



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Making an impact



[stmaryscambridge.co.uk/
magnolian](http://stmaryscambridge.co.uk/magnolian)

Inspired girls make great women

Our history is rooted in the vision of Mary Ward (1585-1645), a pioneer of education for girls, who believed that “Women in time to come will do much”.



Founded in 1898, St Mary's School Cambridge continues to be a place where girls find the courage to be themselves. We inspire our girls to aim high, to be courageous, compassionate, generous, and confident in challenging injustice in the world.

At the core of our ethos is a belief in the value of each individual. In practice, this means that every student is valued, upheld and heard.

Our rich curriculum helps girls to discover, develop and share their unique talents. From thinkers and creators to sports stars and performers, we encourage every student to pursue her individual talents with passion and determination.

As we approach our 125th anniversary, we're proud that St Mary's continues to push boundaries, to innovate and to inspire our girls to excel.

In recognition of this, St Mary's has been shortlisted in the Independent School of the Year awards 2021 and has been awarded an Accreditation by the British Council in the International School Awards for integrating international learning throughout its entire school and teaching curriculum.

stmaryscambridge.co.uk/about

Why all girls'?

A St Mary's girl is known for her confidence and curiosity, her community spirit, her agile mind, her resilience and drive.



Our all girls' environment is unique in Cambridge. Statistics show that girls in single-sex schools achieve higher academic results, compared to their co-ed peers, particularly in science subjects and languages. We believe the benefits are much broader.

In 2021, 81% of A Level passes were at A* - A grade, against a national average of 45%. 97% of students achieved their first choice university offer at prestigious universities both in the UK – 78% to Russell Group universities – as well as internationally.

For us though, success is not limited to exam results; it is about achieving academic excellence alongside a much wider set of values and attitudes that sit at the heart of our ethos as a Mary Ward School, as well as supporting the happiness and well-being of every girl.

Our teaching is tailored to girls' learning styles, needs and stage of development. Gender stereotypes cannot thrive here; our girls focus on being themselves and defining their own place in the world. We offer a nurturing environment with every opportunity for girls to take the lead and to be comfortable in putting themselves forward.

As an accredited *High Performance Learning World Class* school, we develop an evidence-based set of skills and attitudes. From confidence, collaboration and risk-taking to agile thinking, concern for society and perseverance, we ensure our girls are prepared for study, work and life.

We continue to innovate and invest for our students. Our new Preschool opened in 2021, as we believe that learning and teaching can't start too early (see page 7). Our new specialist STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Lab will enable us to further nurture students on their journey to becoming tomorrow's innovators (see page 7). Our £6.6 million investment in state-of-the-art facilities at Long Road Sports Ground, developed in partnership with Homerton College, University of Cambridge, was completed in September 2021 with the opening of the pavilion, delivering our ambitious vision for sporting education throughout the School (see page 20).



Academic excellence and scholarship

As a High Performance Learning World Class school we empower our girls to aim high to reach their full potential.



Our commitment to academic excellence is evident from Preschool onwards. Girls from the age of three can learn free from gender stereotypes in an environment rich in experiential opportunities.

At our newly opened Preschool, girls develop their independence, initiative, creativity and problem-solving skills in a purpose-built early years setting. Pupils benefit from our specialised experience of teaching and empowering girls – giving them a head start in their academic journey.

This nurturing approach continues in Junior School, where girls are encouraged to embrace learning, discover their talents and explore how to make a positive contribution to society. Pupils build their critical thinking, curiosity and creativity, alongside knowledge and skills.

With the opening of our STEM Lab, a dedicated specialist space for teaching Computing, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, we have the physical embodiment of our national and international success in STEM education for girls.

Moving up, St Mary's Senior School is a dynamic and supportive school community, specifically built for girls, allowing their intellectual and social confidence to flourish. We pride ourselves that every girl is known, valued and inspired.

Our enrichment programme makes St Mary's a school filled with activity and creativity. This different type of learning enables and empowers our students to experiment, to enquire, to collaborate, to persevere and to take risks (see page 21).

Our High Performance Learning approach encourages our girls to place their learning within 'big picture questions', such as Black Lives Matter and climate change. At St Mary's we have a generation of young women – global citizens – who engage with the problems and have ideas and an evident passion to solve them.





