



**Glowing Inspection
Report from Independent
Schools Inspectorate**

**The Impact of Early
Smartphone Exposure
on the Mental Health
of Young People**

**A Year of Celebrations
– MHSG at 150**

– NEWS FROM –
**Prep to
Sixth Form**

High Flyer

IN THIS EDITION OF

High Flyer

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Welcome

Welcome to the 65th and very special edition of Manchester High School for Girls' High Flyer Magazine.

In this edition, we are celebrating our 150th Birthday, with special articles, features and heritage content to mark this momentous milestone in our wonderful School's history.

Manchester High School for Girls was founded in 1874 by the people of Manchester, including men and women who were leading figures in the academic, cultural and business life of the city.

The early Governors' Minutes show that many people were involved in setting up the School. Money was raised by public subscription. Over 125 people gave amounts that ranged from 1 guinea to £100. Manchester High School for Girls was the first school in northern England to provide an academic education for girls and one of the first in England. At that time, most people regarded the education of girls as either unnecessary or undesirable.

The Founders of Manchester High School, however, believed that girls had a right to education and that they, and society as a whole, would be better for it. Enlightened and forward-looking, they were determined that the School would be open to 'any girls of suitable age, character and ability without any distinction as to religious profession or social rank.'

They described the essential aims of the School thus: 'To impart to the scholars the very best education which can be given and to fit them for any future which may be before them.'

This continues to be the guiding spirit of the School.

As ever, we are celebrating our students' achievements both inside and outside of the classroom in this edition; also recognising the hard work and accomplishments of our dedicated staff, extensive alumnae network, friends of the School, Governors and the wider school community.

In this issue, we look back at the 150th Birthday Celebration & Awards Evening and reminiscence on the raft of brilliantly successful 150th Birthday events we have enjoyed throughout 2024. We mark our Class of 2024's fantastic results' success, reflect on what the recent change in Government could mean for our School, and discuss the impact of a phone-free childhood on young people.



We will also share a snapshot of the other events still to come in the final throes of our 150th Birthday celebrations and contemplate what the next 150 years could bring for girls' education.

The stories, news and photographs shared in this issue are, as always, shining examples of each member of our community's dedication to challenging stereotypes, breaking through barriers, and making a change in the world.

I hope you enjoy this very special edition!

Mrs Helen F Jeys
Head Mistress



Glowing Inspection Report from Independent Schools Inspectorate



MHSG celebrated an exceptional inspection report this year.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) identified a 'Significant Strength' at MHSG and said: "Staff are ambitious for the pupils and thread the values of learning, innovation, compassion, wellbeing and individuality through every aspect of school life. This results in empowered and dynamic pupils who flourish."

This is the first time MHSG has been inspected since before the Covid-19 pandemic. The glowing report reflects the consistent hard work and dedication of all staff, pupils and the wider school community.

Head Mistress, Mrs Helen Jeys, said: "We are delighted by the recognition that MHSG is a school that empowers the girls within its walls and enables them to flourish. The ethos that underpinned the school's foundation in 1874 is still reflected in its provision today and will continue to do so well into the future.

"Under the new inspection framework, schools are rarely described as having a 'significant strength'. We are therefore delighted that not only have we met all standards required of us as an independent school but, furthermore, demonstrated a significant strength. This

is certainly something to celebrate in our 150th year of empowering girls."

Inspectors were full of praise for MHSG's approach to ensuring pupils' academic attainment, their physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. Leadership and management teams across the school were also lauded.

The ISI report said: "[The school's] enriching curriculum combined with highly effective teaching, generates intellectual interest and ambition amongst pupils who respond well to the high expectations set by their teachers. This results in pupils of all ages being engaged in lessons, learning at pace and achieving well above the national attainment levels.

"Pupils grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful and highly positive."

You can read the inspection report in full on our website at manchesterhigh.co.uk or scan the QR code.



"Staff are ambitious for the pupils and thread the values of learning, innovation, compassion, wellbeing and individuality through every aspect of school life. This results in empowered and dynamic pupils who flourish."



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A Change in Government – What Lies Ahead?

By Mrs Helen F Jeys – Head Mistress

Since our new government came into power earlier this year, there has been much to discuss, plan and respond to, within school. Although there is, evidently, narrative surrounding the financial changes impacting independent schools as a result of this change in government, less is being said about the new government's educational plans! Nonetheless, the aims behind these plans are important as they will, undoubtedly, impact our pupils over the coming years. So, what are the educational plans of the new Government? Well, announcements have focused, so far, on the launch of the 'Curriculum and Assessment Review', chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, with the Government aiming to provide "a broader, richer, cutting-edge curriculum that drives high and rising school standards and sets all young people up for life and work."

Giving every child the best start in life is at the heart of education, as is one that equips young people with the ability to cope with the challenges of a changing world. I applaud any review that attempts to focus on raising standards and preparing young people for their future. Indeed, with the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on all aspects of our life, many talk about AI providing us with what seems like 'educational whiplash' and we need to keep pace with the benefits of emerging technologies as well as with their potential dangers.

As one would expect, Manchester High will contribute to the Government's review and will provide feedback at the very highest level but these aims do give me food for thought. How are we preparing our students for their future and are we enabling them to develop those skills they will need to flourish as young people beyond school?

Well, at MHSG, there is much we are doing already. From innovative changes to the curriculum, with the introduction of a Design, Technology and Innovation programme, exceptional careers advice, Higher Education support



and mentoring from current staff and our alumnae, preparation for university life and Well Being sessions that focus on the building of character as well as practical life skills, our pupils leave MHSG with the maturity, knowledge and self-confidence to succeed.

Furthermore, we do not shy away from the exciting benefits AI can bring. We have an AI Integration Team in school that focuses on how AI can be implemented for the benefit of both staff and students while, at the same time, appreciating and educating pupils on the importance of academic honesty. We also know that examination boards are preparing for examination papers to be offered online in the future. Therefore, providing our pupils with the skills to type at speed will be a challenge that we will need to embrace. Current pilots taking place in school will indicate how much more we need to do to ensure that our pupils are prepared for such eventualities.

But ensuring that our pupils have the skills to succeed in their future careers means that our approach to the non-digital world is just as important. We have a new drive, for instance, to emphasise the importance of reading with our Whole School Literacy strategy. You will have heard in many introductory evenings that reading for pleasure leads to increased attainment. Clark and DeZoya (2011) found a significant positive relationship between enjoyment and attainment and Clark (2011) in a large scale survey of over 18,000 young people found that those who reported enjoying reading very much were six times more likely than those who did not enjoy reading to read above the expected level for their age. Indeed, evidence from OECD (2002) found that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status.

Furthermore, we also do a lot in school to encourage oracy; the ability to express oneself well across a range of contexts. With employers now rating communication skills as one of their highest priorities, the ability to express ideas is more important than ever before. Research suggests that children with good communication skills are four times more likely to achieve good GCSE results with spoken language playing a key role in cognitive development, helping children understand the world around them as well as having a positive impact on academic and cognitive outcomes, self-esteem, wellbeing, mental health, social mobility, employability and civic engagement. The enthusiasm of our students for participation in activities such as Model United Nations, Mock Trial, the English Speaking Union competitions

as well as debating more broadly reflects the ability our students have to communicate their ideas fluently, eloquently and with the ability to convince.

So, I welcome the Government's review of assessments and the curriculum for the benefit of all young people across the country and I will watch, with interest, when the results of the consultation are published in 2025. Manchester High will always continue in its founding aim to empower young women and to "fit them for any future which may be before them."

"The enthusiasm our students have for participating in activities... reflects the ability they have to communicate their ideas fluently, eloquently and with the ability to convince."



Results' Days 2024

Outstanding A-level results

MHSG's Sixth Formers celebrated their outstanding A-level grades this summer.

A total of 86% of all grades achieved by students were the 'gold standard' of A*-B, while 29% of all grades were the highest grade possible, A*.

Head Mistress, Mrs Helen Jeys, said: "I am exceptionally proud of our Senior Sixth students. Their results are testament to their hard work and the support of our brilliant team of teachers and support staff.

"Not only are the results excellent but it is wonderful to see our students going on to study such a huge array of courses at university: from Maths, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics; Dentistry; Medicine and Veterinary Science to Philosophy and French; Archaeology; Modern Foreign Languages and Philosophy. These courses mirror the opportunities the students take advantage of during their time in school and we are excited to see how they enjoy university and await the success they will, undoubtedly, go on to achieve."

