



ST MARY'S HALL





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St Mary's Hall is an independent day and boarding school. It was founded in 1836 as a boarding school for 100 daughters of Church of England Clergymen. At the beginning of this century it was opened to others and to day girls as well as boarders. The school now caters for over 400 pupils in small teaching groups.

The School continues to uphold the Christian aims of the Founder and the teaching of the Church of England. Pupils are encouraged to develop their academic gifts and to achieve excellent results, but at the same time, the breadth of education is recognised. Music, Art, Technology, Physical

Education all contribute to the development of the whole personality and play a full part in the curriculum.

There are from 250-300 girls aged 11-18 in the senior school, which includes a flourishing Sixth Form. The majority of the girls go on to University or other forms of Higher Education.

The Junior Department includes pre-school and preparatory sections in which boys and girls are taught together to the age of 8. Above this age the school is committed to remaining a girls' school.



The Buildings

The main school building was completed in 1836, the architect being George Basevi. The cost was met by public subscription organised by the school's Founder, The Reverend Henry Venn Elliott, whilst the school's nine acres of land were the gift of the Marquess of Bristol.

St Hilary House is formed from two large Regency houses in Sussex Square, a two-minute walk from the school, whilst Elliott House, in the school grounds, was rebuilt after the war following extensive bomb damage, and Venn House, the Sixth Form Centre also in the grounds, was built in 1981.

A new hall and music wing were built in 1969 and a large block, consisting of classrooms, day girl cloakrooms and a swimming pool, was added in 1976. Martin House was added in 1983.

In 1987, a Technology room was fully equipped and St Mark's Church was returned to the School to be the School Chapel.

In 1989, a new Information Technology Unit was established and Gloucester House was opened by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester as the building for pre-preparatory pupils. In 1994 School House was adapted to provide extra Sixth Form boarding accommodation.

School Community

The school aims to be a *community*

- where every individual (each member of staff and each pupil) is known, cared for and has a sense of belonging
- where potential is not just recognised but is actively sought for each person
- where expectations are high in academic work, personal relationships and extra-curricular activities
- where there is continual challenge, opportunity and achievement
- where effort is acknowledged as much as success
- where PRAISE and ENCOURAGEMENT are the key notes of *teaching*

Every member of the school family should be treated with the courtesy and respect which is theirs by right. It follows, therefore, that the community is a happy one and can afford to be OPEN AND WELCOMING, involved with and caring for the wider community.

Brighton is a lively university town in which a rich cultural life, the delights of the sea and proximity to London provide endless opportunities for education beyond the school site.



St. Hilary House, Sussex Square

Christian Foundation Boarding

The school is true to the intentions of its Founder, seeking to commend Christian beliefs and commitment. This is effected as much by examples of love, care, tolerance and forgiveness, as by the broadly-based Religious Education programme.

Opportunities for Christian nurture exist outside the classroom in discussion groups, voluntary attendance at weekly Communion Services, and Confirmation preparation classes. Each morning the senior girls meet for a short service in St Mark's Chapel conducted by the Chaplain, Headmistress, staff or the girls themselves. Boarders attend an Anglican church service on Sundays. Practising members of other denominations and faiths attend their own services.

Residential staff provide a homely atmosphere for the boarding girls, whether in Regency space and splendour or modern purpose-built accommodation. Flexible arrangements exist so that families are not limited to a choice between weekly or full boarding; exact arrangements are made to meet individual requirements.

Boarding life can be particularly stimulating, with the resources and attractions of Brighton and easy access to the sea-front making available a range of weekend activities. Older girls are prepared gradually to cope independently: younger pupils can be accompanied to airports or London if required.



Venn House



Gloucester House

Curriculum

Throughout the school attention to individual needs in small classes helps to develop the potential of each child. The principles of the National Curriculum are met, but much extension and enrichment are possible in addition. Pupils with mild dyslexia can participate in the common curriculum.

Senior girls are prepared for a wide range of GCSE subjects, including all elements of science. Academic courses in the Sixth Form lead to 'A' and 'AS' levels and Creative Arts courses are available for those gifted in Music, Art, Pottery, Design and Drama.

Individual tuition is available in Singing, Speech and Drama, Ballet and an extensive range of musical instruments, including harpsichord and organ.

An external examiner recently wrote: 'These pupils have been **EXCITED TO EXPRESSION**'.

What better motivation for learning! It is hoped that that phrase typifies most of what we do across all the subjects.

Pupils are excited
to expression
to exploration
to experimentation
to enquiry

and thereby stimulated to success.

Technology thrives, but is no longer confined to the specialist rooms. A computerised stage lighting system is programmed by the girls, and we see their technological skills enriching their dramatic and cultural talents. Computers and synthesisers are basic tools of the trade for our young composers of music.





The Sixth Form

The Sixth Form is a time of great development and opportunity. Within a caring community in which students are known as individuals, a great deal of intellectual and spiritual growth is possible. The key concept is confidence.

We are confident of the girls' ability to organise their lives, to take an important leadership role in the school and to make use of the facilities we offer. We hope that they gain in confidence from being in a girls' school and feeling that no career option or course of study is closed to them. Thus Mathematics and the Sciences are popular 'A' level subjects and while the Arts are strong, there is no feeling that girls should take second place in using computer, technology or laboratory facilities.

This confidence is reflected in many of the activities in the school: students run Houses, plan social activities, run companies within the Young Enterprise Scheme, take responsibility for supervising younger girls and achieve well in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Students can be confident that their faith and spiritual life, and their concern for the community, will be taken seriously and respected. 'We are looking for people with a wide range of interests who are able to communicate well on paper and orally and are aware of and care about the world around them', stated one university entrance officer.

