



ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD



OUR VISION & OUR FUTURE
2024-2026



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FOREWORD *by Carroll Barry-Walsh, Chair of Trustees*

WELCOME *by Charlotte Owen, Headmistress*

OUR VISION & OUR FUTURE

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MISSION STATEMENT

FOREWORD

I speak from the heart when I say that St Mary's is a special place. As a former pupil of the school, the St Mary's Way has been a guiding compass for me and something that has informed both my personal and professional life. I am therefore delighted to be the Chair of Trustees of the school that helped to shape who I am and be able to help it flourish and continue providing a first-class education to the girls of today and the future.

St Mary's provides an excellent academic education, based on a strong Catholic heritage and values. It is a school that believes in the worth of every girl, in the value of moral character and academic, creative and sporting achievement, in the importance of integrity, kindness, inclusivity and treating others well, and that seeks to make the educational experience for the girls and their families a happy one.

This is so visible in the values the girls embody today, regardless of their faith background or if they have none. This is what our parent body admire most of all about our school: we are a school that shapes the whole person and not just the intellectual mind. Our outstanding pastoral care and extra-curricular programme also help to develop and transform young girls into confident, resilient and caring leaders for the future.

The Trustees and Governors are committed to striving for excellence in all areas of school life and to delivering our vision for the school in the coming years. We are an innovative preparatory school with excellent staff; as a community, we want the girls in our care to flourish and to thrive, and we feel that our strategic aims will allow them to do just that.

Best regards

Carroll Barry-Walsh, *Chair of Trustees*



WELCOME

Welcome to the St Mary's **Vision & Future Booklet 2024-2026**. The idea of this document is to give you a sense of the direction of travel of what I believe is quite a remarkable and innovative preparatory school. The pandemic of 2019/2020 showed us all that strategic planning must be flexible and adaptable, able to weather the storms of what faces us. As is always the case, there are further challenges ahead no doubt, but I hope that the St Mary's vision will reassure you that we are ready to robustly face such challenges while taking the school forward into the twenty-first century and beyond.

St Mary's has been educating girls in Hampstead for over 150 years; proud of our Catholic ethos and heritage, we remain a school founded on faith, thanks to our founder, Mary Ward, and the sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, later to become the Congregation of Jesus. We welcome girls of all faiths and none, hoping that all who are educated by us feel our warmth and receive an education underpinned by the values of kindness, compassion, respect and forgiveness. We are an innovative and forward-thinking school where each individual is important in our school community, valued, and known. Our welcoming family-feel nurtures each child and supports their wellbeing and happiness. We are also a charitable organisation and we do not believe that education should be for profit; the surplus made by the school is invested back into the education of our girls.

St Mary's is unashamedly all girls; in a single-sex environment we are able to cater exclusively for their needs and development in a way that no co-educational school ever could. We offer a rigorous academic and holistic education with a varied and academic curriculum that provides excellent preparation for the 11+ process, allowing girls to access top London secondary schools. Our regular assessment and broad syllabus of study is important to us but our outstanding pastoral care and extra-curricular programme are also equally valued by all our staff. We believe that we are not just teaching girls facts, figures and examination technique, but we are also preparing them to become responsible, wholesome, kind and good citizens of the world whose individual gifts and talents should flourish; this starts from the moment they join us to the day that they leave. Our outstanding size and space within the London metropolis and inspiring facilities, such as the Global Learning Centre, help to foster the girls' academic success and extra-curricular enrichment so that the doors to leading senior schools are opened.

Many people ask me: why a prep school when it would be so much easier to put my child in an all-through school where they can stay until they are 18? My response to this is that St Mary's, as a prep school, is very tailor-made for this stage of your child's education; we concentrate exclusively on the primary school years and we are well-catered to do that: we have built a whole site around primary education. More importantly, we are preparing your daughters for life; holding their hand through an examination process is excellent preparation for what lies ahead: GCSEs, A-Levels, and the UCAS university entry system. Preparing for and dealing with exams at a younger age makes the next important round much easier to cope with. I would ask you to remember that your daughter will not be the age she is forever and she will have a mind of her own; many who start off in all-through schools do not see it through completely as they become bored and tired of the same place which perhaps does not meet their needs as they develop into the young adult they will become. Moving from prep to secondary school is not only refreshing but gives the girls life skills to cope with transition and change. What better reasons to endorse a St Mary's education?

Our focus for 2024-2026 is outlined below; please do take a moment to learn about where our priorities lie. I have no doubt that St Mary's has an excellent future ahead, built on the current strength of the education that it provides. By continually improving and futureproofing the school, our aim is to be able to continue educating girls in Hampstead for the next 150 years and beyond.