HPL Global Art competition 2021

From thousands of entries from across the world, three of our students scooped awards for their impressive creations on the theme of 'Empathy' in the prestigious *HPL Global Art* competition. Dasha K., Iman A. and Sophie S. won three out of the nine awards available for ages 11-18, with the support of Head of Art, Ms Conroy, who said: "The subject of 'Empathy' seemed particularly relevant this year. The girls embraced the challenge with imagination, artistic flair and creativity".



Shakespeare in the grounds

There's nothing like live drama to lift the spirits, and we were thrilled to be able to welcome a real, live audience to enjoy the performance by years 5 and 6 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream - The Musical*, performed in the Junior School grounds.

As many know, the course of true love does not run smoothly and Hermia (Lauren A.) and Helena (Siren E-H.) definitely learnt this the hard way as the entanglements with Lysander (Gemma S.) and Demetrius (Charlotte M.) became more challenging and heart-wrenching.

There were many highlights for the audience including the blossoming romance between Bottom (Philippa R.) and Titania (Imogen C.), the comedy moments provided by the mechanicals - Evelina V., Lydia G., Leni J-M., Philippa R., Saffron L., and Anna W., the dramatic scenes between Oberon, King of the Fairies (Julia M.) and Puck (Hettie C.), and so many more!



Inspiring role models: Black History Month

Working to eliminate injustice is one of the core values that sit at the heart of a St Mary's education. In Black History Month 2021 our dynamic Art Department launched a campaign to raise awareness of using art to understand and appreciate diverse cultures, ethnicities and experiences. Senior School and Sixth Form students were invited to join a role model competition by entering a 2-D portrait of an individual from a black or minority ethnic background whom they find inspiring. The brilliant entries included a portrait of Billie Holiday by Isla T., Cristina H.-P.'s canvas of Malala Yousafzai and a digital artwork of Rosa Parks created by Ziren S.



Scholars' Showcase

Awarded a scholarship in recognition of their academic abilities, students undertake a range of additional activities, supported by teaching staff, with a focus on expanding and extending their achievements.

Orla D. in Year 8 took part in the Blott Matthews Challenge, which explores the challenges and rewards of engineering. She researched Telemedicine, saying, “I thought it would be interesting to research especially as it has become a lot more relevant during Covid-19”.

Academic Scholars Genevieve M., Charlotte M. and Willa L. in Year 7 created a fascinating TED video: *How Boredom and Mistakes Can Be Good Things*. St Mary's Drama students set up a recording studio in School to create their performance of the inspiring radio play, *Bookcase*.

A selection of the exceptional work of our Scholars can be found on our website:
stmaryscambridge.co.uk/magnolian



Woodland Explorers

As part of our broad and creative curriculum, all Year groups in Junior School enjoy regular Woodland Explorer lessons, in our spacious grounds and further afield. Year 6 spent one session planning a diverse range of settlements to suit the needs of different global communities - homes in a fishing village prone to flooding, in alpine forest hills, and for nomadic tribes. All the girls had access to the woods and any natural resources they could find. Much ingenuity and creative problem solving was in evidence.

Find out more: stmaryscambridge.co.uk/junior



Focus on STEM

It is well-documented that learning in an all-girls environment increases the number of girls who select STEM subjects at university and beyond. At St Mary's we are dedicated to instilling a passion for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects in our students, with an inspiring curriculum and programme of talks, events and outings throughout school life.

Our specialist STEM Lab is opening this coming year, thanks to a generous donation from alumna Miss Yingting Qian, and heart-warming support from our sponsors and alumnae. The dynamic new Lab will enable us to further nurture our girls on their journey to becoming innovators of the future by providing specialist equipment and dedicated spaces for study, creativity and experimentation.

St Mary's girls always enjoy a STEM-related challenge! Whether it's introducing Year 4 students to the technology behind basic circuitry by building lighthouses from plastic bottles, or challenging our Year 7 students to program a short game using a BBC Microbit, our lessons aim to bring STEM subjects to life and make them fun.