Ten MHSG students achieved grade A*s across all of their subjects and over a third of the year group achieved A*/A across all of their A-levels.

Students secured places at some of the highest ranked UK universities; including Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, LSE, UCL, St. Andrews, Durham, Warwick and more.

All five of the school's students who were offered places at Oxbridge also secured their places this year.

Natalie, MHSG's former Head Girl, was in receipt of a Bursary and secured her place at Durham University to study History, after achieving A*AA.

On Results' Day she said: "I'm so relieved and so happy, I can't even put it into words. My best memory from MHSG has got to be being Head Girl, it's been so important in my growth. Without question, MHSG helped me to get to where I am today."

Mrs Jeys continued: "With women continuing to be under-represented in STEM related careers, we are also delighted that 100% of all grades awarded in subjects such as

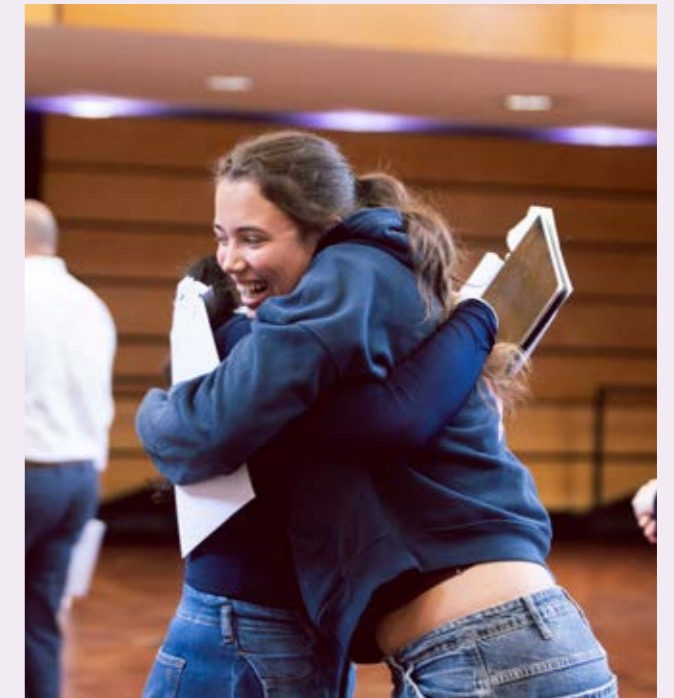
Computer Science and Physics were A*-B. This bodes well for the future; I am sure that we will see our students go on to be the agents of change that they have been since MHSG was founded 150 years ago.

"Furthermore, the fact that ten departments across a range of subject areas are celebrating 100% A*-B grades this year proves that our students succeed in all areas, from the creative subjects of Drama, Music, Fine Art and Graphics to English Language, Geography and Classical Civilisation.

"We are exceptionally proud of our students and wish each of them every success for the next stage of their exciting, educational journeys."



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"I'm so relieved and so happy. I can't even put it into words. My best memory of MHSG has got to be being Head Girl, it's been so important in my growth. Without question, MHSG helped me to get to where I am today."

- Natalie, Head Girl 2023-24



Results and Destinations 2024

The median A-level grade was an A.

A total of

86% of our students'

A-level grades were the 'gold standard' of A*-B, and

31% were the highest grade possible, A*.

909 GCSE entries were awarded at grade 7 -9 (A/A*).

90%

of GCSE grades awarded in Computer Science and 86% of grades in Further Maths were 7 and above – showing that pupils excel in areas of the curriculum in which girls, traditionally, are under-represented nationally.



University Destinations



Fantastic GCSE results

Year 11 students celebrated a bumper crop of fantastic results, with 909 grades at 7 and above (A/A*) awarded to them this year.

A total of 90% of grades awarded in Computer Science and 86% of grades in Further Maths GCSE were 7 and above – showing that pupils excel in areas of the curriculum in which girls, traditionally, are under-represented nationally.

At the same time, pupils performed incredibly well in the creative subjects, with over 90% of grades awarded being 7 and above in Fine Art, Graphics, Drama and Music. Results in the Humanities also were exceptionally pleasing with 100% of all grades in Religion & Philosophy and 96% in Geography being 7 and above.

Head Mistress, Mrs Helen Jeys, said: “We are delighted that our students have performed so well in their GCSE examinations this year. They are a hard-working and dedicated group of young people who deserve their fantastic success. With the average (median) grade achieved being a Grade 8 (A*), our pupils deserve to be exceptionally proud of their achievements and the manner in which they have balanced their academic work with extra-curricular interests; both of which are so important to the development of their character.

“Similarly to our students’ superb A-level results, it is wonderful to see our Year 11 students succeed in subjects from a range of curriculum areas.”

Priya, who continued into MHSG’s Sixth Form to study Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Spanish with a hope to study Medicine at university, achieved all 9s and one 8 in her GCSEs.

On Results’ Day she said: “I’m very happy and did not expect these results. The teachers have been so supportive, they’ve helped me so much.”

“I look forward to seeing our pupils return to MHSG in September to begin their A-level journey with us. With an exceptional team of teaching and support staff to aid their transition, I am sure they will continue to flourish. Congratulations to the class of 2024!”

- Mrs Helen Jeys

Priya’s mum and dad were thrilled with her results.

Her mum, Dr Siddals, said: “We are absolutely thrilled. She worked so hard and we couldn’t be prouder.”

Her dad, Dr Siddals, added: “We’re so proud of her, her approach has been so mature, with no hassle, she did it all herself and owes these grades to no one but herself.

“We are so happy with MHSG and so pleased she’s continuing into the Sixth Form. The teachers have been fantastic and so supportive, whatever she needed, they delivered.”

Mrs Jeys added: “I look forward to seeing our pupils return to MHSG in September to begin their A-level journey with us. With an exceptional team of teaching and support staff to aid their transition, I am sure they will continue to flourish. Congratulations to the class of 2024!”



“We are exceptionally proud of our students and wish each of them every success for the next stage of their exciting, educational journeys.”



'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'

Mrs Jill Hayes, Head of Drama

Every year it is a pleasure to work on the school musical - I enjoy the camaraderie and buzz around the School as we head towards performance week. This year, however, I decided on a change of direction and chose to direct 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' because the performing rights had become available to schools.

This brought cries of, 'What about the dancing?', 'We won't have a big cast!' and 'We always do a musical.' I stood my ground calmly with a smile on my face. The students who auditioned were a different set to our usual musical theatre lovers. I was thrilled to see a huge range of people who had never performed before, attracted to the process by the subject matter of the novel and subsequent adaptation by Simon Stephens.

I needn't have worried about initial concerns. As rehearsals progressed, we added dances and choreographed movement sequences. We had a large cast, and live music was arranged to fit the themes and style of the play. A week or so before opening night, I began to see just how special the piece really was. I described it as having 'beautiful bones' to my friend and I knew the cast felt the same.

Our audience raved about the play. People wept throughout, discussed it for hours and fed back the most beautiful remarks.

It mattered.

It resonated with the cast and audience alike. It hit home with friends who have neurodivergent children. One of them told me that she had 'silently wept all the way through because she felt seen for the first time while watching a play.' One of her children had vomited that day, because the dog had been sick in the same room as them. The other had gone to college with pyjamas under their clothes because of a sensory issue with their jeans.

We need to remember that Drama teaching and school shows are not window dressing for our schools to make us look fun. They are integral to our students' well-being and sense of identity.

In particular, this year 'The Curious Incident' reminded me that, for some of our neurodivergent students, just getting through the school day is completely draining as they mask almost continuously.

As I wrote in my programme notes, it was my turn to learn that accomplishments mean different things to different people and that our journey together is the reward and that most importantly, nothing is impossible.

Thank you to the cast, for teaching me.

Ila, Junior Sixth

Nowhere in the play does it mention that Christopher has autism, but his challenges are like those of many on the autistic spectrum. As someone with autism, I can relate to a number of Christopher's nuances, one of those being sensory overload - the world can be a very loud place (unless I am making the noise myself!).

You could say that Christopher's brain is wired differently - he loves Maths and anything that is logical; life is definitely a lot easier when things go to plan. He has fantastic skills in observation and notices the little things that most people often miss. He therefore has a unique perspective on life, which was hopefully shown in the production.

Many people, like me, use masking as a coping mechanism, hiding their differences, acting the role of someone that is expected of them in everyday life. Christopher however does not do this, and the challenges he faces are evident throughout. The play also highlighted the vital role of family, school, and a strong support network, which are things I have been fortunate to have.

