

Vision & Future

2026-2029



ST MARY'S SCHOOL
HAMPSTEAD





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 throughout my life 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 believes strongly that a girls only educational environment gives girls the best chance to flourish, to excel in a wide range of subjects, channelling their minds, creativity, sporting and technical skills without any limitations imposed by cultural or societal stereotypes or expectations. 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, both the intellectual mind and their character. 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



Introduction



Welcome to the St Mary's Prep School, Hampstead vision booklet 2026–2029.

The year 2026 marks a significant milestone in the history of St Mary's: one hundred years since the School moved from England's Lane to its current home on Fitzjohn's Avenue, opening here in September 1926. It is an anniversary of which we are immensely proud. Even more remarkably, our story stretches back over 150 years. To have sustained a thriving Catholic preparatory school in Hampstead for so long is an extraordinary achievement and a testament not only to the dedication of those who have gone before us, but also to the enduring strength of our shared mission: to educate, nurture and inspire young people in faith, wisdom and love.

We remember with gratitude the sisters, staff, parents and pupils whose commitment, generosity and quiet acts of service have shaped this school across generations. Each of us is privileged to be part of that living tradition and has a responsibility to ensure that it continues to flourish for generations to come.

One hundred years after arriving on Fitzjohn's Avenue, St Mary's Prep School is a vibrant and ambitious school, recognised for its outstanding academic standards, exceptional pastoral care and tangible Catholic ethos. Our vision is clear: to empower girls through academic excellence and moral integrity to become confident, resilient and caring leaders of the future.

As a charitable school, every decision we make is driven by what is best for our pupils. We believe that education should never be for profit and every surplus generated by the School is reinvested directly into enhancing the educational experience, facilities and opportunities available to the children in our care.

As a girls only school our pupils are not stereotyped into "female" subjects but are encouraged to excel across the curriculum - and many go on to be scientists, engineers and economists. Academic excellence lies at the heart of everything we do. Through a carefully planned curriculum, high expectations, expert teaching and a culture of intellectual curiosity, we enable every pupil to fulfil their potential. We combine the best of traditional teaching with the thoughtful integration of modern technology, ensuring that our pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Preparation for the 11+ begins well before the examination process itself. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are challenged, supported and inspired through a broad, ambitious curriculum that develops both academic depth and independent thinking. Regular assessment, specialist teaching and carefully tailored guidance enable our girls to secure places and scholarships at many of London's most academically selective day and boarding schools. Our consistently excellent destination schools reflect the quality of teaching and learning experienced every day in our classrooms.

Our exceptional facilities further enrich this experience. Spaces such as our STEAM Global Learning Centre encourage innovation, creativity and collaboration, providing pupils with opportunities to solve problems, think critically and embrace challenge within our unique city campus.

The quality of our education was recognised during our 2026 ISI inspection, where the school met standards in every area. Inspectors praised our academic provision, commenting:

 The broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum is designed to nurture pupils' curiosity, independence and resilience... Teachers balance academic rigour with creative and recreational learning.

While academic success is central to our mission, we believe it can only be achieved when children feel happy, safe and valued. Exceptional pastoral care is therefore inseparable from academic excellence. Ours is a warm, welcoming and diverse community in which every child is known as an individual and encouraged to flourish. The confidence this creates enables pupils to take intellectual risks, embrace challenge and develop resilience. Above all, we recognise that wellbeing underpins success and our achievement of the Wellbeing Award for Schools reflects the importance we place on supporting every member of the St Mary's Prep School community.

We are immensely proud of our Catholic identity and heritage. Rooted in faith and inspired by Gospel values, our school was recognised as Outstanding in every area of its 2026 Catholic inspection. These values shape every aspect of school life and encourage our pupils to become compassionate, courageous and socially responsible young people. At the same time, we are a genuinely inclusive community that warmly welcomes families of all faiths and none, united by a shared commitment to kindness, respect and service.

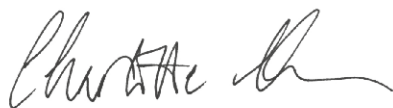
As a standalone preparatory school, we focus exclusively on one of the most important stages in a child's educational journey. These formative years establish the academic foundations, confidence and character that prepare girls not only for success at 11+ but for lifelong learning. Our specialist expertise allows us to concentrate entirely on the needs of primary-aged children, ensuring that every aspect of school life is designed specifically for their development. Furthermore, many of our parents are new to London and form life-long friendships with other families in our school community.

We recognise that the transition to senior school can feel daunting for parents and that the attraction of an all-through school may appear to offer certainty. However, a high-quality preparatory education provides something uniquely valuable: the opportunity for each girl to discover her strengths, develop her independence and grow into a confident young person before choosing the senior school that is the very best fit for her aspirations, talents and character. Our outstanding record of preparing pupils for leading senior schools demonstrates the strength of this approach and the confidence with which our girls make this important transition.

