



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Accolade



An accredited *High Performance Learning* World Class school



A High Performance Parent Toolkit



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Introduction from Charlotte Avery, Headmistress



Andreas Schleicher of the OECD has argued that “the 21st century ... is about how knowledge is generated and applied, about shifts in ways of doing business, of managing the workplace or linking producers and consumers, and becoming quite a different student from the kind that dominated the 20th century. What we learn, the way we learn it, and how we are taught is changing. This has implications for schools and higher-level education, as well as for lifelong learning.”

Here at St Mary’s, we have been determined to rise to this challenge of preparing students for a rapidly changing world that we do not yet know. High Performance Learning (HPL), as a set of thinking skills and a set of attitudes, has enabled us to prepare our students for the world beyond school by focusing on the way that we learn, as well as what we learn. Thinking in this way has enabled

us to become a better learning community: working together, collaborating, trying new things and, crucially, learning from our mistakes.

We are delighted to update our wider community through this edition of Accolade with some details of how HPL has shaped our school in this extraordinary year and look forward to the next stage of our learning journey together.

How HPL made us lockdown ready!

From Kate Latham: Director of Teaching & Learning

Like all schools, we needed to respond quickly to establish a completely different model of teaching and learning when lockdown was announced with less than a week’s notice last March. Parents were impressed with the way in which the school went online; the results of our Junior and Senior parent surveys were very good, and we thank parents for their support during that difficult time. We were able to offer live lessons to all year groups, from Reception up to Year 13. We also continued with enriching activities such as assemblies, House meetings, School Council meetings and even Sports Days across the school!

Being an HPL school facilitated that potentially difficult transition in several ways. Vital skills for remote learning like *self-regulation, strategy planning, flexible thinking, risk taking, open mindedness, perseverance, resilience and concern for society* are already an explicit part of our learning vocabulary and toolkit, and we were able to call on them during our term of remote learning.

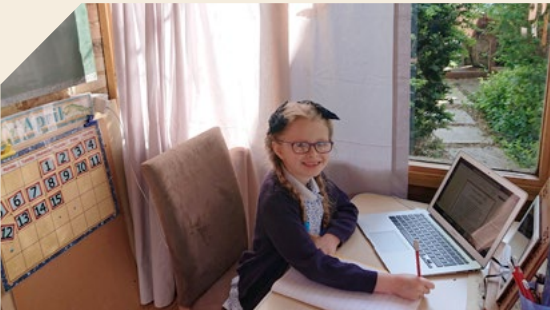
We were absolutely bowled over by the positivity of our students, which we celebrated in our annual Prize Giving by introducing prizes for *collaboration, creativity and resilience* for the first time.

We were also able to use the framework of HPL to give structure and meaning to enrichment beyond the classroom - our girls were ready and able to work independently, whether that was entering

(and winning) national competitions, or taking part in our many Sports Day challenges!

Additionally, our culture of professional sharing – which is such an important bedrock of HPL and which is established through teacher continuing professional development groups – has meant that there has been a generous and productive sharing of ideas and resources as we learned together the most effective means of maintaining high quality teaching and learning as a remote school.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that our parents are partners in our HPL journey meant that every St Mary’s home became a High Performance Learning hub.



Values, Attitudes and Attributes



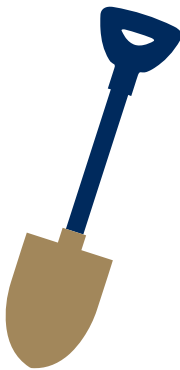
Agility

Can you find your own direction?



Empathy

Can you collaborate with others?



Hard Work

Can you persevere and overcome setbacks?

From our Global Lead Teachers

The Importance of Engaging with Feedback

From Andrew Flint, Senior School HPL Global Lead Teacher

Feedback from teachers to pupils is a vital aspect of effective Teaching and Learning. It has a particularly central role within the High Performance Learning framework, because it fits entirely with the 'with the students, not to them' approach. This year we have chosen to make student engagement with feedback the central aspect of the House Points system: students receive House Points for successfully improving their work on the basis of the feedback from their teacher.

Effective feedback avoids trait-based comments such as 'You're so clever' or 'Great work – just what I would expect.' These phrases suggest that the child possesses innate qualities or permanent, pre-established traits that cause them to succeed. They send the message that their ability levels are fixed. Instead, as an HPL school we encourage students to develop a growth mindset, to be confident that, through dedication and focused practice, all students can achieve at a high level.

When students focus on the grade or the mark they receive, they tend to compare themselves with their peers or to see the grade as the most important aspect of the work. Furthermore, problems can develop when students who are always used to achieving high grades find new work challenging and their grades dip. A student who has always received praise for being 'intelligent' and who believes that intelligence is a fixed trait beyond their control is less likely to possess the *resilience* to seek new ways to think or work that will be necessary for success as the material they study becomes more complex.