Participating in the Youth STEMM award scheme, students work together to organise activities during STEM week, through outreach at a local primary school, or at the Cambridge Science Festival. The award enables participating students to be recognised and rewarded for the skills they develop.

Community and compassion



In this, a year like no other, St Mary's School values of 'respect for all people and the earth they inhabit', together with 'wisdom, understanding and discernment' have certainly come to the fore.

As Head Girl Tabitha D. put it, "We have so much to be proud of this year. We have been challenged in ways that no other year has experienced as a result of the pandemic. We're proud to say that we have been able to remain positive. The main thing that got us through the year was supporting each other."

This was echoed by Head Girl Maya S.: "Looking back at the past year, my fondest memories regarded all such occasions on which, despite being physically apart, we have all supported one another, growing and learning together."

Girls throughout the school have shown resilience throughout the year in their commitment to sport and exercise. Our Sports Captain, Amelie D said, "I loved being able to connect with other year groups and give help, support and advice, especially about how sport could help students to be resilient and persevere."

These words speak volumes about the ethos and atmosphere of St Mary's School. We are a hugely

diverse community, with students from 35 different countries. Our values-based approach to educating and caring for our students came into its own last year, when the school community pulled together to ensure that we continued to provide the highest quality education and learning experiences possible, despite the challenging times.

St Mary's has a global outlook, evidenced by our International School Award Accreditation in 2021. The British Council assessors stated: "The school provides a rich environment and distinctly international atmosphere for its day girls and boarders alike."

Our international learning opportunities align with our Mary Ward values and many aspects of High Performance Learning, such as empathy, alternative perspectives, and collaboration. This ensures that St Mary's girls are not only hard-working, but creative, empathetic and open-minded.



Scan the QR codes
to watch our two
lockdown films

will be fine



International art prize winner

Year 9's Isla T. won third prize for her entry in the international HART Prize for Human Rights, a competition for young people with a passion for global affairs and current human rights issues. Isla's powerful painting, *Stolen Childhood*, depicts a child soldier in Uganda. Isla says, "I tried to capture the fear, sadness and loneliness of the boy in the painting. He should be at school and playing with his friends not carrying a gun." The judges said there was a huge number of entries from schools all over the UK and abroad for this prestigious prize. We are very proud of Isla's achievement.



Environmental action

With representatives from Years 7-13, St Mary's Environmental Action Group (EAG) is committed to the continuous improvement of the School's environmental performance and to educating our community about the crucial issues of climate change and sustainable development. The EAG always aims to inspire positivity when talking about challenging topics, keeping to our Mary Ward value of 'seeing good in all creation'. The EAG has established the weekly 'ways to eco-engage' initiative, considering issues such as fast fashion, microplastics and the environmental impact of the meat industry. And pupils are never too young to get involved: our Reception class recently made jellyfish from carrier bags, highlighting the impact of plastic waste in our oceans.



Compassionate fundraising

In June 2021, the School held a fundraising day in support of two excellent causes – one close to home, and the other close to our hearts. St Mary's is proud to support Cambridge Women's Aid, which provides dedicated and specialist services to women and children affected by domestic abuse. Our long-term partnership with the Mary Ward School in Mbizo, Zimbabwe has already made a significant contribution to the school community there, and these additional funds will continue to support their work. The Mbizo School motto is one of Mary Ward's sayings: 'Do good and do it well' – something which informs our whole approach here at St Mary's.



Cows about Cambridge

St Mary's sponsored one of fifty *Cows about Cambridge* – a public art trail which aimed to create a feel-good factor for the region and to generate £8 million of economic value. The cow sculptures promoted well-being and an active lifestyle, and facilitated discussions on environmental issues. St Mary's is one of a handful of schools involved in the Mini Moo learning programme, which saw 46 miniature cows pop up at various locations around Cambridge. Students designed and created 'Miss Mary Moo', named after the school's founder Mary Ward.

Find out more: cowsaboutcambridge.co.uk

Moving Heaven and Earth in partnership with Ely Cathedral

In summer 2021, students participated in an exciting project with Ely Cathedral. *Heaven and Earth – The World in Our Hands* was a special event to highlight some of the very real issues affecting our world, addressing our responsibility to safeguard our planet and to acknowledge the impact of climate change.

