

Towards and beyond our 150th anniversary

*A masterplan for the future of
South Hampstead High School*



Our mission at South Hampstead is to open doors, hearts and minds. We are already one of the most successful schools in London. We aim to be one of the greatest in the fullest sense of that word – a school which sets the agenda and educates its pupils to be pioneers, just like the original founders of the Girls' Day School Trust.



South Hampstead
High School
G D S T

I am fortunate indeed to lead a vibrant school which prides itself on its distinguished history of providing young women with an inspiring and rigorous education, and outstanding opportunities for personal development.

I am also fortunate to have benefited from the fruits of a ten year strategic master plan for the school which culminates with the completion of the development of the hall in the Waterlow building.

The Waterlow Hall development also marks the start of our new master plan. Inside, we outline some of our ambitions for the school in four key areas:



TEACHING & LEARNING



BREADTH & ACCESSIBILITY



COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP



CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2026, we will celebrate 150 years since South Hampstead High School was founded. I hope you will join with me to secure our vision for the school over the next few years and ensure that young women will continue to benefit from a South Hampstead education for many years beyond our 150th anniversary.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'VMMB' followed by a stylized flourish.

VICKY BINGHAM

Headmistress, South Hampstead High School



A genuinely enriching and inspiring intellectual education

We are proud of our tradition of academic success. We want to continue raising the profile of scholarly endeavours amongst our pupil community; the focus of our curriculum development over the next few years will be on critical thinking and ensuring we tackle diversity, racism and prejudice through our teaching. Success in national examinations is important and opens doors, but a genuinely diverse, enriching and inspiring intellectual education will do far more than that. Our aim is consistent excellence of provision across the board so that whatever a pupil's background, aptitudes or interests, she can fly.

Research into how students learn has developed exponentially in recent times. Our teachers are not just passionate about their subjects but also about pedagogy, many are involved in additional research and scholarship beyond their everyday teaching. Continuing professional development is central to our teaching and learning plan and will ensure the recruitment, retention and development of the very best staff. We hope to build on our existing programme of panel discussions, academic lectures and conferences to become a centre for educational learning for staff and colleagues in other schools.



Double our current bursary provision

“More than ever, I value the self-confidence and independence of spirit I developed as a result of being at South Hampstead. My education set in motion lasting foundations, values and ambitions to give me one of the best possible starts in life.”

DATSHIANE NAVANAYAGAM (2005)

Bursary pupil, BBC Producer

At South Hampstead, we have a long history of providing bursary awards and our bursary pupils have contributed hugely to the diversity and endeavour of the school.

Bursaries are supported by the GDST through the Girls' First Bursary Fund and through our own bursary fund, the Futures Fund. Each year, the GDST is able to support around 1,000 pupils across the school network. Combined with bursaries from own SHHS Futures Fund, currently up to 5% of our South Hampstead pupils receive some sort of financial support.

Our ambition is to do much more and by our anniversary year in 2026 we aim to have funds to support at least double the current number of pupils. If you would like to help us achieve this aim or find out more about our bursary programme please contact us.



Long lasting and mutually enriching partnerships

Partnership is a critical part of our master plan. We can learn much from the schools in the state sector, and they from us.

We have excellent relationships within our local community and are already involved in a number of outreach activities and several new joint ventures. We want to establish sustainable and mutually enriching partnerships which benefit our staff and pupils and those beyond our gates. Mutual understanding between the state and independent sectors and between pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds are two of the most important educational imperatives right now. We see our role in fulfilling these responsibilities as an exciting opportunity and a critical part of our educational mission – to open doors, hearts and minds.

We work hard to reconnect with our alumnae community, building an extensive programme of reunion events, networking opportunities, mentoring and speaker events as well as involving our former pupils on steering groups and consultative bodies. Our goal is to ensure that our alumnae remain a core part of our school community and that we continue to support our pupils throughout their lives.