In contrast, HPL helps to create a culture in which the score on the work is less important than the lessons that they learn from it for the future. Instead of comments relating only to that piece of work, they receive guidance that helps to develop their *metacognition*, and advice on the kinds of skills or approaches that they might employ to improve in the future. It might encourage students to *find connections* with other work in that subject or to reflect upon how what they have learned in other curriculum areas might help them to see the bigger picture or wider topic.

Here are some examples:

- How did you get that answer? Could you explain what you did?
- Why do you think this piece of work was so successful?
- What made you pick this strategy to answer the question?
- Could you try a different strategy next time?
- What could you do differently?
- Compare this essay to the one you wrote at the start of the year: what is different?
- This is a fascinating answer. Can you tell me more: what else do you think about this question?
- Has this work shown you any gaps in your understanding? What could you do about this?
- Where do you think this answer fits into the bigger picture?
- What skills did you use to answer this question?
- What other subjects could you use to help you understand this topic better?

By providing feedback that takes the form of questions of this kind, we encourage students to reflect upon how they can improve and to take greater responsibility for their own learning. It supports them not to see the grade or mark as the main objective but rather to see their work as part of an ongoing process of improvement over which they have agency. Supporting students to develop a growth mindset helps them to succeed not only now, but in their future education and on into the adult lives and careers.



The impact of HPL on children with special educational needs (SEN)

From Daniel Taylor, Junior School HPL Global Lead Teacher

Since St Mary's gained certification as a High Performance Learning (HPL) World Class School, we have continued to work tirelessly in the Junior School to integrate HPL within our school ethos and environment so that pupils become outstanding learners and leaders within their communities.

When I started my teaching career, I served as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator in the United States, and I have continued passionately supporting and advocating for children who require specialised support. Over my time as an educator, working in various schools and teaching a wide range of age groups, I have found one common theme. Students may not necessarily remember the exact topics we teach, but they will take away the life skills that we, as teachers, impart. Therefore, I became fascinated with the HPL framework when the St Mary's Senior Leadership Team first pursued it. HPL creates a structure wherein pupils develop specific values and learning attitudes, backed by training critical thinking skills which can be used throughout their lives.

In April 2020, I became an HPL Global Lead Teacher, following in the steps of my Senior School colleague, Dr Andrew Flint. My interest was centred on the premise of HPL's ambitious claim that all children can achieve at a high level when given the proper environment and guidance. Specifically, I was keen to demonstrate the efficacy of the HPL framework within Special Educational Needs planning and programmes. There is a common misconception that children with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) often cannot achieve as highly as some of their peers. Professor Deborah Eyre, Founder and Chair of HPL, has been challenging this idea within educational settings in general, as set out in her policy paper 'Room at the Top', but I wanted to focus on this specific group of pupils.

Just like Professor Eyre, I believe that any child can achieve at a high level regardless of ability. However, this idea becomes trickier to navigate when children have a difficult time accessing curriculum content due to specific learning needs, such as dyslexia. This is not to say that these children cannot achieve at as high a level as compared to their peers, but it does mean that educators must think more critically about how to create an environment where students with SpLD can be given the opportunity to successfully explore the HPL framework, such as the thinking skills of *meta-thinking*, *linking*, *analysing*, *creativity*, and *realising*. I contend that Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and teachers must partner together to create what I call "Effective Entry Points" to HPL.

Within my role as an HPL Global Lead Teacher, I am working to develop structures and ideas for SENCOs and other educators to create these "Effective Entry Points". I believe that it starts with considering the HPL Values, Attitudes, and Attributes structure. Specifically, pupils with SpLD must be given the resources and training to support their development of agile thinking and a hardworking ethos. In HPL, Professor Eyre stipulates that an individual must be willing to take risks and learn to think creatively, while also persevering if they are to develop a high-performance learning mindset. Children with SpLD can at times struggle with perseverance as compared to their peers, but perseverance has been shown to increase dramatically when children are provided with targeted resources. When a student feels confident to use given resources within a lesson, they are more willing to *take risks* and push boundaries. This is where real learning takes place, and where thinking skills begin to develop long term benefits.

My hope is that as an HPL Global Lead Teacher I will be able to support my colleagues at St Mary's, and collaborate with fellow educators across the country. My aim is to develop HPL more comprehensively within our learning support system at the Junior School, focusing on effective entry points, so that children with SpLD will be able to achieve at their highest levels. By working with other schools through various training sessions, conferences and workshops, our school will continue to successfully develop our HPL programme so that more students are positively impacted.



Where is our St Mary's community from?



A giant map in the dining room displays the countries of origin of our girls. With new students adding even more countries, this will bring home to the students how internationally diverse the school is.

International Focus

From Emily Dutton, our International Lead
'With students not to them'

St Mary's is wholly committed to the belief that the wide-ranging international character of our students provides an opportunity to enrich the educational experience of both our girls from afar and those from closer to home. This strongly held belief is deeply rooted in our core Mary Ward values that celebrate religious and cultural diversity. It is also a central aspect of a High Performance Learning school that encourages students to be actively engaged and community-minded global citizens.