Students worked with sustainable materials to produce wonderfully creative work which filled the Cathedral nave. They made beautiful wall hangings to communicate their ideas, contributed to the Stone Trail which symbolises togetherness, as well as making

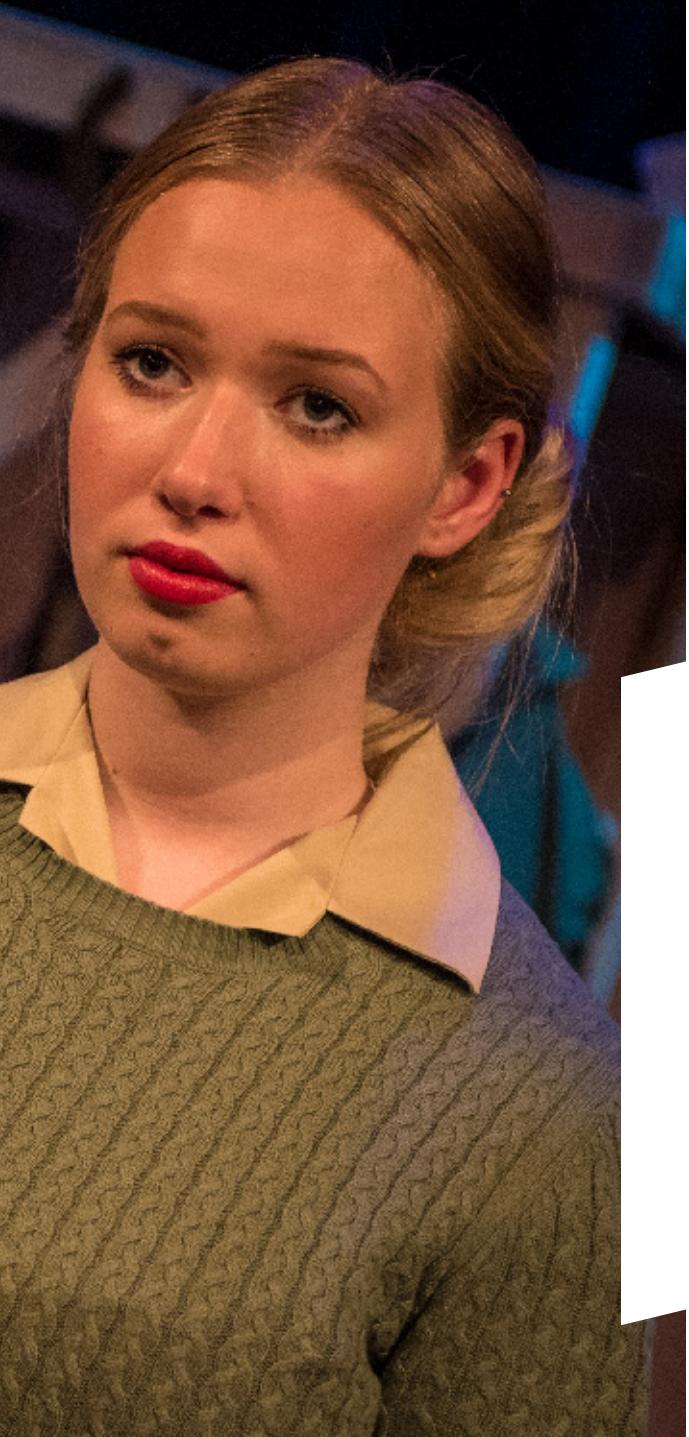
origami birds and writing haiku poems to symbolise peace and hope.

The project was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our students' passionately-held beliefs as well as their incredible creativity, in the awe-inspiring setting of Ely Cathedral. There were prizes for teamwork and collaboration, as well as individual prizes for empathy, kindness and leadership – all values we hold dear at St Mary's.

Ethos and strategy

In our small classes, each girl is valued, supported and inspired, as she experiences an education tailored to meet her needs.





A St Mary's education can be defined in many ways.

Firstly, it's the way we inspire a love of learning and the importance we place on happiness and pastoral care. It is our strong community, which nurtures integrity, justice and respect as part of a moral and spiritual framework, and our commitment to being responsible citizens. It is also our expertise in educating girls, allowing their intellectual and social confidence to flourish.

