happy*, by Nitya M. in Year 8 (both multi-lingual)

Key Stage 4 Poems in English

- First prize: *The Words I know (and the ones I don't)*, by Grace P. (Year 10)
- Second Prize: two joint winners: *The Other Side*, by Freya G. (Year 12), and *Reflections of an African*, by Maryam A. (Year 11)
- Highly Commended: *Our World, Our Words* (poetry calls us), by Eloise S. (Year 9)

Key Stage 4 Poems in different languages

- First prize: *Dia De Los Muertos* - in Spanish- by Karla C-C. (Year 11)
- Second prize: - *Not her, we* - in Lithuanian - by Upe T. (Year 10)
- Highly Commended: *Just Smile* - in Chinese and Korean - by Cadee C. and Claudia F. (Year 11s)

On World Poetry Day itself, we were treated to a multi-lingual poetry reading event in the LRC, in which Cadee C., Karla C-C., Vanessa L., Youshan H. and Ines M. read their poems and translations.



Days of Reflection

- In October, our **Year 7** students focused on their sense of self and friendships: they wrote letters to their older selves which will be given back to them at the end of their Upper Sixth year.
- In November, **Year 9** students explored issues of justice and fairness in our communities and in the wider world through a mix of discussion, activities and quiet reflection. They considered what small steps they could take to contribute to peace and justice in school, in the community and beyond. During the morning, students and staff had the opportunity to hear from, and enter into, some thought-provoking discussion with a representative of Jimmy’s, the Cambridge shelter and support services for those sleeping rough.
- In January, **Sixth Formers** focused on ‘noticing life more deeply’, identifying points of stability, virtue, and spirituality. Many students found they benefited much from a talking and listening exercise, called an Emmaus Walk, which took place in the afternoon.
- Also in January, **Year 10** students reflected on their lives as ‘Pilgrims together on life’s journey.’ Some discussions and activities were built around the metaphor of pilgrimage, specifically the pilgrim way to Santiago de Compostela in Spain (known as the Camino), as depicted in the film, ‘The Way’. An unexpected bonus was the visit of a former colleague who had recently completed the Camino who spent some time answering students’ questions about the experience.

Leadership and Voice

- We were immensely proud of every girl who participated in our vibrant **October Open Morning**. Prospective parents and their daughters, as well as colleagues from other schools, expressed how impressed they were with the



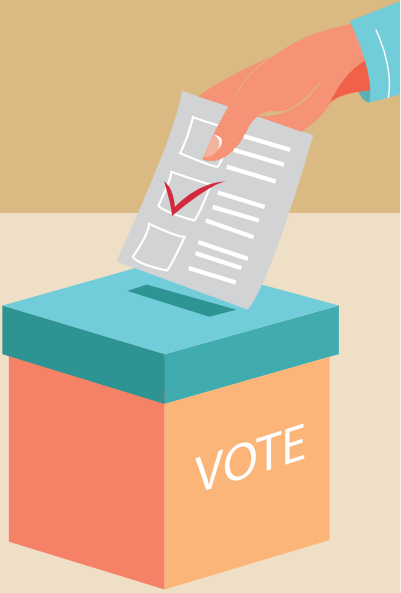
conduct, liveliness and passion for their school which the girls manifested abundantly.

- Sixth Former, Eloise Streeter, took forward an ambition to have a **Self-defence Club**. In November, she surveyed other year groups, established a wide-ranging interested, identified and approached the staff member with the expertise and interest in running the club which was added to the Clubs, Activities and Societies booklet for the Spring Term.
- **Year 9 students heard from older peers** about their experiences undertaking GCSE and A level courses at St Mary’s over a series of Tutor times in November. This enabled students to gain a head start when thinking about their option subjects for Year 10 and to hear the follow through to our A level programmes.
- **Upper Sixth students hosted a Work Experience Convention for their Lower Sixth peers** during a Tutor period in November during which they presented the opportunities in which they participated in last year.
- **Rowers** had the opportunity to give suggestions and then vote for blade colours and designs as part of our submission to affiliate with Schools’ British Rowing

Head Girl & Senior Prefect Elections



Head Girl, Emmi B. with Professor Donald



Having enjoyed an exceptional standard of speech during the live Hustings for the election of Head Girl, the school community responded: the level of voting engagement was encouragingly high. Letters of application, interviews and school record were also taken into account as part of a very careful discernment process.

Our new Sixth Form leadership structure and team is as follows:

Name	Appointed to
Emmi B.	Head Girl
Alice W.	Deputy Head Girl (Boarding)
Natasha L.	Deputy Head Girl (Day)
Zoe E.	House Captain - Brookside
Sophia G.	House Captain - Cavendish
Clem S.	House Captain - Paston
Genevieve S-H.	House Captain - Elms
Victoria G.	Academic Leader
Reem S.	Academic Leader
Rennie Y.	Junior School Leader
Connie P.	Social and Community Prefect
Kasey Y.	Social and Community Prefect
Achu L.	Drama Captain
Peggy T.	Music Captain
Connie P.	Sports Captain
Anouk S.	125 Ambassador



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