To this end, we have an International Committee which evolves each year as the student membership changes and different issues surface at school, local, national and international level. Consisting of a wide range of students across age groups, the committee has worked hard to raise awareness of issues of

personal interest to international students, as well as of global issues of importance to the whole of the student body. The committee designed and delivered assemblies to celebrate the International Day of the Girl; they spoke to the whole school about wage discrimination and the number of young girls across the world who are forced into early marriage and childbirth against their will. The committee recorded a series of videos to support the '#HearMeNow' campaign, dedicated to encouraging girls to be advocates for social change across the world.

The committee also created a new notice board to display information relating to different countries, cultures, and identities across the world. A giant map in the dining room displays the countries of origin of our girls. With new students adding even more

countries, this will bring home to the students how internationally diverse the school is.

The International Committee presented assemblies to the whole school to celebrate Black History Month in October. This year, this issue has been especially in focus due to racial violence in the United States and the campaign to remove historical monuments relating to Britain's role in the slave trade. The international committee presented assemblies that highlighted the important contributions of black people, both past and present. The girls chose to celebrate figures like Rosa Parks, a woman who challenged racial discrimination by refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man in 1955, sparking nationwide protests that helped to end US segregation laws, and Michelle Obama, the

accomplished attorney and former first lady of the first African-American President in US history.

This year, students have also been contributing to the Missing Maps projects. Working as a part of a global community, girls have been working to literally put people on the map, by contributing to online data that maps vulnerable people and places, helping humanitarian agencies to provide aid and governments to plan sustainable development.

Further opportunities to allow students to engage in internationally planned projects include 'E-twinning' with other schools, and sharing virtual classrooms, which enable students to collaborate on research projects or compete in cross-curricular challenges with students in other countries.



Black History Month in the Junior School

From Sarah Cliff, Deputy Head of the Junior School

In the Junior School, we have celebrated Black History Month by focusing on the achievements of ‘Black Heroes’ past and present. A special assembly launched the start of that very important month and teachers continued to teach their classes about individuals who have faced adversity and discrimination because of racism, overcoming this to become pioneers in their fields, like Mae Jemison and Lewis Latimer.

The stories from the Rebel Girls books are at the heart of life at the Junior School, with every class being named after a Rebel Girl. During Black History Month, teachers shared Rebel Girls stories about black women with their class, and looked at their achievements, including Ruby Bridges, Mary Seacole, Josephine Baker and Harriet Tubman. Girls in Year 3 also learned about Bessie Coleman, a famous pilot, and wrote letters asking for her to be included in the next edition of Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls. Girls in Year 5 have been studying space, and learned about the achievements of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, who were also the subject of the book and film Hidden Figures.

Also during the month, the Year 6 classes (Ruby Bridges class and Harriet Tubman class) started

reading their class book Freedom 1783 by Catherine Johnson. The book tells the story of Nat, an enslaved boy from a sugar cane plantation in Jamaica, who finds himself in London and meets important abolitionists of the time, such as Granville Sharp and Olaudah Equiano.

The issues raised by Black History Month continued into November, with girls looking at the importance of Kamala Harris being the first Black and Asian woman Vice-President in US History. Year 6 are reflecting on justice in their RE lessons; they looked at the life of Martin Luther King and how he sacrificed his life for the civil rights struggle.

They were inspired to write their own ‘I have a dream’ speeches.

The Junior School has ensured that every class has really thought about the [Mary Ward value](#) of ‘Celebrating Diversity’ during Black History Month and beyond. They have thought about the inequalities that many people have faced

and still face due to racism. The passion with which they spoke about how they want to bring about change is wonderful to see. Ruby Bridges once said: “Don’t follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail.” To which girls in the Junior School can reply: yes we can!

The passion with which they spoke about how they want to bring about change is wonderful to see.

Black History Month in the Senior School

From Kate Latham: Director of Teaching & Learning

At a time when the international discourse can be dominated by the language of nationalism, racial intolerance, closed mindedness and closed borders, the school remains dedicated to celebrating its educational identity and to encouraging students to approach their futures as fully engaged, activist members of the global community.

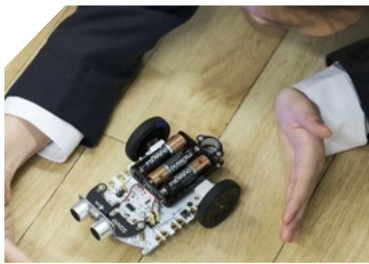
St Mary’s celebrated Black History Month in October in true HPL style by ensuring that students were at the heart of activities. The Sixth Form-led History & Politics Society gave an inspiring assembly focusing on some of their black heroes, including Claudette Colvin (Rosa Parks’ less well-known forerunner) and Mae Jemison, the pioneering astronaut.

This theme was continued with a BME role model Art competition in which students produced some inspiring pieces. Include winners’ pictures

BAME boarders gave a brilliant, thought-provoking and very honest assembly to the whole boarding community from their own very personal perspectives about their experiences of being young black women growing up and/or going to school in the UK.

This year’s Year 7 Integrated Learning Week, whilst maintaining its usual focus on our Mary Ward characteristic of Eliminating Injustice, will focus specifically on slavery, and will develop students’ *concern for society* alongside their *collaboration* skills.