To realise our vision, we must continually look ahead. Education is constantly evolving and the St Mary's Prep School of today is naturally different from the school that welcomed its first pupils to Fitzjohn's Avenue in 1926. Yet our purpose remains unchanged. Our commitment to academic excellence continues to be guided by timeless values: intellectual curiosity, kindness, integrity, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, respect, courage and hope.

This vision booklet sets out our priorities for the next three years as we continue to strengthen every aspect of school life. We do so from a position of considerable strength, confident in the exceptional education we already provide and ambitious for what lies ahead. By continually investing in our people, our curriculum, our facilities and our future, we aim not only to preserve the remarkable legacy entrusted to us, but to ensure that St Mary's Prep School continues to educate and inspire 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 and caring leaders of the future.



OUR *Mission Statement*

St Mary's seeks to provide an outstanding education firmly founded on 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, worth and wellbeing of each child, high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence. 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.

OUR *Future*

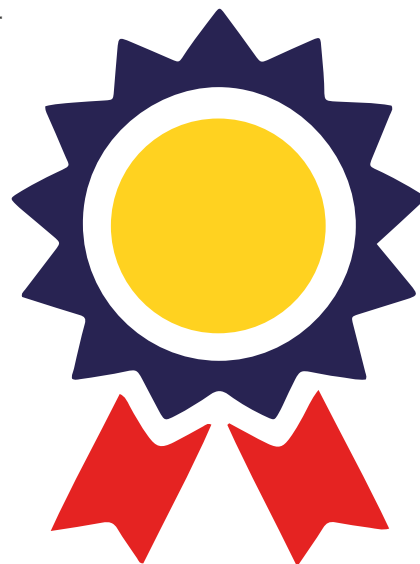
To achieve our vision and our mission of the school, we have seven strategic pillars to lead St Mary's Prep School forward into the future, primarily for the next three years, and beyond. The pillars are designed to ultimately ensure that the wellbeing of the girls is at the heart of what we do so that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

1 TEACHING AND LEARNING

St Mary's Prep School 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 foster a culture of academic excellence by delivering an ambitious, rigorous and inspiring curriculum that enables every pupil to achieve her full potential and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- To strengthen the quality of teaching and learning through high expectations, evidence-informed practice, effective use of digital technologies and AI, and a balanced approach that develops critical thinking, creativity and intellectual curiosity.
- To ensure every pupil is challenged and supported to succeed through robust assessment, exceptional SEND provision and outstanding preparation for future educational pathways, including the 11+ and beyond.
- To celebrate and recognise academic achievement, scholarship and individual success, promoting a culture in which aspiration, effort and excellence are valued and shared across the school community.





2 PUPIL WELLBEING

St Mary's Prep School 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 individual to flourish.

Vision

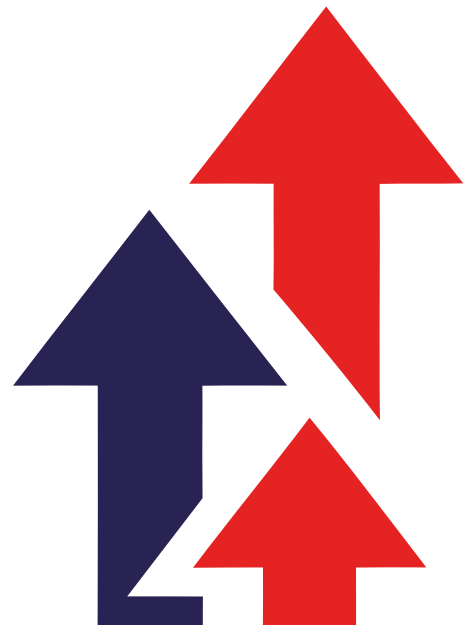
- To nurture a culture of wellbeing in which every pupil develops the emotional intelligence, resilience and confidence to flourish both personally and academically.
- To empower pupils to build positive relationships, exercise compassionate leadership and develop the skills to navigate friendships, challenges and the responsible use of technology with confidence and integrity.
- To foster a strong partnership with parents in promoting wellbeing, resilience and positive mental health, ensuring a consistent approach between school and home.
- To provide an environment, both physical and organisational, that places wellbeing at the heart of school life through dedicated spaces, effective leadership and opportunities for healthy, active play and reflection.

3 STAFF WELLBEING AND DEVELOPMENT

St Mary's Prep School recognises that their staff are their most precious resource and values 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 cultivate a highly skilled, innovative and reflective staff body through high-quality professional development and a culture of continuous improvement.
- To foster a supportive and inclusive workplace that prioritises staff wellbeing, enabling colleagues to flourish personally and professionally while maintaining the highest standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care.
- To create sustainable working practices that enable staff to deliver an ambitious curriculum through manageable workloads, efficient processes and protected time for planning, innovation and professional growth.
- To strengthen organisational effectiveness through robust appraisal, improved pupil progress tracking and strategic resource planning, ensuring the school continues to deliver excellence in education.