The most difficult part of rehearsing for this play was at the beginning when trying to portray Christopher accurately. I had to 'unmask' myself, and be myself, in

order to portray someone who shows their autistic traits. However, by the end of rehearsals, I became used to 'unmasking' and becoming Christopher, and the process was easier.

I loved the regularity of daily lunch rehearsals. Since rehearsals have finished, my lunchtimes have suddenly become free, which means that there is a lack of routine, and I need to socialise more. Socialising outside of the given structure of a rehearsal can be tiring - there is no script, and I am masking continually. In a rehearsal I am in a safe space, whereas masking outside of rehearsal is harder and more tiring, as I need to conform to societal norms. One reason I love acting is because it means that I become another person. I don't have to be myself. I am acting out a script, so I am not personally being judged on what I say or how I react to others.

'The Curious Incident' developed my acting skills and built my confidence. One advantage was that there was a small main cast, so therefore it was easier for me to socialise rather than being in a larger group of people. Playing Christopher has made me more determined to act in the future and has taught me a lot about the process of performing for theatre.



Archana Hinduja - Ila's mum

With less than three months to learn the lines and rehearse for the role of Christopher, Ila had a significant challenge ahead of her at the start of September.

Ila has a diagnosis of ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) and anxiety, so it was important to manage her expectations and balance schoolwork with line learning to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Fortunately, Ila has an exceptional memory for memorising lines - far better than mine.

After we worked together to map out how many pages she needed to learn every day, she set aside dedicated time to practise. However, an hour out of each evening did have an impact on other aspects of Ila's well-being.

Ila uses masking as a coping strategy, whereby she consciously or unconsciously suppresses certain behaviours, traits, or emotions to avoid being judged, to fit in socially, or to meet the demands of school or social interactions. Masking can become a strategy for those with autism to navigate a world that may not always be understanding of their differences, but it can come with significant emotional and physical costs leading to exhaustion, anxiety or burnout because of the constant effort it requires.

As Ila masks continually during the day, adding an extra hour of line-learning to the evening came with its own challenges. I had to ensure that Ila had time for herself each evening and that line-learning was an enjoyable process, so that it did not exacerbate the fatigue. The solution was a combination of these two, my role being to test her on the lines and read the parts of the other characters.

What began as a daily routine soon became something we both truly enjoyed. In fact, one week after the performance ended, we both found ourselves almost missing the rehearsal of lines each evening. The conversations that Christopher engages in - from his definition of and frustration with metaphors to the questioning of where Heaven might be - all resonated with us, and we shared memories, laughing at conversations we had had over the years.

However, whilst these shared experiences brought a lighter atmosphere to the onerous task of learning lines, there were scenes within the play that evoked memories that were more difficult to revisit: the non-acceptance by society and the worry that your child might struggle later in life to manage certain tasks. There were scenes I purposefully skipped or skimmed during rehearsing with Ila. The last scene where Christopher repeatedly asks, 'Does that mean I can do anything, Siobhan? Does that mean I can do anything?' still brings tears to my eyes.



As a selective mute until the age of seven, never did I then imagine that Ila would be able to deliver a performance as she did. It is a testament to her determination and resilience that she has come so far.

The performance nights arrived, bringing with them a mix of emotion and pride, along with a fear that Ila was putting herself in a vulnerable position. As a parent, it's natural to want to protect your child, but when your child chooses to portray a character with autism, reflecting many of her own traits, I couldn't help but worry for her well-being. However, her own personality and talent shone through, and it became immediately apparent to me how much confidence Ila acquired in being able to portray the role of Christopher. It gave her a platform to be acknowledged both for her ability to act, but also for her differences. Enjoying every second of the performance she was, as she wrote in the programme, keen to foster a level of understanding within the school community.

Over the past three months, I have noticed a change in Ila: she has grown as a person, developed clear aspirations to pursue a career in acting, and, perhaps most importantly, is proud of who she is.



Celebration & Awards Evening

2024

This year's Celebration & Awards Evening was an incredible night of live musical and dance performances at the prestigious Bridgewater Hall and a celebration of academic and extra-curricular achievement.

The event is the jewel in the School's crown – particularly in this our 150th year - and an amazing showcase of all of things that make Manchester High School for Girls' students, staff and community so remarkable.

With a theme of Aspiration, this year's event showed MHSG at its absolute best, celebrating each and every member of our richly diverse community.

We were joined by esteemed guests, including Guest of Honour, Barrister and MHSG alumna Harini Iyengar.

Ms Iyengar discussed the importance of steering your own course, and not living your life by the hopes and dreams others may have of you.

Addressing students, she said: "Now that I am at least half-way through my life, my advice to you is to aspire to be the captain of your ship. If you want a happy and healthy life, first of all, you need to decide for yourself what course to steer. Do not live your life trying to fulfil other people's aspirations for you.

"Second, you must expect to meet some stormy weather which throws you off course. Do not live your life expecting it all to be plain sailing and thinking that you have failed just because you have to keep on changing your plans.

"Third, you must remember to enjoy the view as you sail along. Do not become so obsessed with your long-term aspirations that you forget to have fun today."

All of our prize winners and the students who celebrated their examination successes that evening are a real credit to the School.

Our Warburton Prize winner, Sophia, gave a stunning solo piano performance of Les Adieux Sonata Op.81a, No. 26, by Beethoven. Our orchestras, choirs and dancers performed incredible pieces on stage and our Head Girl Team delivered moving and insightful speeches, and were remarkable ambassadors for the School's student body.

Celebration & Awards Evening 2024, as it is every year, was so moving and such a resounding success thanks to all of the invaluable contributions continually made to MHSG – from the students, staff, governors, alumnae, friends and our wider whole school community.



"Do not live your life expecting it to all be plain sailing and thinking that you have failed just because you have to keep on changing your plans."

- Harini Iyengar, Barrister & Alumna

School News

Arm Tech Visit

All of our pupils hugely benefitted from a very special visit from Software & Hardware Engineers from Arm Technology!

Our Sixth Formers & Senior students enjoyed a question and answer session on all things AI, Technology and working as a woman in the industry.

Our Prep pupils enjoyed a robotics workshop, learning about algorithms and programming.

Thank you so much to the whole Arm team for the fascinating sessions.



Year 7 Lakeside Residential

Our Year 7s had a fantastic time at their residential trip at Lakeside.

They enjoyed team-building exercises, problem-solving games and getting to know their classmates.

There were smiles all around, despite the mud!



'Les Miserables' with MGS & WGS

Huge congratulations to our senior students, who performed fantastic renditions of Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables', alongside students at The Manchester Grammar School & Withington Girls' School in October.

Jasmin Paris Run in Edinburgh

Recently, some of our current pupils had the privilege of meeting and running with our very own alumna, Jasmin Paris, in Edinburgh (following our Bursary Ball auction over the summer).

Jasmin (Class 2002), was the first woman to ever complete the gruelling Barkley Marathons in Arizona earlier this year - running for over 59hrs, without sleep and scaling the equivalent of Mount Everest twice.

Our current pupils asked her lots of questions about her time at MHSG and everyone had a fantastic time.

Thank you again, Jasmin!



The Infamous Henry VIII

Thank you so much to our wonderful PTA for funding a fantastic History workshop for our Year 11s, J6 & S6 with the one and only Henry VIII!

Safe to say, everyone enjoyed the session and seeing their learning being brought to life!

Battle of Hastings Re-enactment

Our Year 7s had an absolute ball re-enacting the infamous Battle of Hastings out on our lawn as part of their History lessons.

Thank you, as ever, to the incomparable Miss Martin, Mr Clarke, Mrs Troth & Miss Welsby, for their dedicated organisation and acting skills!

Year 11 Study Day

Our Year 11s had a dedicated study day, with sessions from our SEN Co-ordinator, Mrs Ripper, on exam revision techniques and our school counsellor, Miss Vora, on managing exam stress.

Parents also attended a guided session on how to support their children through their exams.



Celebrating Diversity at MHSG

One of our School Values is Individuality. It has been a busy time for our students and staff celebrating this across the whole School community.

This academic year's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) captains have now been appointed and are busy planning events and discussions. Congratulations to Hadia, Jumanah, Devananda, Merwa, Ameerah, Serena, Meerab & Amelie.

Their role is to lead on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion events within school, liaise with form groups, listen to feedback and ideas, attend form DEI forums and help shape the School's direction on all things DEI from a student perspective.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Alumnae Committee

These meetings allow alumnae and senior staff to discuss important DEI issues and are open to MHSG alumnae, former staff and friends of the School.

All meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams. To take part, please contact development@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk.



DEI Captains



Faith & Secular Assemblies

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Charter

Our School has produced a DEI Charter, with the input of all key stakeholders - including students, staff and alumnae. This can be viewed in full on our website.

Events

In the first half term of this academic year alone, we have enjoyed visits from a Rabbi, for Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot, celebrated Black History Month with a series of assemblies featuring guest speaker Bee Zulu, and more.

Our DEI captains will lead a number of events across the rest of the academic year.

Last year, we celebrated Lunar New Year, Eid, Diwali, International Women's Day, Pride and LGBTQ+ History Month and many more as a School community, and we look forward to celebrating many more festivals and events.



Black History Month



Rabbi Visits

Manchester High School for Girls Preparatory Department is Changing its Name

We have some exciting news!

From 6th January 2025, the Manchester High School for Girls Preparatory Department will officially be renamed the Manchester High School for Girls, Preparatory School.

Head of Preparatory, Mrs Samantha Gibbons, said: "We believe that this small but significant adjustment strengthens our identity within the broader Manchester High School for Girls' community and will further reinforce the continuity and quality of education that our families value.

"As you are undoubtedly aware, Manchester High School for Girls is an institution that has a rich history and an enduring commitment to the education and development of girls. Indeed, the assertion of our founders was to 'impart to the girls the very best education which can be given, and fit them for any future before them.'

"By aligning the name of the Preparatory School with the Senior School, we are formally recognising that we

are part of an outstanding all-through school that fosters excellence, from the youngest learners in the Preparatory School to the accomplished young women in our Senior School."

While the Preparatory Department's name will evolve, its core values, teaching methods, and commitment to girls' education will remain unchanged.

We will continue to nurture a warm, caring, and stimulating environment that fosters confidence, creativity, and a love of learning, ensuring every girl reaches her full potential.

Mrs Gibbons added: "We are excited for this next chapter in our school's journey and look forward to continuing to work in partnership with everyone in the MHSG community."

"By aligning the name of the Preparatory School with the Senior School, we are formally recognising that we are part of an outstanding all-through school that fosters excellence, from the youngest learners in the Preparatory School to the accomplished young women in our Senior School."



Our Librarians' Recommendations

For our pupils from Reception to Year 2 we recommend:



THE DICTIONARY STORY

by Sam Winston & Oliver Jeffers

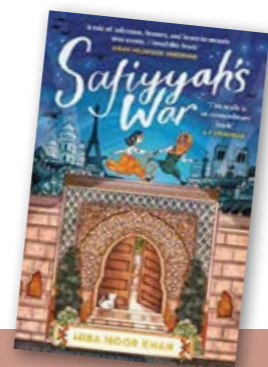
Dictionary wishes she could tell a story just like the other books. So one day she decides to bring her words to life. How exciting it is, she thinks, that an adventure is finally happening on her very own pages!

But what will she do when everything gets out of control, all in a jumble, and her characters collide causing the most enormous tantrum to explode.

This isn't what she wanted at all! How on earth will she find sense in all this chaos? Her friend Alphabet knows exactly what to do and sings a song that brings calm and order to Dictionary's pages once again.

- This story manages to reimagine the dictionary by integrating narrative elements within its entries, turning definitions into a playful, artistic, and literary experience.
- Jeffers' whimsical illustrations and Winston's intricate typography complement each other resulting in a book that is both visually striking and intellectually stimulating.
- The story encourages readers to think about language, definitions, and the power of words in a more creative and expansive way. It inspires curiosity and language in young readers whilst challenging the perceptions of more seasoned readers.
- This book offers a fresh and engaging way to experience both language and art and illustrates the power of language, how words can be both functional and poetic, and how storytelling can emerge from even the most ordinary sources, like a dictionary. It challenges the reader to think about language not just as a tool, but as an art form.

For our pupils in Years 3-6 we recommend:



SAFIYYAH'S WAR

by Hibah Noor Khan

War comes to the streets of Paris and Safiyyah's life changes for ever. Her best friend's family have fled, and the bombing makes her afraid to leave the mosque where she lives. But when her father is arrested by the Nazis for his secret Resistance work, it falls to Safiyyah to run the dangerous errands around the city. It's not long before hundreds of persecuted Jews seek sanctuary at the mosque. Can Safiyyah find the courage to enter the treacherous catacombs under Paris and lead the Jews to safety?

- 'Safiyyah's War' has been shortlisted for several book awards including the Yoto Carnegies 2024 Shortlist and has been named the 2024 Jhalak Children's and YA Book Prize winner as well as the Indie Book Award 2024.
- With a focus on family and community, Safiyyah's War emphasises the importance of helping others during difficult times.
- 'Safiyyah's War' is inspired by real-life events and offers a fresh perspective on World War II by paying tribute to the wartime resistance fighters of the Grand Paris Mosque. Noor combines historical accuracy with emotional storytelling and provides a voice to a community often missing in World War II historical fiction.
- It is a compelling story with themes of resilience, bravery, and determination in the face of adversity. The story highlights how ordinary people, including children, can show extraordinary courage during times of crisis, offering an inspiring message to readers.

For students in Years 7-11 we recommend:



SEVEN MILLION SUNFLOWERS

by Malcolm Duffy

Escaping war is only half the battle as the Kovalenko family swap Ukrainian dangers for life with a British family. 15-year-old Kateryno and her family live in Kharkiv. Their lives are shattered when on February 24th 2022 the Russian army invades. Their apartment block is struck by a missile. After weeks living in their basement, Kateryno, her mother, and brother, decide to leave, joining seven million Ukrainian refugees. They come to England and meet their host family, the Hawkins. But their new beginning brings a whole new set of problems.

- 'Seven Million Sunflowers' offers a poignant and relevant exploration of war, displacement, and the strength of human spirit.
- The story features a brave and determined protagonist in Kateryna, a 13-year-old Ukrainian girl navigating the challenges of being displaced by war.
- The story comprises an engaging and emotional storyline following Kateryna's journey from war-torn Ukraine to safety in England, making it a significant read for those interested in understanding the human side of political events.
- Despite addressing challenging themes such as war and displacement, themes of empathy, understanding, and support across different cultures are also there to illustrate the importance of human connections.

For our Sixth Formers we recommend:



WHERE THE HEART SHOULD BE

by Sarah Crossan

Ireland, 1846. Nell is working as a scullery maid in the kitchen of the Big House. Once she loved school and books and dreaming. But there's not much choice of work when the land grows food that rots in the earth. Now she is scrubbing, peeling, washing, sweeping for Sir Philip Wicken, the man who owns her home, her family's land, their crops, everything. His dogs are always well fed, even as famine sets in. Upstairs in the Big House, where Nell is forbidden to enter, is Johnny Browning, newly arrived from England: the young nephew who will one day inherit it all. And as hunger and disease run rampant all around them, a spark of life and hope catches light when Nell and Johnny find each other. This is a love story, and the story of a people being torn apart.

- This is a touching and realistic portrayal of the struggles faced by those who experience homelessness, especially young people, the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of love, family, and support in overcoming life's challenges.
- Bestselling author, Sarah Crossan, evokes deep emotions and delves into complex emotional terrain exploring themes of love, family, and identity with sensitivity.
- The story is skilfully written in verse and packed with nuance to build a vivid and immersive story.
- Packed full of emotional intensity and powerfully delivered, this will stay with the reader for a long time after it is finished.

The Impact of Early Smartphone Exposure on the Mental Health of Young People

By Mrs Samantha Gibbons – Head of Preparatory School

Those of us old enough to remember the 70s and 80s will recall the time when ‘fast food’ emerged in the US with the expansion of McDonalds and thereafter swept the world. More commonly referred to as ultra-processed food today, we now have a much greater understanding of the science which has proven that the consumption of these products is associated with a higher risk of succumbing to many diseases. Dense with calories, convenient to use, highly palatable and perniciously addictive, we are all familiar with the temptation to eat these items and the consequential accelerating rates of obesity in the developed world. Furthermore, these products are manufactured by enormous organisations with an eye on profitability more than ‘genuine’ health and well-being. I use the word ‘genuine’ because some of the so called ‘health foods’ advertised ubiquitously, are amongst the worst offenders.