St Mary's becomes a finalist for STEM Initiative of the Year

St Mary's has become a finalist in the 'STEM Initiative of the Year' category, having been chosen from hundreds of entries for the 2020 Cambridge Independent Science and Technology Awards. St Mary's is thrilled to have become a finalist for this award for the second year running, in recognition of the fantastic work undertaken by the school to encourage girls across the Cambridge community to consider a career in STEM.

Tia wins national photography competition!

Tia S., a Year 13 Photography A Level student and boarder at Mary Ward House, won a national photographic competition. The prestigious 'Khadija Saye Photography Award' is run by the Boarding Schools' Association and Tia S. scooped up the 2020 prize.



Art scholar 'highly commended' in human rights competition

Amie B., a Year 10 art scholar, was Highly Commended by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) for her entry into the Creative section of the HART Prize for Human Rights in the intermediate age category. She was selected, along with a handful of other students, from well over 200 entries from 45 different school in the UK and abroad for this prestigious prize.



St Mary's students have creative writing published

Imogen C. in Year 6 and Olivia L. in Year 8 had their stories, *Driving for life* and *Will Takya and the magic biscuits* respectively, selected for publication in the Crazy Cab stories anthology following a competition by CAAB Publishing.

St Mary's celebrates success



Hannah wins prestigious Outdoor Learning Design Competition

Hannah P., a Year 9 student, was voted the winner in KS3 of the TG Escapes Outdoor Learning Design Competition, run in association with Headteacher Update and SecEd magazines. Hannah designed a learning campus, with two eco-buildings, an outdoor classroom, nature areas and growing beds.

Mandarin teacher wins prestigious literary prize

Wenyan Lu, Head of Mandarin at St Mary's, became the 1st Prize Aspire-igen winner of the SI Leeds Literary Prize 2020 for her novel *The Funeral Cryer*. Many congratulations!



Lily wins Rotary Club writing competition

Lily F., a Year 9 student, won a Rotary Club writing competition. She claimed first prize in the intermediate category (11-13 years old) with a clever poem, 'Connections', which uses the comparison of a tree, aging with time, with that of love growing and blossoming before fading away.



Year 6 become international finalists in iCool Robotics competitions

In the summer of 2020 eight of our Year 6 girls participated in the 'International CoSpace Online (iCool) Challenge 2020'. Four of the girls, Anna T., Sissi H., Tuppencc J.-K. and Tess F., were named as 'finalists', in recognition of their exceptional performances, with scores well in excess of 1000 points amassed during a six-minute match!

As the highest scoring UK entrant, Anna T. then competed in a virtual match against the highest scoring entrant from Iran. After a tense match, her robot emerged victorious with 1060 points to her opponent's 920! This meant that she finished in 3rd Place in the 'iCool Challenge 2020 CoSpace Rescue U12 Category'.

Enrichment

Last year we worked hard on reforming our in-school enrichment programme in order to give students opportunities to develop ACPs and VAAs outside of the curriculum.

Getting creative: the Arts Award in Year 7

From Sarah Robley, Art teacher & Year 7 Arts Award Co-ordinator

The Arts Award enrichment is specifically designed to create enterprising learners through the pillars of High Performance Learning. Students undertake different creative, leadership and research projects throughout the year, each designed to foster the values, attitudes and attributes of HPL.

Students begin the academic year creating their own Arts project, based on any aspect of the Arts. The core ACP of this project is, of course, *creativity*. Initially, students are encouraged to *think flexibly and fluently* in generating multiple ideas, and then select and refine the best among them. *Originality* is celebrated as all students pursue different projects, and they are encouraged to be innovative in their approach. Students engage with enquiry-based learning through developing their own project, thus encouraging independent thought and building *intellectual confidence*. Although teachers guide students in their choice of project, girls have ownership of their own investigation, which stimulates their curiosity and motivation. This extended student-led project lasts throughout the Autumn Term, giving students a chance to engage in focused practice of their chosen discipline, be it filmmaking, creative writing or illustration.

Extended deliberate practice is a central pillar of high performance, setting students on the path to expertise, and instilling in them the self-motivation and persistence necessary for high achievement.

Our Year 7 students are pursuing projects as diverse as dressmaking, song-writing and creating an illustrated book. Many pupils have chosen to *collaborate* with peers to create their project, whilst others prefer to work independently. Both approaches are valuable, and we encourage pupils to follow their preferred method of working for this project in order for them to produce their best work. We are very excited for students to share their projects with the rest of their group so we can celebrate the diversity, imagination and originality of all our girls.

In the Spring Term, pupils will focus on teaching an Arts skill to other members of their group. This is designed to develop students' leadership skills whilst nurturing their confidence. It also gives them an opportunity to engage in complex and *multi-step problem-solving*; breaking down the task of teaching a skill, deciding on a suitable approach, and then acting on it. This is such a valuable experience to gain early on in students' secondary school life. Planning an activity and guiding their peers through it develops pupils' self-assurance and sets them on the path to embracing and seeking out more demanding leadership roles as they progress through school.