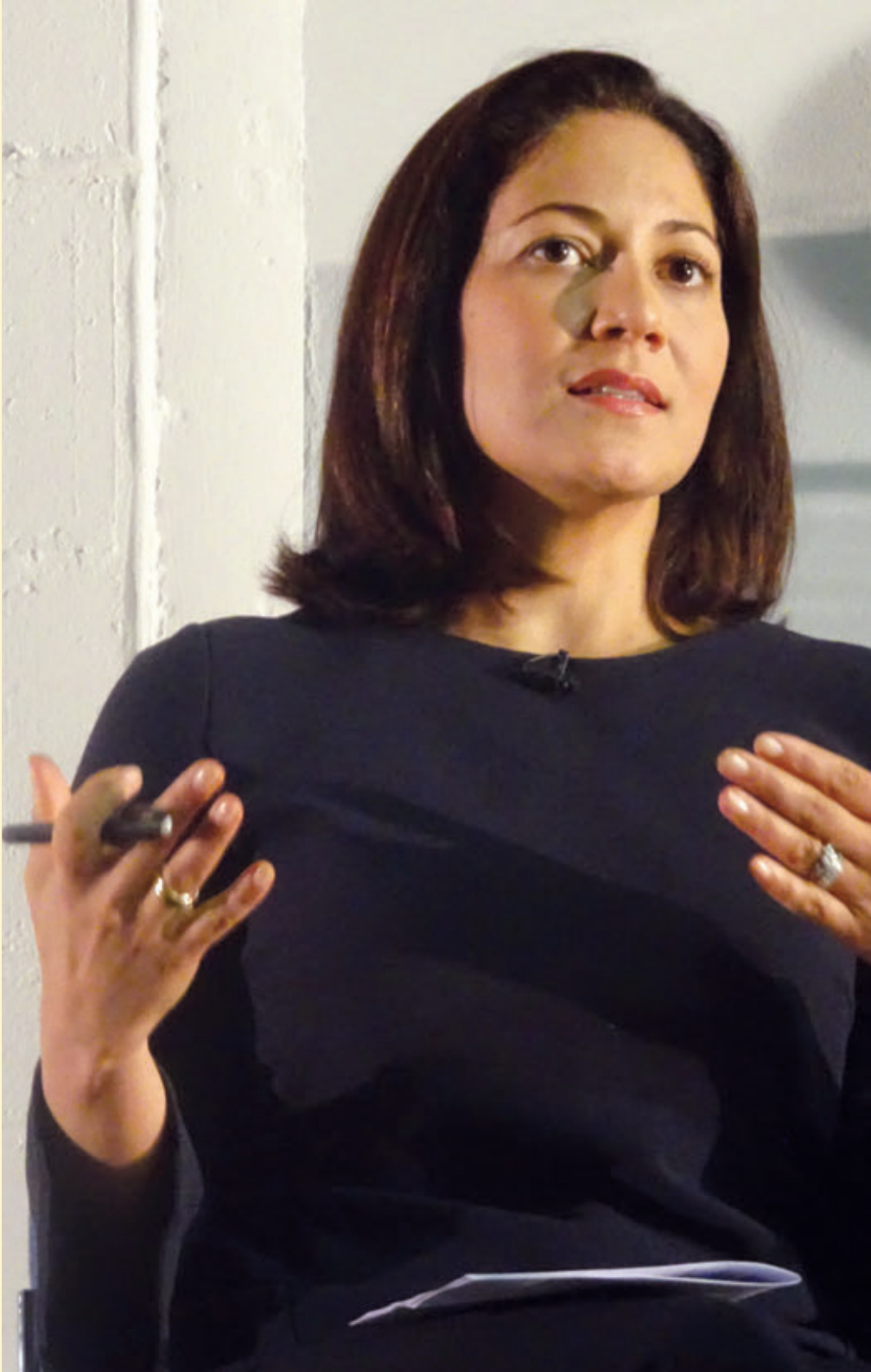


Project Zero: A pupil led initiative to reduce our impact on the environment

In 2014, to celebrate the opening of the new Senior School, we commissioned the artist William Sweetlove to create an artwork. He chose to focus on an environmental message. The South Hampstead penguins are made from a recyclable plastic and the artworks are designed to inspire a community-wide conversation about the importance and the environmental impact of recycling.