It is about learning in different ways – including digital innovations and a wide range of creative, sporting and extra-curricular activities. It is about encouraging skills and attitudes to ensure our students are prepared for life.



"I like the ethos of St Mary's better than any of the other schools that we looked at. What I particularly liked about this school was that it has a holistic approach to education and I think that the staff are as concerned about the social and emotional development of the students as they are with the examination results."

Parent

From our Headmistress

Schools are places of healing as well as education. This has been a year of anger across society and in the media: it has been a painful time as we understand just how at odds with each other many have become; normal life as we knew it has been completely interrupted.

Our purpose as educators is to abide with the pain within our community and look with compassion at the present and value the interruption, using the opportunity provided to discern, with hope, the future. We need our girls to be the next generation of compassionate leaders.

We worked behind the scenes during the Spring Term on important matters pertaining to inclusion, diversity and equality and the Summer Term saw the launch of our Inclusion Committee.

We all have a duty and responsibility to safeguard our planet and acknowledge the impact of climate change. Girls' education, research shows, is key to building greater environmental awareness and containing climate change. Our eco-group has been strongly productive, offering creative opportunities to generate solutions at home as well as at School.

We have looked more broadly at sustainability and again have done some heavy lifting via our Eco group. Our digital strategy has delivered on a vision towards a near paperless community. Additionally, Year 9 undertook work on sustainability as part of their enrichment and cross-curricular studies during our inaugural June Jubilee Jamboree.

We have always supported our pupils through our pastoral care programme. We hope that every girl

feels that there is a teacher or tutor, nurse, counsellor, boarding staff member or Peer Counsellor to whom she can turn in school if she has anything that she wishes to discuss. We take the student voice very seriously indeed and as a girls' school wish to empower our students to be self-confident, reflective and compassionate young women.

We have also continuously sought the views of our parent body about learning and welfare as a necessary aspect of fulfilling one of our school aims which is to walk in loving accompaniment with parents in these challenging times.



From our Head of Juniors

Many have spoken about the opportunity for a post-pandemic 'reset'; indeed, the pandemic has presented an opportunity for us to re-think how we live, and for us, how we educate our daughters. In the wider world this has manifested itself in the Climate Change protests, the Black Lives Matter movement and the impassioned fight for gender equality.

In school, we are actively learning about these issues and thinking about the consequences in our context. We have a very engaged Eco-Council who organised a Climate Change Conference and are now spearheading a campaign to discourage 'fast fashion'. We have also set up a diversity and inclusion committee with Junior School representation to examine these issues in school. Through assemblies and discussion with the girls, I am always struck by their maturity and engagement with such issues. It gives me great hope that we have a generation of young women who engage with the problems, and have ideas and an evident passion to solve them, thereby creating a cleaner, fairer and more inclusive world in their image.

This is what a Mary Ward education should give our pupils. Mary Ward also fought an impassioned fight in the context of Tudor England; she would be proud of our Junior School girls today.

From the Chair of our Governing Body

Central to the strategic aims of St Mary's is making the very best provision for the education of the girls committed to our care, however diverse their personalities, interests and needs may be. We will remain faithful to the timeless values proclaimed by Mary Ward, the basis of a pastoral provision that nurtures and supports all our pupils.

It is clear that the two central aspects of the strategy will remain: to make the best possible provision for girls in terms of teaching, co-curricular activity and pastoral care and generation of sufficient annual surpluses from 2022 to permit building development on the scale envisaged pre-pandemic.

St Mary's has not stood still in these difficult times. We are all delighted to see the girls enjoying the state-of-the-art sports facilities at our newly refurbished Long Road Sports Ground. We also announced the ambition to establish a partner school abroad and we formed a major programme of development of our buildings, which would be the first on the Bateman Street site since the 1970s.

Continued prosperity is directly related to the provision for our pupils being of the highest quality. That is where virtually all our time and energy will be focused.



Charlotte Avery
Headmistress



Jo Christian
Head of Juniors



Stuart Westley
Chair of the
Governing Body

Pastoral care, sport, health and well-being

At St Mary's, we believe the students achieve more when they are happy and healthy.