The Summer Term will be devoted to researching an Arts practitioner of their choice. Here, students engage in independent research, honing their *analytical* skills as well as practising *self-regulation* through evaluating and improving their own work. Again, giving students full choice over their research project gives them a sense of autonomy and encourages self-reliance.

Throughout the Arts Award programme, we embrace the central tenet of High Performance Learning; 'with learners, not to them'. The Arts Award programme is centred around helping students become more effective learners through supporting them in developing their own capabilities. Underpinning all the projects is an aim to create enquiring, creative and open minds.



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Expanding horizons: the Year 8 STEMM Award

From Robin Griffiths, Physics teacher & Year 8 STEMM Co-ordinator

The HPL framework recognises the behaviours of great learners, and if you have read Dr Andrew Flint's article in last year's Accolade, you will know of St Mary's determination to build our curriculum around these behaviours. But the curriculum is only one aspect of our students' education, and these behaviours are not limited to a purely academic setting.

We are building on our extracurricular offering at St Mary's to encompass the principles of HPL, exploring beyond the curriculum to enable students to make links with the wider world. For Year 8 students, this means enjoying a broader perspective on their STEMM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine). Students will journey outside their comfort zones in a relaxed and inquiring way to explore their STEMM subjects in greater depth.

In the Year 8 enrichment programme, we are pursuing the Youth STEMM Award (YSA) Junior Award. Our pupils will complete the award over the year, with rotations in science (acids and alkalis in the home), technology (Python gaming), engineering (flying machines), maths (density and diving) and medicine (augmenting ourselves). These experiences are more exploratory in nature and focus on the application of these fields.

The YSA Junior Award asks students to address four skills in each of the STEMM rotations; namely, to learn about the topic, explore more about the area, then apply their new knowledge to a problem. To complete each rotation, they should be able to explain what they have learned to someone else. These four skills closely link with the HPL advanced cognitive performance (ACP) characteristics of *linking, analysing, realising* - and even *creating*

when students are challenged to craft an explanation of their experience, and so the YSA Junior Award complements and exemplifies HPL principles.

HPL has particular resonance in the STEMM field as traditionally it is one that girls often do not identify as being 'for them'. HPL of course encourages a more open mindset, challenging students to question the spurious assumptions that lead to these damaging ideas. HPL also encourages the *resilience* needed to break these stereotypical limitations: indeed to say, "yes she can"!

In each of our activities we are focused on STEMM in a wider context, for example the wide variety of professions involved in the design and creation of modern artificial limbs. Highlighting possibilities empowers the girls by showing them the sheer breadth of opportunities in the STEMM field, encouraging them to make links to STEMM subjects that they would not normally encounter in their science, maths, or technology lessons.

The importance of the enrichment programme is clear: it helps add perspective to the students' perception of STEMM, giving them a broad context in a fun and self-directed way and enabling them to potentially identify an opportunity that appeals to them. Capitalising on this opportunity will take all the characteristics and attributes that HPL promotes.

Both HPL and our STEMM enrichment programme for Year 8 encourage: creativity and curiosity; making links to several curricular subjects; encouraging a creative and open-minded approach, and so on. In short, our STEMM enrichment programme is steeped in the values, attitudes, and attributes of the High Performance Learner.



Adventure in Year 9

From Janine Norman, Geography teacher and Duke of Edinburgh's Award manager

Year 9 pupils are working hard at developing their independence - such a key tenet of High Performance Learning - by taking part in the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. There is a chance to learn practical skills such as First Aid, campcraft and navigation planning in the classroom, working collaboratively with others, and then these skills are developed on the practice expedition. Reflection on what each group has learned, not only practically, but also about themselves as individuals and as a team is built into the programme following the first expedition. It is often a chance for the girls to really learn how they cope under the pressure of being physically tired and challenged by the elements while still having to problem solve! The final expedition gives

the girls a chance to show that they have met and exceeded the 20 conditions required to succeed at a DofE expedition. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme also often supplies young people with a great incentive to develop other skills and physical activities outside of the formal enrichment time, and also to volunteer either in the school community or beyond, developing people skills, understanding and compassion for people in different walks of life.

We anticipate that through the *perseverance* and commitment required to succeed in attaining the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, our students will develop the *resilience* that they need to make progress both in school and in their lives beyond St Mary's.

The final expedition gives the girls a chance to show that they have met and exceeded the 20 conditions required to succeed at a DofE expedition.

Junior School Enrichment Clubs

In the Junior School, we have a wide range of after and before school enrichment clubs. The girls enjoy physical activity such as hockey, netball and kung-fu clubs, artistic enrichment through art and eco-art club and linguistic enrichment through immersing themselves in modern foreign languages through Spanish club and French theatre club. Over 80% of the Junior School girls attend such clubs on a daily basis.



Over 80% of the Junior School girls attend such clubs on a daily basis.