This conversation at South Hampstead has evolved into Project Zero, a pupil-led initiative. Its goals for our 150th anniversary in 2026 are that all our buildings will be as carbon neutral as possible; that we will have limited single use plastic in the school; and that we will have significantly reduced our contribution to landfill.

We hope that all our pupils will enter our 150th year as leaders in reducing the impact of South Hampstead High School on the environment.



Pursuits beyond the classroom that build character and confidence

South Hampstead's co-curricular programme is a critical part of the education we provide. We currently offer over 140 clubs and activities ranging from Feminist Society to Chemistry Club and have an enviable reputation for the breadth of our co-curricular provision.

The refurbished Waterlow Hall provides a showcase venue for a whole range of arts, performance and the spoken word. In recognition of this, and to continue to build character and confidence in our pupils, we have recruited a Director of Debating to champion and grow debating here. Our aim is to educate pupils across all the years in the skill of public speaking and establish South Hampstead as a debating hub, thus creating valuable partnerships with local schools.

The quality of our speaker programme was recently described as "rivaling that of a top university". We have benefited from generous support in this area and are keen to ensure that this part of school life remains as rich as ever. Our goal is to enable pupils to find and use their voice – by listening to ideas, by asking searching, even provocative questions, and by presenting in turn themselves.



*A full refurbishment,
reconfiguration and extension
of our Junior School buildings*

In 1957 we were able to acquire a new site to create a home for our younger girls. Ever since, the Junior School has grown and thrived in our two beautiful Victorian buildings in Netherhall Gardens.

We want to adapt and extend both Junior School buildings to create larger and more flexible and imaginative teaching and breakout spaces. As part of the comprehensive plan, class sizes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will be reduced by moving to two-form entry in this Key Stage. In addition we will create new communal space and play areas to allow for seamless indoor and outdoor learning, including a hall big enough to accommodate the whole Junior School community.



Pupils who go into the world as engaged, confident and responsible citizens

South Hampstead is a community and fundamental to our ethos is that every girl is known by and belongs to this community.

In the next few years, our aim is to extend our pastoral care and support through the tutorial system, group and individual coaching and counselling, and the teaching of life-skills and through the PHSE programme. Importantly, we plan to share these initiatives with parents and pupils so that all know how to get help and feel the core sense of being part of a community that cares.

Inherent to this are efforts to further embed our new TORCH values throughout the school – Thoughtfulness, Open-heartedness, Respect, Courage and Honesty – these are at the centre of the South Hampstead community. The website and literature will be updated to reflect these values and communications will focus on helping girls to understand how to live by these values and go into the world as responsible and confident citizens. We will continue to strengthen our Sixth Form leadership positions to encourage their initiative and ambition and establish them as role models for the rest of the school.