Employers and colleges can be confident, as we are, that the Sixth Formers of St Mary's Hall are encouraged to be articulate, caring and enterprising young people with the skills and flexibility needed in the modern world.



Social activities are a feature of Sixth Form life, whether parties and discos, wine tasting, meetings with other schools, or theatre and concert visits. Staff and pupils enjoy meeting on a social basis and Sixth Formers from other schools are invited to relevant functions. The Sixth Formers themselves take responsibility for the programming of such social events.



Venn House, the purpose-built Sixth Form Centre, was opened in September 1981 and has become an important focal point for all Sixth Formers. They take full advantage of its excellent study and recreational facilities. As in other areas they are here encouraged to exercise the freedom afforded by having their own centre, with a growing awareness of their responsibilities to the community and themselves. Venn Common Room was further extended in 1995.

St Mary's Hall Junior Department



Small classes, enthusiastic teachers, fun and enjoyment typify the learning environment in the St Mary's Hall Junior Department. Our aim is to give every child a balanced, all-round education designed to allow the individual to reach his or her full potential.

In the early years a strong emphasis is placed on providing a thorough grounding in Reading, English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Art, Music and PE. This is built on as the child proceeds through the school.

We aim to instill enthusiasm for learning and discovery, so much of our History and Geography work is project based and includes field trips where appropriate.

A system of pupil profiling allows staff to identify strengths and weaknesses and ensure that the curriculum is always suited to the individual child. The Junior Department benefits from close links with the Senior School, making use of specialist staff and facilities such as the Computer Network, Art and Pottery rooms, Gymnasium, Swimming Pool, Hockey, Tennis and Netball courts (with subject specialists).

All Juniors have the opportunity to learn the recorder and later the violin. Individual tuition can be arranged in pianoforte and all orchestral instruments. There is a flourishing Junior Choir and a growing orchestra. All children are encouraged to take part in the musical and dramatic productions that regularly occur in the Junior Department.

There are regular speech and drama lessons and extra tuition is available in Ballet, Drama and Speech Training. Throughout their time in the Junior Department, pupils are based in small class groups where the teacher takes a pastoral and educational interest in each child.

Every effort is made to ensure that parents are kept fully informed of the progress of their child. Regular meetings, both formal and informal, with class teachers are encouraged.



School and Parents

Considerable importance is attached to the relationship with parents. In addition to Parents' Evenings, parents and staff are regularly in contact through social events such as Open Day, school plays and concerts, Speech Day or careers evenings. Parents are welcome to visit the school at other times, by appointment, to see the school in action or to speak to the Headmistress or other members of staff. Newsletters are regularly sent to parents.

The school is supported by an active Parent-School Association. All parents are members of the Association and are invited to attend a range of social and educational functions.

The School Day

The week's timetabled lessons are arranged from Monday to Friday. Activities take place at lunch time, after school and at the weekends. Supervised preparation after school is an option which some parents find valuable.

Pastoral Care

Each form is looked after by a form teacher. He or she takes care of the pupils' academic work and general welfare.

In addition, there are senior members of staff in charge of each year group. In the Sixth Form there is a Director of Studies, who is assisted by other members of staff, who act as tutors to small groups for the whole of their Sixth Form course. Both pupils and parents have ready access to these members of staff and to all subject teachers. The Headmistress and Deputy Head are always ready to involve themselves in any matters which may require special attention.

The pastoral curriculum covers study skills and relationships, and links closely with the Health and Careers education programmes.

Health

The School Doctor and School Nurse provide appropriate medical care and share in the Health Education programmes.



Catering

The Health Education policy is put into practice by the catering team. Each day there is a selection of fresh vegetables to accompany hot meat or vegetarian dishes. A salad bar provides a feast for the eye as well as the palate. All diets can be catered for. The desserts selection includes fresh fruit, as well as choices of light or traditional puddings. The catering staff take an interest in the pupils and help to create a caring, family atmosphere at mealtimes. Junior Department pupils eat with their teachers, who ensure that a balanced meal is consumed.

Careers

There are at present two members of staff with specific responsibility for careers education and guidance. Careers advice is not undertaken in a vacuum; there is constant consultation between the Headmistress, tutors, subject staff and careers staff.

The Careers Library is very well stocked with a full range of current careers literature, higher education prospectuses and occupational directories, many of which are duplicated in the Sixth Form Centre. Throughout the Senior School girls are encouraged to use the Careers Library in their free time or study periods.

The careers staff are always available for private consultations. Most Sixth Formers leave St Mary's Hall to go on to higher education or into a profession. They are prepared for this

transition by the careers education programme, which includes advice sessions, and may include periods of work experience.

Entry, Fees and Bursaries

The School encourages candidates to enter from a wide variety of backgrounds. Entry to the Senior School is normally at 11+, 12+ or 13+, and occasionally at 14+, dependent on performance in the Entrance Examinations. Sixth Form entry is based on GCSE performance.

There are bursaries for daughters of the clergy and Service personnel and the school participates in the Government's Assisted Places Scheme. A small number of academic and music scholarships is awarded each year on the results of examinations held in January.

Additional Assisted Places and Scholarships are available for entry into the Sixth Form. Bursaries may be awarded in cases of financial need to enable girls to remain for the Sixth Form course. In exceptional cases a free place may be awarded.

Entry to the Junior Department is based on informal interview and/or test depending on age of entry.

Fees are payable in advance. They cover tuition in all school subjects and include books and stationery.





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