Leadership

The Junior School prides itself on the number of leadership opportunities on offer to the girls, from Reception up. We have five school councils alongside Prefects, Prefect Assistants and Sports Captains. Last year, our Eco Council helped to organise the Climate Change Conference for Children, which was a week-long focus on climate change culminating in a debate with children from St Albans RC Primary School, supported by Friends of the Earth volunteers. This year, the Library Council has played a key role in encouraging the Prep girls to try new books – including arranging their own display on the Acton House staircase.

Student voice and leadership are at the centre of an HPL philosophy. Our students continue to lead through scholarships. Prefect action and clubs and societies. This term our Prefects were proud to lead students in a competition to consider a better post-Covid-19 world: ‘What’s your vision for the world after coronavirus?’ The aim of the competition was to make students’ voices heard. Our students have realised that the COVID-19 pandemic raises many questions about how our societies are organised, and how public health challenges can be tackled. As governments struggle to protect lives and keep our economies afloat, ambitious ideas that once seemed improbable have suddenly become surprisingly plausible.

Now that everyone is thinking about what our post-lockdown future might look like, the Senior School Prefects wanted to find out about the best ideas from the next generation regarding questions such as:

- What might democracy look like as countries emerge from lockdown?
- Can society be fairer in the future?
- How will public health change as a result of this global pandemic?
- What lessons from history have we forgotten that might guide how the world recovers?
- How will our societies and cultures respond to this global crisis and its aftermath?

Vanya C. (Year 11) won the competition with her insightful and provocative analysis. Here’s her answer to the question, “What lessons from history have we forgotten that might guide how the world recovers?”



Throughout history, neither wars or natural disasters have killed as many people as bacteria, viruses and diseases have. Within our environments there are various microorganisms that lead to infections. In the history of pandemics the first ever recorded outbreak was the plague of Justinian (541-542 AD, with recurrences until 750AD) which was carried over the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt to Constantinople with claimed as estimate of 30-50 million lives. In earlier times, it was believed that gods and spirits imposed destruction and demolition on those who deserved their wrath. The understanding of pandemics was very limited at that time, poor sanitation hastened its spread. Despite all the drawbacks, humanity has managed to overcome the plague which shows the resilience of the human race, and this can act as a great ally in our fight against COVID-19. Despite the history of death and disease, humanity has continued to look past it and learn from it.

The understanding of the factors that contribute to pandemics and advancement in medical science have been powerful tools in helping to reduce the impact of this virus. Humans now link the pandemic to dangerous microorganisms rather than angry gods and spirits. We have continued to learn and adapt to new techniques, like quarantining the affected and imposing social distancing measures as well as conducting geographical statistical analysis in order to limit the magnitude of the infection. During the plague in 17th century Europe, an estimated 10% of the population of England and Wales perished while a whopping 40% of Italy perished, but although the plague spread throughout Europe the economic outcome of the outbreak was not evenly distributed according to the economist

Guido Alfani’s article. He notes that “interestingly, during the century, the fastest growing areas were those less affected by plague”. His analysis shows that there may be a relationship between areas of Europe that were less impacted by the plague and periods of increased economic growth. He notes that England was hit considerably less intensely by the 17th century plague than areas in northern Italy. As a result, England’s economy continued to thrive and trend upwards during the century while northern Italy stagnated. During the 1918 Spanish flu there were some unexpected economic outcomes. According to economists Elizabeth Brainerd and Mark V. Siegler, American states that were more impacted by the disease tended to grow faster in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Despite all the drawbacks, humanity has managed to overcome the plague which shows the resilience of the human race, and this can act as a great ally in our fight against COVID-19.

Although we can look to the past for models and precedents for our present moment, we can’t use past catastrophes to see the future. But history can offer insights into human behaviour and bring comfort when we feel like we are in unknown territory traversing unknowable terrains. We can look to the economic upheavals and disease outbreaks of

bygone eras to note how people adapted, adjusted and survived in times of great uncertainty. We can learn from their mistakes and take some level of solace in their successes. Today we don’t know what the political, medical or economic future holds, but we can see that even though past pandemics followed similar patterns, they had vastly different outcomes based on regional efficacy of treatment and economic structures. We can trace the way society recovered from disasters and take heart knowing that there are roads to recovery.

Curriculum Focus: Sport

From Louise Powell: Acting Head of Sport



Our curriculum offers a broad range of sports, giving girls the opportunity to explore and try many things.

Sport at St Mary's helps students to develop not only high-performance athletes, but also high-performance learners. The way in which our girls learn in sports lessons and clubs encompasses all the VAAs and ACPs of HPL. Girls can plan strategies, collaborate and take risks to name but a few HPL opportunities. With the development of our new sports ground at Long Road, girls can now access our enhanced state of the art facilities alongside this existing high-performance approach.

Our curriculum offers a broad range of sports, giving girls the opportunity to explore and try many things. Our 'Games for Understanding' model encourages students to adopt a growth mind set, as they participate in activities that may be new to them. A large element of these lessons focuses on problem solving and working as a team, finding the answer to questions through exploration during the lesson. Girls collaborate to analyse and evaluate

the situation of the games that they are playing, creating a plan to solve the problem or complete the task. Through this approach, our students continue to be critical thinkers and flexible leaders, deciding which rules, positions or tactics could be changed to adapt the game that they are playing.