As a school, we are mindful that well-being is actively promoted in all areas, not just PSHE lessons. One of our High Performance Learning characteristics is resilience. We are proud that St Mary's girls have been resilient and adapted so well to all that has faced them this year. Our dedicated pastoral care team has supported students and staff throughout.

Our fully-trained school Counsellor offers confidential advice and our Lay Chaplain offers a listening ear and wise counsel. We also have an independent listener, who is there for students should they wish to talk to an adult independent of the school. Our Peer Mentor scheme is an invaluable part of the pastoral care provision for pupils at St Mary's.

Research by UK charity *Women in Sport* highlights the critical relationship between sport and self-worth, confidence and body image in young girls. Our *Sport for All* curriculum offers enjoyment and choice - from joining

an extra-curricular club, to participating in competitive sport, or simply finding a physical activity they enjoy. Girls pursue sports they are passionate about, supported by specialist teachers, and our elite sportswomen regularly compete at county and national level.

St Mary's girls from Junior School through to Sixth Form now enjoy using our new state-of-the-art sporting facilities at our Long Road sports ground, developed in partnership with Homerton College, University of Cambridge (see page 20).



Girls on Board

Girls on Board is a key part of our approach to pastoral care and it aims to empower our girls with the tools they need to solve their own friendship issues. The initiative is a pro-active approach that helps girls, their parents and teachers to understand the dynamics of friendship, recognising that teachers and parents often have limited success when it comes to resolving conflict between girls.

The programme delivers sessions in which girls work together to understand that they all feel this way. *Girls on Board* enables girls to resolve issues more effectively and aims to minimise the impact of conflict when it does arise, by encouraging open, honest and effective communication.



Long Road Sports Ground

To deliver our ambitious vision for sporting education, and as part of our commitment to the health and well-being of all pupils, St Mary's offers state-of-the-art sporting facilities at our Long Road Sports Ground, developed in partnership with Homerton College, University of Cambridge. Long Road includes athletics facilities for track and field, astroturf pitches for hockey, rugby and football, cricket nets, and netball and tennis courts. The grounds are floodlit for year-round use and a new pavilion with a kitchen and changing rooms opened in September 2021. Together with the rowing facilities at our dedicated boathouse on the River Cam, St Mary's girls have a huge range of sports to enjoy.



Action on Mental Health

St Mary's heightened its already strong focus on supporting well-being with a targeted programme of activities during Mental Health Awareness Week. Students in our Junior School, Senior School and Sixth Form had access to a full programme of activities, workshops and talks focused on practising and exploring different techniques for supporting mental health. The programme was designed to offer a balance of different approaches – spanning the creative, fun, informative and active.



Peer Mentors

St Mary's has always had a strong focus on the positive mental health of our students, and our peer mentoring scheme is one of a range of support measures we have in place. Peer mentors are excellent role models for younger pupils, encouraging them to think about the needs of others and being prepared to give some of their time and friendship.

There are advantages on both sides of the relationship. Mentors can assist pupils with, for example, easing transitions through the School, or with the inevitable difficulties which can arise from changing friendship groups. Similarly, from the other perspective, it allows further opportunities for responsibility and personal growth for the pupils in the older years who act as Mentors.

Enrichment in Senior School and Sixth Form

St Mary's Enrichment programme makes ours a school filled with activity and creativity. We firmly believe that this different type of learning freed from the strictures of the curriculum or exam board specifications enables and empowers our students to experiment, to enquire, to collaborate, to persevere and to take risks.

All students have dedicated Enrichment time. Girls in Years 7, 8 and 9 enjoy the opportunity to develop as artists, scientists, adventurers and citizens following recognised award paths - the Arts in Year 7, STEMM in Year 8 and Adventure (the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award) in Year 9.

In Year 10 students follow a variety of paths: for example, the Sports Award, the Bronze STEMM Award, the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award and the BBC Young Reporters competition.

In the Sixth Form students have followed their own bespoke programme, including debating, the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award and participation in the Drive IQ Award, allowing them to develop the skills needed to be women of influence and global citizens of the future.

Explore our impact



Our new
Preschool



St Mary's
Junior School



St Mary's
Senior School



St Mary's
Sixth Form



Mary Ward
House





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