I think that there are many parallels to be drawn from the revolution in the way we eat, to the advent of smart technologies on the health of our young people. I do not mean to exclude adults from this assertion, but I am concerned with the education of young children, and this is where my focus lies. The advent of Smart Technologies has, since its inception, been peddled by large corporations as super helpful, convenient and intuitively easy to use. We have been told that they can help us become more creative, smarter and faster. Tapping into our primitive

brains and activating the dopamine system, the millions of applications and social media platforms at our disposal have created a compulsion which is very hard to resist, not unlike that triggered by ultra-processed food.

In today’s hyper-connected world, it is hard to imagine a life without smartphones and they are not going to go away. These devices have revolutionized the way we communicate, learn, and engage with the world. However, as parents, and educators, we must seriously consider the impact of early smartphone exposure on the mental health of young people. With growing research into the developmental and psychological effects of screen time, we are gaining insights into how early and excessive use of smartphones can influence the well-being of children as they approach adolescence. Understanding this impact is critical if we are to foster environments that promote healthy development.



The Rising Tide of Smartphone Use

It is not uncommon to see toddlers swiping through screens or staring at YouTube. This trend raises important questions about the long-term consequences for mental health, especially as children grow into adolescence, a period marked by significant emotional and psychological development.

A growing body of research indicates that the use of smartphones in early childhood can have a detrimental impact on mental well-being. These effects can manifest in a number of ways from increased anxiety and depression to difficulties in attention, self-regulation, and sleep patterns. The relationship between early smartphone exposure and these challenges is complex, often involving a range of social, emotional, and neurological factors.

Developmental Challenges and Emotional Regulation

One of the most concerning aspects of early smartphone exposure is its impact on emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in an appropriate and balanced manner. This skill is critical for healthy interpersonal relationships and overall mental health. The area of the brain, which governs decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, is still developing throughout childhood and adolescence.

When young children spend excessive time interacting with digital devices, they may become reliant on external stimuli for distraction or emotional comfort. Instead of learning how to manage emotions through interaction with caregivers, peers, or through self-reflection, they may turn to a device for instant gratification or escape.

Social Skills and Interpersonal Relationships

Another critical aspect of early development is the formation of social skills. Much of a child's ability to engage with others, develop empathy, and build meaningful relationships is learned through face-to-face interactions with family, peers, and caregivers. When children spend too much time in front of screens, particularly smartphones, they miss out on these crucial social experiences. This can hinder their ability to form close relationships and engage in cooperative play, both of which are essential for healthy social development.



Anxiety, Depression, and the "Comparison Trap"

As children grow older and become more active on social media, the risks associated with early smartphone exposure evolve. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of social media. These platforms often present an idealised version of life, where users showcase their best moments, achievements, and appearances. For young people, this can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-esteem as they compare their own lives to the seemingly perfect lives of others. Indeed, this aspect of social media disproportionately affects girls, who spend more time than their male peers using these platforms.

Striking a Balance: The Role of Schools and Families

While it is clear that early and excessive smartphone use can have detrimental effects on the mental health of young people, it is important to recognise that technology itself is not inherently harmful. Smartphones offer numerous educational benefits, providing access to information, fostering creativity, and facilitating communication. The key is finding a balance between healthy screen time and opportunities for real-world interaction, physical activity, and unstructured play.

At Manchester High School for Girls, we fully support the principles of the Smartphone Free Childhood Movement, which recommends delaying smartphone use, or at the very least, limiting exposure until the age of 14. Mobile phones of any sort are not permitted in the Preparatory Department, but for those girls who need to be contacted while travelling, we advocate the use of 'brick phones' as a safer alternative. Recently, we were privileged to host Dr. Susie Davies, founder of PAPA (Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adolescents), who conducted informative workshops with our Years 5 and 6 students. Her visit culminated in a valuable evening presentation for parents, addressing the risks of phone addiction and offering practical strategies to manage it.

Fundamentally, we have a responsibility as educators to help prepare our pupils for their future world, ensuring that they have the life skills needed to interact positively with those around them. Helping our pupils to avoid unhealthy habits lies at the heart of a truly holistic education.

Prep Adventures

Bone Doctor Visit

Our Year 3 class enjoyed a talk from Dr Zaf Naqui, an orthopaedic hand and wrist surgeon, who came in to talk to them about 'Your Bones And How We Fix Them!' as part of their science lessons.

Thank you so much, Dr Naqui for teaching and inspiring us all so much!



Science Week

Everyone had a fantastic time in Science Week.

They learned about stars, planets, galaxies and made their own constellations, 3D Graphic Artwork and more.

150th Birthday Time Capsule

Pupils have been enjoying planning and preparing to bury a Time Capsule to mark MHSG's 150th Birthday this year.

As part of their Time Capsule Club, our youngest pupils have been drawing pictures of their uniform and sharing their experiences of life in our Prep.



Mini Model United Nations

Year 6 pupils enjoyed fierce debates as part of their Mini Model United Nations sessions with our Sixth Formers.

Thank you so much to our Year 13s for teaching and inspiring the next generation of diplomats!



Robotics

Our Junior pupils have been enjoying their Robotics Club sessions so far this year.

They have been programming their little buddies to follow instructions (including glowing in the dark!) from control panels and undertake obstacle courses.



New House & Sports Captains

Congratulations to our newly elected Preparatory Department House Captains and Sports Captains.

They will be in post for the 2024-25 academic year and will act as ambassadors for their respective houses/sports throughout.

Well done, everyone!



Harvest Festival

We all enjoyed our Preparatory Department's Harvest Festival in October.

Thank you to everyone for their fantastic donations of food and toiletries, which went to the wonderful Emmeline's Pantry.

This assembly was also part our Prep's work as a Unicef Rights Respecting School. Article 24 states that everyone has the right to health, water, food and safety.



A Year of Celebrations – MHSFG at 150

This year has been a momentous one for Manchester High School for Girls. To celebrate turning 150, we have hosted a vast array of fantastic events, involving all members of our School Community.

We feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to mark the occasion with so many alumnae, former staff and friends of the School returning to Grangethorpe Road and joining us at our events in Manchester and London, throughout 2024.

Thank you so much to all of you, whether you attended in person or supported our events in another way, for making 2024 such a brilliant year in the history of MHSFG.

You can read more about just some of the events we have hosted so far throughout the year – with more to come!

Founders' Day

On 19th January, we hosted our flagship Founders' Day celebrations, both at the prestigious Bridgewater Hall and later back at Grangethorpe Road.

With stunning live musical and dance performances from our student body, fascinating insight from our Archivists and brilliant speeches, the ceremony at the Bridgewater was most definitely one to remember.

Later that afternoon, we hosted our alumnae and former staff lunch in the Main School Hall and it was truly wonderful to welcome back so many familiar faces to MHSFG.



Fundraising Launch

What better date to launch our annual Bursary & Capital Fundraising scheme for our 150th year, than on MHSFG's Founders' Day itself?

On 19th January, following the festivities at both the Bridgewater Hall and at Grangethorpe Road, we welcomed a panel of alumnae who had all been in receipt of a Bursary during their time at MHSFG.

Hearing their inspirational life stories and the impact MHSFG's Bursary Fund had had upon them, their families and their lives was truly humbling.

A huge thanks goes to all of our alumnae for sharing their experiences with us that evening.

We also heard about MHSFG's plans for the next few years; including raising funds for new student spaces.

If you would like to find out more about how to donate to the MHSFG Bursary Fund or Capital Fundraising programme; please visit our website at manchesterhigh.co.uk/support-us.



Founders' Lecture: Emma Barnett (Radio 4 Today Programme Presenter and MHSFG alumna, Class of 2002)

We were fortunate enough to be joined by MHSFG alumna and journalist, Emma Barnett later in January 2024.

She spoke to a group of current students in our Head Mistress' office, inspiring the next generation of budding reporters and fielding their questions, before taking to the Hall stage and addressing a larger audience of parents, alumnae, staff and former staff at MHSFG.

Her candid discussions about life after MHSFG, the impact the School had had upon her, and the reality of being a woman and mother in journalism today was both profound and insightful.

Thank you so much to Emma for coming back to MHSFG to deliver such a fascinating lecture, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Back in Time for School Day

In February, our staff donned their best period attire and well and truly got into character to ensure our students enjoyed an authentic experience of lessons from years gone by.

Complete with botany classes in the Biology Department, sock darning in Textiles, Victorian Maths classes, a traditional tuck shop at breaktime and food from across the years for lunch, everyone had a fantastic day!



MHSG Iftar

In the Spring, we welcomed hundreds of MHSG parents, friends and staff to join us for a very special Ramadan Iftar event – open to all faiths and none.