We are seeing that these skills are easily transferred into more traditional sports such as netball and hockey. This HPL learning style means our students can transfer fundamental knowledge about games into a range of sports. In the Upper School, pupils have the chance to consider other areas of sport, such as coaching and umpiring, allowing them to link their knowledge from playing into another facet of their sporting lives. This student-centred approach, which encourages the students to be proactive in their learning, lives out the HPL mantra of 'with our students, not to them.'





Curriculum Focus: History

From Alison Gundy, Head of History

As a History teacher, I am sometimes asked ‘isn’t History just lots of dates and facts?’. My answer is always the same: History is so much more than dates and facts! What makes it such an exciting subject to teach and learn is that we get to take those dates and facts and interpret them for ourselves.

To take an example from the Year 7 curriculum, the girls have been learning about the events of 1066. Over a series of lessons, we have focused on big picture questions such as ‘Who should be the next King of England?’; ‘Did William win the Battle of Hastings because he was lucky?’ and ‘Why was William able to survive as king of England?’. The girls have followed the narrative of events and used this narrative to answer these questions, often coming up with very different answers and alternative perspectives.

A recent highlight was when we became history detectives and tried to solve the history mystery ‘How did Harold Godwinson die?’. The girls learnt about the job of the historian: to examine and interpret the facts, while being critical of what they read and not taking everything at face value. They then tackled the mystery of what happened to Godwinson with gusto, forming hypotheses and using the available evidence to test these out. By the end of the lesson, we had many more questions than we had answers, but as one student commented, ‘the more questions we ask, the more answers we will eventually have!’

A subsequent lesson asked the girls to put themselves in William of Normandy’s shoes. They were asked to list the problems he faced after winning the Battle of Hastings and to prioritise these problems. This

activity evolved into strategic thinking and planning, with groups suggesting not only which problems William should prioritise, but also how he should secure the rest of England in the longer term. Some very creative suggestions considered the geography of England and made links with what they knew about the landscape of Britain. Making links with their geographical understanding enabled the Year 7 students to see that William needed to secure not only London but also the rest of the country; creative ideas included how he should split up his army, what he should do about the seaports, how he could win over the mutinous English and what he could do to keep control in more remote regions and protect them from a Viking invasion. Although there were many alternative perspectives about what William

should do first, the girls were able to embrace this diversity and build upon each other’s points as they debated the best strategy for success.

Through open and critical enquiry, Year 7 students have been able to examine and challenge different theories, argue with intellectual confidence from the evidence

available and encourage each other to think flexibly and creatively. As they move through the year and progress up the school, their learning will deepen and widen as they understand and engage with the world around them. Moving beyond British history, they will study the impact of the Crusades, the role of women in the Middle Ages and the development of new technology. Whatever the subject matter, we encourage them to be critical thinkers, to embrace different perspectives and to be fearless in taking risks and intellectually playful in considering different ways of thinking.

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Curriculum Focus: Junior School

From Edie Stuart, Year 4 teacher

In the Junior School, the disciplines of History and Geography are combined under the umbrella of Humanities. This ensures that we are constantly making links between the two subject areas and reinforcing important core skills such as mapping, interpreting timelines, and investigating evidence. We also make an effort to integrate other areas of the curriculum into our Humanities topics where it makes sense to do so.

For example, this past term, the learning in Year 4 focused on volcanoes. We studied volcanoes from the geographical perspective - locating the world’s major volcanoes on a world map, exploring the Earth’s structure and discussing the basics of plate tectonics. We then focused upon the momentous eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79CE; we examined the original letters of Pliny the Younger as well as some of the historical artefacts that have been collected from Pompeii. We then discussed the reliability of written and physical artefacts and the limits to what a historian can know for sure! This was, of course, the perfect opportunity to use our HPL ACPs - in particular, the analysis of Octavia the Owl! In English, the girls took on the role of a

Pompeii citizen, using what we had learned of the eruption to create diary entries about that fateful day. We even made links in our Art lessons, by using volcanic colours in the paintings that we created in the style of Jackson Pollock.

Over the next few terms, we will cover a range of different topics including the Norman Invasion, the Aztecs, South America, and the Tudors. In studying each of these topics the girls will be pushed to extend their thinking skills and have the opportunity to further practise and develop their skills as budding geographers and historians.