4 SPIRITUALITY AND CATHOLIC ETHOS

St Mary's Prep School 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, wisdom, love and care. The St Mary's Way is the code of conduct by which we live.

Vision

- To deepen and celebrate the school's Catholic ethos by fostering a lived understanding of faith in action that is inclusive, reflective and meaningful for pupils, staff and families of all backgrounds.
- To strengthen the spiritual life of the school community through development of more-inclusive liturgical experiences, supporting greater participation in Mass, Gospel services and whole-school acts of worship.
- To enhance engagement with the wider school community by developing opportunities for shared reflection on values, spirituality and moral purpose across different faith traditions.
- To ensure that the school's mission and values are clearly articulated, lived and understood, strengthening the sense of identity, belonging and shared purpose across the community.

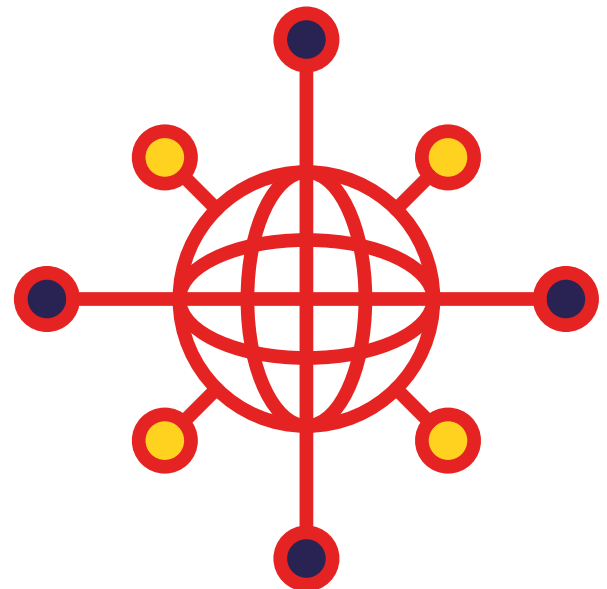


5 INFRASTRUCTURE

St Mary's Prep School 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 ensure a safe, sustainable and high-quality learning environment through effective estate management, continuous improvement of facilities and responsible stewardship of resources.
- To enhance operational efficiency and digital capability across the school through robust IT systems, clear data management practices and a rolling programme of technological renewal aligned with the school's digital strategy.
- To promote environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability through improved energy efficiency, reduced consumption and environmentally conscious decision-making across the school estate.
- To maintain and develop outstanding facilities, including buildings, grounds and outdoor learning spaces, ensuring they are safe, inspiring and fit for purpose in supporting excellence in teaching, learning and wider school life.



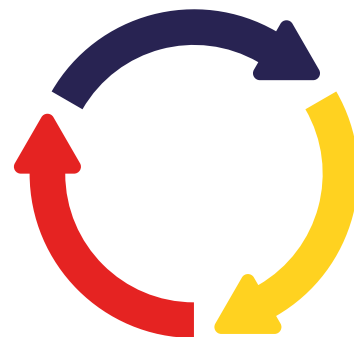


6 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability to St Mary's Prep School 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 generations to come.

Vision

- To ensure the long-term sustainability of the school by maintaining a balanced and inclusive admissions strategy that supports access, diversity and financial stability through the effective use of bursaries and resources.
- To strengthen Early Years provision as a centre of excellence, securing strong pupil progression into the wider school and establishing a high-quality foundation for long-term academic and personal success.
- To expand provision that meets the needs of modern families, including wraparound care and holiday clubs, ensuring accessibility while supporting the school's wider community role.
- To explore and strengthen strategic partnerships and collaboration with aligned organisations to improve efficiency, share best practice and enhance the sustainability of Catholic education provision.



7 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

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

Vision

- To enhance the school's profile and reputation through meaningful external engagement, including awards, partnerships and participation in national initiatives that recognise excellence in education.
- To strengthen community confidence and engagement through authentic consultation, effective communication and a culture of listening that values the voice of pupils, parents and staff.
- To ensure a clear, consistent and compelling articulation of the school's ethos, values and educational offer across all stages, supporting strong identity, continuity and long-term sustainability.
- To develop strategic systems for growth and sustainability, including admissions, alumni relations and philanthropic engagement, which secure the long-term future and flourishing of the school.







ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

47 FITZJOHN'S AVENUE, LONDON NW3 6PG
020 7435 1868 OFFICE@STMH.CO.UK

STMH.CO.UK