The wonderful event saw MHSG parent, solicitor and broadcaster Ayesha Nayyar take to the stage and share her experience as a Muslim woman across multiple industries.

We were also fortunate enough to be joined by the then Greater Manchester Municipal Mayor, Mrs Yasmine Dar, who chaired a panel discussion with our current students on their experiences both at MHSG and beyond.

Following the call to prayer, everyone enjoyed breaking the fast with fantastic food provided by Zouk.

A wonderful evening was had by all!



London Supper Club at the House of Lords

We were thrilled to welcome so many alumnae to a very special edition of our annual London Supper Club in the Peers' Dining Room at the House of Lords in London this Spring.

With a fantastic range of guests joining us from across the

years, we enjoyed outstanding fine dining, silver service and catching up in such historic surroundings.

It was a truly remarkable evening in the hallowed setting of the House of Lords, with the School's history as a key UK institution on show for all to see.

Many thanks to everyone who joined us that evening, it really was incredibly special.



MHSG's 150th Birthday Ball, Lowry Hotel

The flagship event of MHSG's 150th Birthday celebrations was a roaring success in June.

We hosted a glamorous ball at the Lowry Hotel, featuring our host, radio presenter and MHSG alumna, Michelle Eagleton.

Michelle was a fantastic MC, with fun games and activities for all guests to enjoy throughout the night, alongside a brilliant live auction of some stellar prizes, all in aid of the MHSG Bursary Fund.

We enjoyed fantastic food, followed by plenty of live music and danced well into the wee, small hours of the morning.

A phenomenal £20,000 was raised on the night itself, with many more donations flooding in since.

A huge thank you to all of our guests for attending and making the evening such a wonderful celebration of what makes MHSG so special.

Borneo World Challenge Trek

Our Senior students experienced the trip of a lifetime in the final weeks of the Summer Term. They travelled to the jungles of Borneo and took part in vital conservation projects, planted trees, met orangutans, supported turtle hatchlings and trekked through the rainforest; working hard together to overcome challenges along the way.



Summer Extravaganza

We hosted a fantastic fete-style Summer Extravaganza for our whole school community in the summer term.

With a live DJ, world food trucks, henna stall, chocolate tombolas, archery activities, an ice cream van, tuck shop, plant store, jewellery stand, cake stall, artisan arts and craft shops and more, the afternoon was a brilliant one for all of the family.

A highlight of the event was the charity 'Staff vs Parents' football match on the astroturf, which was as competitive as can be imagined!

The Grand Reunion

Our annual alumnae reunion was back once again this year, but this time it was even bigger and better than ever to celebrate the School's 150th Birthday.

It was truly wonderful to see so many of our former pupils and staff return to Grangethorpe Road for what turned out to be an incredibly nostalgic and special celebration of our community.

There was a fascinating Archive display of items and memories for everyone to share, thanks to our wonderful Archivists, Mrs Gwen Hobson & Mrs Pamela Roberts; including former MHSG sports kits and uniform items for alumnae to try on!



If you'd like to see more photos of all of our 150th birthday celebrations in 2024, please visit www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterhigh/.

Investing in Student Spaces

by Mrs Zabina Kosar-Ahmed, Director of Marketing, Admissions & Development

Investing in the new social heart of the School

150 years on from the opening of Manchester High School for Girls on the first site at Oxford Road, the next stage of investment at our Grangethorpe Road site will be a much needed Outdoor Wellbeing Hub.

Giving students better access to nature and creating a space for performances, assemblies, social gatherings and talks, this space would be vital for their cultural development, becoming the new social heart of the School.

Our plans for a versatile canopy design, producing a space for up to 300 people, also means that this would be used for sports like table tennis, and provide an alternative to our busy Dining Room – allowing students to eat and socialise outdoors, whilst connecting with the environment around them.



It is the one facility our current students say is missing from the School. Can you help us to build the spaces that foster their independence and creativity?

We are looking to fundraise for this much needed space, with our PTA raising additional funds to invest in the equipment needed to create a unique, multi-use environment.

You can sponsor a seat in the Outdoor Wellbeing Hub for £300 to leave a lasting legacy of your support for the School.

We welcome conversations with individuals or corporate sponsors who would like to demonstrate their support for the development of the new social heart of Manchester High.

Please email me via development@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk to find out more or make a donation.



Invest in our Reflection Space

Founded on the principle of welcoming talented girls of all religions and beliefs and of none, we continue to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion, crucial in building the character of our students.

This focus means we are also looking to invest in a Reflection Space, to reflect our commitment to every child. Whether a student is considering the actions of the previous year during Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish celebration of the New Year, praying during the Muslim festival of Ramadan, coming together with others in Christian Union meetings, celebrating together during Diwali for our Hindu and Seikh communities, or just finding time to reflect in silence, this would be a special, private space for all of our students.

We are in the process of assessing design options for a sustainable timber structure. This will be nestled close to the Dining Room, easily accessible to all students.

Can you help us to build a space that helps build pupils' character and confidence?

We estimate costs of around £250,000 to complete this project. We welcome donations over £300.

With unprecedented financial pressures on schools, we are simply unable to continue to provide these essential student spaces without the support of our generous Manchester High community.

Please email me at development@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk to find out more or make a donation.



Play your part in the evolution and progress of Manchester High for the next 150 years.

MHSG's 150th Birthday Merchandise



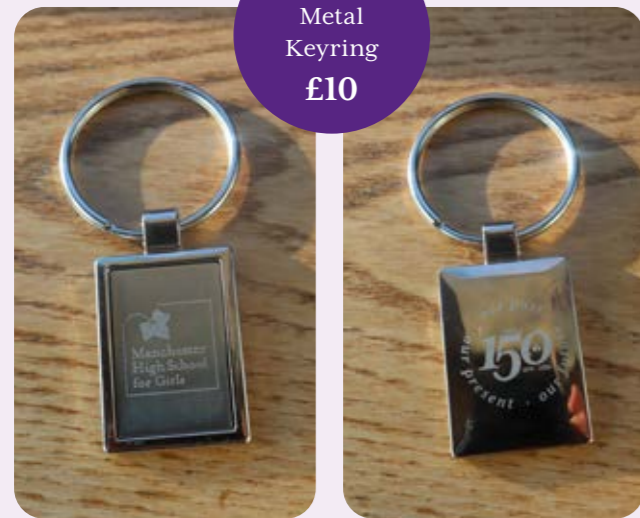
MHSG Artist's Print
£15



Coffee Mug
£5



Fridge Magnet
£3



Engraved Metal Keyring
£10



Metal Pin Badge
£5



Tote Bag
£5

Email marketing@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk to place an order.

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RAISE A GLASS, ENJOY THE GIN AND HELP THE MHSG BURSARY FUND!

Please note, MHSG Gin can only be purchased in person at School events.

150th Birthday Timeline

By Mrs Gwen Hobson & Mrs Pamela Roberts

23rd March 1873

The first recorded meeting of subscribers to the Manchester Model Girls' School was held in the Mayor's Parlour in Manchester Town Hall.

By 1874, the School was officially named The Manchester High School for Girls.



Miss Elizabeth Day was chosen as the first Head Mistress of the Manchester High School for Girls.

July 1873



1877

The Preparatory Department opened in a converted Victorian town house at 274 Oxford Road.

19 January 1874

Manchester High School for Girls opened for the first time in two converted Victorian houses at 369 and 371 Portland Terrace, Oxford Road.

Three of the first four women to graduate from the University of Manchester were former pupils of MHSg.

Old girl, Alice Cooke, became the University's first woman fellow in 1890.



1881

By 1881, the School had outgrown the original houses on Portland Terrace. The governors commissioned a brand-new building on Dover Street, opposite the University.

The new School had science laboratories and a gymnasium.



1886



1893

Christabel, Sylvia and Adela Pankhurst became pupils at MHSg.

1898

Sara Burstall became Manchester High's second Head Mistress.



1907

The British Federation of University Women, the first organisation for women graduates in the UK, and later called the British Federation of Women Graduates, was founded at MHSg.



1913

Sara Burstall and some of her staff and old girls went on the 1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage, as part of the campaign for votes for women.



Dr Mary Clarke became Manchester High's third Head Mistress.

1924



1914 - 1918

Manchester High School supported the war effort throughout WWI.

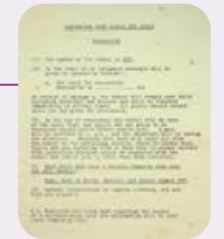
1936

The School bought the 11.5 acre site at Grangethorpe, including Grangethorpe House and the Grangethorpe Military Hospital buildings, from Manchester Royal Infirmary, for conversion into a new school.