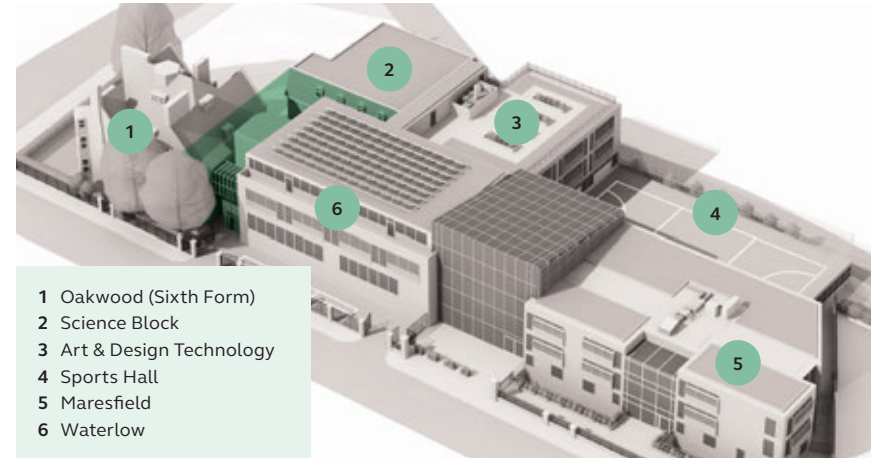


Inclusivity, breadth and excellence on the local and national stage

We regard sport as a critical part of our personal development and wellbeing strategy. We aim to cater for those pupils with real competitive spirit and talent but also for those who simply wish to develop healthy habits for life. Many of our pupils currently compete at National and County level, but equal emphasis is placed on wider participation in sport. We have invested considerably in our sports department and strategy across the school and this is already starting to bear fruit.

Our Lymington Road sports complex and our relationship with the Hampstead Cricket Club and Cumberland Lawn Tennis Club offer us fantastic opportunities. Together with them and the GDST we intend to explore how we can make best use of this site over the next few years.

The aim is a sporting programme which will offer inclusivity, breadth and excellence on the local and national stage.



A coherent home for the final two years of study

In 1991 Oakwood House was purchased to create a home for our Sixth Form. It provides a wonderful, historic and warm setting but we are conscious of our growing Sixth Form numbers and the need for additional study and relaxation space. Our plan is for an extensive but sensitive refurbishment of Oakwood to create a coherent space and home for the final two years of study.

The Sixth Form is an integral part of the school (indeed, the pinnacle of the South Hampstead experience) so alongside this refurbishment, we will seek to transform how the Oakwood building links to the main school building to allow direct access to the science, art and design & technology departments.

‘Connectivity’ marks an ambition to create seamless interaction between the two Senior School buildings and maximise the indoor and outdoor space on our site. By doing this we hope to provide additional relaxation spaces for our pupils – a challenge for any centrally located London school.

‘Connectivity’ will also be an opportunity for us to continue to invest in cutting-edge facilities and resources in science. We are lucky to benefit from good-sized and well-equipped science laboratories and we plan to enhance these and build on resources such as our interactive periodic table and our new Sixth Form chemistry laboratory in the future.



Opportunities and adaptable skills to deal with an ever changing workplace

Preparation for life beyond South Hampstead very much ties in with our aspiration to become a research-rich school. One of the most important debates in education right now is how best to prepare pupils for an ever changing workplace in the 21st century. Answering this question requires careful thought, wisdom, research and, perhaps, making some bold choices. We are living in some of the most exciting times for education.

The Futures Programme was launched in September 2017 and the aim is a cohesive programme running from Years 7-13 to educate students in career options, workplace skills and university choices.

Our aims are to use our network to best effect and implement our *This is Me* project – a programme designed to encourage students to reflect on the skills they learn at South Hampstead; to build their confidence; to give them opportunities to build skills that will make them properly “work ready”. Above all we want to address the female confidence gap as well as the gender pay gap.



Diversity at the heart of everything we do

As a school, we continue to review our curriculum in the widest possible sense to ensure we address racial prejudice and celebrate racial diversity. Our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) across all year groups covers diversity and discrimination including racism and racial bias specifically, which are also addressed in staff training.

We have set up a steering committee comprising current staff, students and alumnae to help us address racial inequality throughout the school, starting from the very earliest age.

Championing diversity is not just about changes to the formally taught curriculum. It includes making conscious decisions about the assemblies we deliver, the books in library, the speakers we invite, the clubs and societies we run, the plays we put on. It means ensuring that students and staff know how to speak intelligently and from an informed basis about prejudice.

We are committed to ensure that South Hampstead is a place where mutual respect and diversity can flourish and are at the heart of everything we do.

Get in touch at:

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