With best wishes

Charlotte Owen, *Headmistress*



OUR VISION

St Mary's empowers girls through academic excellence and moral integrity to become confident, resilient and caring leaders of the future.



OUR FUTURE

To achieve our vision and our mission of the school, we have seven strategic pillars to lead St Mary's forward into the future, primarily for the next three years, and beyond. The pillars are designed to ultimately ensure that the wellbeing of the girls is at the heart of what we do so that they can thrive and achieve academically and emotionally.

#spacetobecome

1

Teaching and Learning

St Mary's offers an inspiring and rigorous academic education; the curriculum showcases excellent teaching and learning, giving our girls a thorough grounding in primary education and preparing them well for senior school entry. Girls are stretched and challenged to think beyond classroom learning and to be inquisitive and curious in their studies.



VISION

- To provide a varied and rigorous curriculum which allows for the development of academic and creative talent.
- To continue to develop the use of technology in the classroom.
- To prepare girls well for senior schools and the 11+ examination.
- To provide the girls with strong and secure foundations in their learning so that they can smoothly transition between preparatory and senior school.

2

Pupil Wellbeing

St Mary's places great value on the importance of the individual, striving to seek a well-roundedness in each child and a high level of emotional intelligence, happiness, and resilience. St Mary's provides excellent pastoral care and also encourages the spiritual development of each person, allowing every girl to flourish.



VISION

- To ensure that the wellbeing of each child is of primary consideration in our pastoral provision.
- To continue to focus on our 4 Rs so that we embed Resilience, Reflectiveness, Risk-taking and Respect in all that we do.
- To provide a broad selection of extra-curricular opportunities, responding to need as interests and skills develop and change.
- To instil confidence in our girls, openly celebrating their success, so that they are able to cope with the challenges that they face.

3

Staff Wellbeing and Development

St Mary's recognises that their staff are their most precious resource and places a value on their professional development and wellbeing in the workplace so that they are able to develop the highest level of skillset in their specialist area and be happy and supported in their work.



VISION

- To robustly ensure the highest levels of quality assurance, training and appraisal.
- To place importance on wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance.
- To invest in staff development, fostering collaboration in preparing, planning and delivering the latest teaching or non-teaching skills.
- To provide a supportive and happy working environment.

4

Spirituality and Catholic Ethos

St Mary's is proud of its Catholic heritage and tradition and is a forward-thinking school, fully aware of the importance of embedding life-long values that allow an individual to grow in moral integrity, kindness, hope, love and care. The St Mary's Way is the code of conduct by which we live.



VISION

- To inspire our girls to embrace the Catholic values of kindness, compassion and forgiveness.
- To strengthen outreach community work.
- To provide a strong bursary provision to those who would otherwise not be able to access or sustain a St Mary's education.
- To ensure that all members of our community feel valued and included: we openly welcome and value families of other faiths or of no faith at all.

5

Infrastructure

St Mary's recognises that its site needs to be maintained and developed in order to reflect the needs of an ever-changing world and to ensure that its pupil body can thrive with the facilities that are available to them.

VISION

- To maximise the use of the wonderful space available.
- To create a cutting-edge twenty-first century space through continued investment and initiative.
- To upgrade facilities on a rolling programme.
- To ensure that IT and technology remains forward-thinking and enhances processes, teaching and learning.



6

Sustainability

Sustainability to St Mary's is twofold: the school is committed to being as environmentally sustainable as it can be, mindful of its environmental impact. St Mary's also wants to secure a sustainable future and reputation so that the school continues for many future generations to come.



VISION

- To be mindful of the environmental impact that the school has in all its decision making.
- To secure pupil growth.
- To futureproof the school, through strategic intervention, in order to mitigate the effect of any external political threat.
- To continue its long tradition as a leading Hampstead prep school.

7

Marketing and Communications

St Mary's is keen to celebrate its success as a leading North West London all girls' preparatory school.

We feel that *#spacetobecome* best articulates our ethos and vision, and this phrase will be incorporated into our branding. This will appear in all marketing campaigns and on all promotional documentation going forward.

VISION

- To be widely known in the North West London area for our excellent reputation of academic rigour with a happy family-feel in a substantial and impressive space.
- To maintain healthy pupil numbers in a charitable and non-profit Catholic environment, which is inclusive and welcomes families of other faiths or of no faith at all.
- To aspire to be sector-leading whilst being highly regarded for the all-girls' education that we provide, nurturing confident and kind pupils.
- To celebrate our senior school destination success.



MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's School seeks to provide an education firmly founded on Christ and the Catholic Faith. Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life. Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each child, where each child is valued and high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence to achieve individual potential and spiritual development. St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community. St Mary's is inclusive and welcomes girls from all communities and faith backgrounds, or none, and believes that all benefit from the school's values. St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

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