1939

The School was evacuated from Dover Street to Cheadle Hulme School in September 1939.



1941

The School moved into rented buildings in Didsbury - Broomfield, Central Road and Warley - until Grangethorpe could be rebuilt.



1945

Miss Agnes Bozman was appointed as Manchester High's 4th Head Mistress.



1949

The School began a staged return to Grangethorpe Road.



September 1940

The School moved into its new home on Grangethorpe Road.

December 1940



Continued overleaf...

1951 The last senior forms returned to Grangethorpe and, in 1952, the Preparatory Department moved from its wartime premises in Warley into Broomfield.

1953 The sculpture, 'Threshold', by Mitzi Cunliffe, designer of the BAFTA mask, was unveiled. It commemorates the courageous leadership of Dr Clarke and her staff who triumphed over wartime disaster to plan for the future.

1959 Miss Kathleen L. Cottrell became the School's 5th Head Mistress.

1962 MHSG was one of the three schools in England to take part in the pilot of the Nuffield Physics Scheme, adding electronics and nuclear physics to the curriculum. The new Bursall Library was officially opened.

1967-1968 The swimming pool was built.

1971 A second floor was added to the East Wing with classroom and modern languages accommodation.

1973 The Preparatory Department returned to Grangethorpe from Broomfield and Star Block was built for the Infant Department.

1975 Miss Mary N. Blake became the 6th Head Mistress of MHSG.

1982 Work began on the new Music House. It was officially opened in 1984.

1983 Miss Mary M. Moon became the School's 7th Head Mistress.

1989 A new block of science laboratories was built.

1991 The new reception area was officially opened.

1994 Miss Elizabeth M. Diggory became the School's 8th Head Mistress.

1997-1998 A new all-weather hockey pitch was installed, and the School Hall was refurbished.

1998 Mrs Christine Lee-Jones became the School's 9th Head Mistress.

1999 Manchester High celebrated its 125th birthday. The Princess Royal visited the School in April 1999.

2007 The new Sports Hall was opened by Dame Kelly Holmes.

2009 Mrs A. Claire Hewitt became the School's 10th Head Mistress.

2012 New Preparatory Department buildings were officially opened by Beth Tweddle MBE, Olympic gymnast.

2014 The Princess Royal opened the new Sixth Form Centre.


2017 The new school uniform, reflecting the colours of the suffragette movement, was introduced.

2020 Mrs Helen F. Jeys became Manchester High's 11th Head Mistress.

2020 On Friday 20th March 2020, Manchester High closed for the first time in its history because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown. Online teaching began on Monday 23rd March.

2020 The new Wellbeing Hub was opened.

2024 Manchester High School for Girls celebrates its 150th Birthday.



MHSG Suffragette History

Manchester High and Votes for Women

The campaign for the improvement of female education at the end of the nineteenth century was part of the wider movement of political and social reform. Many of those who played a leading part in the campaign for equal education for women were also supporters of female suffrage. They included Emily Davies, founder of Girton College, Cambridge, Dorothea Beale, Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College and founder of St Hilda's College, Oxford, and Frances Mary Buss, founder of North London Collegiate School.

The Suffragists and Suffragettes were the two main groups fighting for women's suffrage; both groups have links with Manchester High.

The Suffragists, led by Millicent Fawcett, campaigned using peaceful methods such as petitions and lobbying.

The Suffragettes were determined to win the right to vote for women by any means. Their militant campaigning sometimes included unlawful and violent acts which attracted much publicity.

Manchester High's most famous former pupils were the suffragettes, Christabel, Sylvia and Adela Pankhurst, who joined the School in 1893. Their mother, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst, was a leading figure in the suffragette movement and their father, Dr Richard Pankhurst, was a vigorous supporter of women's rights.

Christabel followed her father into the Law and was the first woman to graduate in Law from the University of Manchester and with a first class degree. Sylvia studied art in Manchester, and their younger sister, Adela, was a prolific contributor to the school magazine.

All three girls joined their mother when she founded the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 to continue the struggle to win the right to vote for women.



Miss Dorothea Beale



Millicent Fawcett



Emmeline Pankhurst



Miss Frances Mary Buss



The Pankhurst Sisters

Sara Burstall's Dilemma

Sara Burstall, the second Head Mistress of MHSG (1898 -1924) was a strong supporter of the suffrage movement, but, as Head Mistress, she realised that 'the head of an endowed public school... could not in honour set an example of breaking the law.'

In her book, 'Retrospect and Prospect', she explained: 'personally, I had been born a suffragist, for my parents both believed in votes for women, but I had never felt able to do anything of a public character.'

However, at the Headmistresses' Conference at Manchester High School in 1908, a resolution for women's suffrage was carried by a large majority:

'...the Association of Headmistresses, assembled in conference at Manchester, desires to place on record its strong conviction that the grant of the parliamentary franchise to women is both just and expedient.'



Sara Burstall in 1905



1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage Routes

Miss Burstall wrote later:

'It is difficult today for women to realise what a bold step this was. Perhaps there was something in the air of Manchester, which had always led in the suffrage movement, that encouraged the members of the conference!'

In July 1913, Sara Burstall and some of her staff, all wearing academic gowns, took part in the Manchester to Stockport leg of the nationwide Suffrage Pilgrimage converging on London, to show support for votes for women.

Miss Burstall felt that it would be correct for her to go on the pilgrimage, especially as her age entitled her to a seat on a lorry! She recalled:

'Crowds watched us, sometimes with hootings, but as we came into Stockport there were showers of stones, fortunately small, from a crowd of women. No one took any harm, but the incident is perhaps worth recording.'



1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage

Upcoming Events

for alumnae and friends

Founders' Day Celebration & artwork unveilings

Date: Monday 20th January 2025

Time: 9.45am arrival

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: Free

This event will mark the end of our sesquicentenary celebrations with a special Founders' Day assembly, followed by light refreshments and the unveiling of two exciting MHSG artworks: the specially-commissioned 'MHSG at 150' photograph collage by renowned artist, Charlotte Newson, and a renovated tapestry by the School's second Head Mistress, Sara Burstall.



Joint Reunion with Manchester Grammar School & Withington Girls' School

Date: Thursday 6th February 2025

Time: 6.30pm onwards

Venue: The Escapologist

Address: 35 Earlham Street, Covent Garden, WC2H 9LD

Price: £15

Join your fellow Manchester High School for Girls, Manchester Grammar School & Withington Girls' School alumni for a memorable reunion on Thursday 6th February 2025. We look forward to reconnecting with many of you at The Escapologist, Covent Garden, described by Time Out Magazine as 'one of London's coolest bars'.

Tickets are limited, and priced at £15, which includes a welcome drink and canapés. A cash bar will also be available.



Founders' Lecture with Nazir Afzal OBE

Date: Tuesday 25th February 2025

Time: 6.15pm for 7.00pm lecture

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: Free

We are honoured to welcome Nazir Afzal OBE to Manchester High to deliver the 2025 Founders' Lecture. Mr Afzal is a former Chief Crown Prosecutor for North West England and became Chancellor of The University of Manchester in 2022. Join us for what promises to be a fantastic, insightful lecture and discussion.



Ivy Leaf Society Lunch with the Head Mistress

Date: Thursday 3rd April 2025

Time: 12.15pm

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: Free

An exclusive, invitation-only lunch with the Head Mistress for members of our Ivy Leaf Society, who have informed us that they have left a gift to MHSG in their will. If you have included MHSG in your will, please contact the Development Team to join the Ivy Leaf Society.



MHSG Eid Celebration

Date: Friday 13th June 2025

Time: 5.00pm

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: TBC



Join us for a wonderful evening of food, conversation and celebration. Those of all faiths and none are welcome.

Fundraising Dinner with Aneel Mussarat

Date: Saturday 28th June 2025

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: The Midland Hotel

Address: 16 Peter Street, Manchester, M60 2DS

Price: £1,500 prominent table / £900 table / £90 individual



We are delighted to be hosting a black-tie gala dinner alongside prominent Manchester businessman and philanthropist, Aneel Mussarat. Aneel also has strong personal ties to Manchester High, strengthening his commitment to raising money for the Bursary Fund.

Set in the iconic Midland Hotel, the evening will feature a sparkling drinks reception, a three-course dinner, live entertainment from our talented students, a charity auction, and dancing late into the night.