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Sixth Form Focus

At the beginning of the academic year, the Sixth Form (virtually) welcomed Jo Cruse, entrepreneur and long-term friend of St Mary's, as part of their start-of-year programme. Jo gave the Sixth Form some ideas to keep them focused in the year ahead, and as high-performance learners we turned these into our goals for the year:



St Mary's Sixth Form

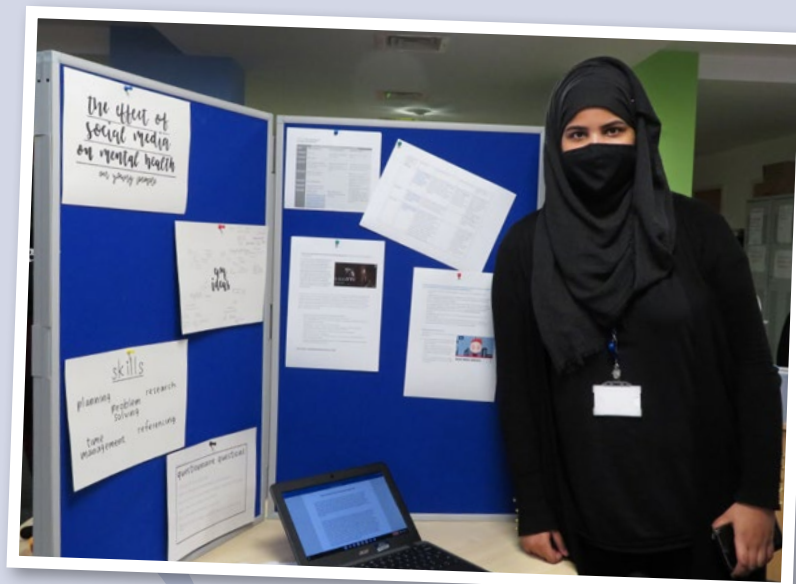
Goals 2020

Leap and Grab opportunities!
Try something new
Lean into discomfort
What really motivates you in life?
SUCCESS



Our Sixth Form students have certainly been putting these goals into practice, not least through their outstanding Extended Project Qualifications (EPQs), which were brilliantly showcased at our marketplace. Teachers and fellow students were very impressed by all the hard work that had gone into the EPQs and by how eloquently and enthusiastically the girls talked about their chosen subject.

- Inspiring projects for this year have included:
- An investigation into the reasons for the underrepresentation on women in conducting
- Research into and design of a dyslexia-friendly children's book
- A guide to promoting well-being in the workplace
- A case study on the effects on a city and a nation of hosting the Olympic games



We caught up with Zara K., a Year 13 student who recently self-published a book on astronomy for her EPQ.

What made you decide to publish a book?

I was originally set on doing a completely different idea for my EPQ. However, when I realised this wasn't possible, I decided to produce something physics-related. I wanted to write and publish a book as it seemed exciting and something new, and then decided to incorporate this with my interest in physics.

Why did you decide to choose this topic?

I wanted to produce a short summary of the history of Astronomy/ Astrophysics along with a few major discoveries, as I wanted to make something accessible to anyone by explaining intriguing phenomena in just a short read.

What most interests you about this topic?

I am really interested in the idea of dark matter and energy, the theories that they inspired and the mystery surrounding these ideas, the topics of the curvature of spacetime and general relativity also fascinate me. These ideas all really interest me as they express a world and universe so different from the one that we are used to experiencing and I find this amazing.

Tell us what the most interesting, and most difficult, parts of writing and publishing the book were?

One of the most interesting yet challenging aspects of writing the book was producing the diagrams. I went through many different ideas about how to do this, eventually settling with Corel draw. I found it very interesting learning how to use and adapt this to produce the diagrams for my book.

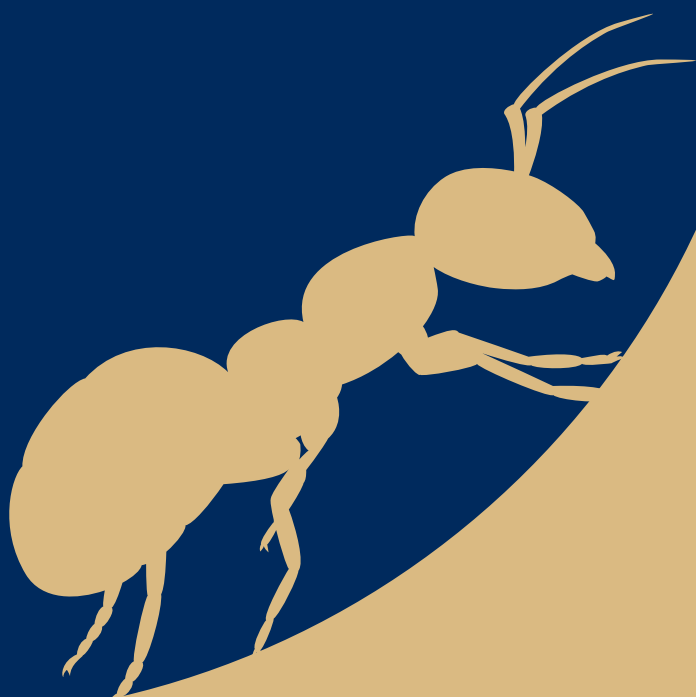
What advice would you give to other budding young writers?

I'm not really a writer, however I would say 'just go for it' and write down anything on any topic as you never know what might come of it!

Did a St Mary's education inspire you to study STEM?

I have always been interested in the sciences due to the constant discoveries and intriguing ideas and at St Mary's I have been encouraged to pursue this path and develop my understanding and interest further. I have attended many clubs throughout the years which have inspired me to continue developing my knowledge in this field.





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