Summer Extravaganza

Date: Saturday 5th July 2025

Time: 11.00am to 4.00pm

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: TBC



After the success of last year's event, we are looking forward to another fun-filled day in MHSG's grounds, jam-packed with summer stalls, activities, games and refreshments – something for all the family!

Alumnae Reunion

Date: Saturday 27th September 2025

Time: 11.00am to 3.00pm

Venue: MHSG

Address: Grangethorpe Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Price: £35



If you left MHSG in a year ending in a '5', this is your year to gather your friends and celebrate your decade reunions! As always, the reunion is not limited to those celebrating decades; we welcome all alumnae and former staff to join us regardless of when you said goodbye to MHSG, so why not get a group of friends together? The day promises to be filled with nostalgia as you reconnect and reminisce with old friends and former teachers and explore those once familiar buildings.

Tickets for all events, including those that are free of charge, must be booked in advance by visiting www.ticketsource.co.uk/MHSG

Alternatively, please contact the Development Team:
development@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk or 0161 224 0447



Scan to book

MHSG Lives Remembered

Brenda Mills (MHSG 1933-1940)

Brenda attended MHSG on a free place, having come first in Oldham in the 11+ examination. She went on to study Maths and Physics at the University of Liverpool, where she took on roles as Secretary then Lady President of the Student Physical Society, and Treasurer of the Guild of Students. Brenda became a Maths teacher, working at Chadderton Grammar School, Broughton High School and Oldham Hulme Grammar School. Her teaching also took her further afield to Johannesburg and Durban in South Africa, where it appears a talent for art was stimulated. Her outstanding working references pay tribute to her energy and enthusiasm, her friendliness and courtesy, and her lively and attractive personality – all glowing characteristics to which those who remember her will attest.

Brenda passed away on 3rd January 2023, aged 100. A member of our Ivy Leaf Society, she left a legacy to MHSG that will benefit future generations of pupils through bursaries and school facilities.



Marie Grant (MHSG Governor, 2002-2021)

It is with great sadness that we share that Marie Grant passed away on 25th July 2023, aged 86. Marie was a friend and Governor at Manchester High School for Girls for twenty years. As an experienced Head of Preparatory schools herself, Marie brought so much skill, understanding and empathy to her role. She was exceptionally knowledgeable about children and about how they enjoyed learning; she was a font of knowledge when it came to safeguarding and she was a huge support to the Governing Body and to the teaching and Senior Leadership Teams at MHSG. Her passion for music and for the Alderley Edge Festival was infectious and she attended so many productions and concerts in her support of the girls. Most importantly, she was a friend to staff and a listening ear; she cared, and will always be remembered with huge fondness.

Marie's generosity and love for MHSG has been extended beyond her lifetime through a gift left in her will to the Bursary Fund, for which we are incredibly grateful.



Margaret Ursula Smith (MHSG 1943-1950)

Margaret was an active member of our alumnae community and will be well-remembered by members of the Manchester branch of the Old Girls' Federation, having served as its President in the late 1990s. Upon leaving MHSG in 1950, Margaret had intended to pursue her interest in art having gained a place at the Royal College of Art. Sadly she was unable to take up her place after her mother passed away suddenly, deciding instead to stay at home with her father. Remaining local, Margaret took a secretarial course and started her working life

at the Manchester Guardian newspaper, which became The Guardian in 1959, as editorial secretary, where she continued working until her retirement. A fierce supporter of women's rights, Margaret was very involved in the Manchester Townswomen's Guild and helped to change and improve the livelihoods of women for the good of society wherever she could. Margaret passed away on 15th February 2023, aged 90, but has continued this commitment to better others' futures through a legacy donation to the MHSG Bursary Fund.

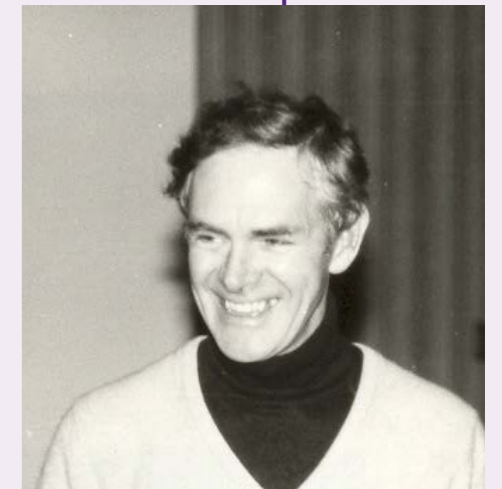
Margaret Latimer (MHSG Staff, 1981-1994)

We are sorry to report that Mrs Margaret Latimer passed away on 14th May 2024, aged 85. Margaret taught in the Chemistry Department from 1981-1994, and many will also remember her as a stalwart of the Thursday Singers.

She was an inspirational teacher, and we are enormously grateful for her contribution to the Manchester High community.

Brian Trueman

Though not a member of MHSG staff himself, Mr Brian Trueman was a well-known member of the Manchester High community through his wife, Mrs Angela Trueman (MHSG 1978-1996), who served as Head of English and Senior Mistress. Mr Trueman was an actor and television presenter, as well as a core member of animation company, Cosgrove Hall Films, where he was a writer for popular children's TV programmes such as Danger Mouse and The Wind in the Willows. At MHSG, he will be remembered for his huge contribution to the success of school drama productions. He gave generously of his time and expertise, and many alumnae will be grateful for his advice and inspiration. Brian passed away after a short illness on 1st September 2024, aged 92.



The Next 150 Years

By Mrs Helen F Jeys, Head Mistress

As a School that prides itself on empowering young women in the 21st century, the question about the ongoing importance of the history of the School is a valid one. However, for me the answer is easy. As Charlie Munger stated, "There is no better teacher than history in determining the future." To illustrate, one of my favourite assemblies is the first that I give to new Year 7 pupils; one in which I talk about the history of the School, the women who have sat in the same seats before the pupils on this, their very first day in Senior School, who have themselves gone on to be agents of change. There is a real feeling in this assembly that pupils understand the legacy and tradition to which they now belong. They understand that, just like those women who have been educated at the School before them, there is no barrier to their success. If Kotska Wallace can be a Principal Engineer at the European Space Agency, then so can they aspire to the same heights! If Sylvia Pankhurst can help bring the vote to the working woman, then they too can stand up for the rights of women in the future.

And I believe that because of reasons such as these, girls' schools, like Manchester High School for Girls, have bright futures ahead. In schools like MHSG, girls flourish in the knowledge that there are no gender barriers to their choice of subject, leadership opportunities are available to them as young women and they have a voice that can be heard. Here, the future leaders, engineers, politicians, musicians, artists and scientists will be educated, confident in the knowledge that glass ceilings are there to be broken.

Recent research completed by the Girls' Schools Association supports these assertions. Indeed, the Chief Executive of the GSA said, in introducing this research:



"The fact is that girls' schools fuel the best futures for young women, from the youngest girl at the start of her school journey to young women at the start of their adult lives as they leave it. Proven repeatedly, a girls-only education powers-up young women to fulfil their full potential and ambitions to be the stateswomen of their own lives and research repeatedly confirms the benefits of girls-only education."

So, what does the research conclude? Well girls in girls' schools consistently achieve better grades in all subjects and outperform girls in other kinds of schools academically. The uptake of sciences is higher – with Biology 40% higher, Chemistry 85% higher, and Maths 86% higher in girls' schools – compared with girls in other schools. Girls in girls' schools are 2.7 times as likely to take Further Maths, and more than twice as likely to take Physics and Computer Science at A-level – compared to girls in other schools. Indeed, Computer Science has seen the largest growth in uptake for girls, with the percentage of girls taking Computer Science doubling in girls' schools.

But our school is not just about the value of academic education; it is also about ensuring that girls have access to the variety of extra-curricular opportunities that enable them to flourish and to be happy. Indeed, there is evidence to conclude that in schools like MHSG, girls play more sport and for the longest time in comparison to any other schools. Furthermore, girls in girls' schools are nearly five times more likely to play cricket and 30% more likely to play football!

What always impresses me about our students by the time they leave the School is their self-confidence, the fact that they are principled and are campaigners for the rights of others. In an environment such as Manchester High, girls grow into confident, rounded young women who have emotional intelligence. They are happy, motivated and possess mental toughness which – in turn – helps them grow into capable, relaxed and able young adults. Their character becomes aligned with the ivy life that symbolises the School; resilient and tenacious.

Sasha, one of our Sixth Form students, has recently had her words about the value of girls' education published in a GSA publication and she summarises so clearly why girls' education should and must continue well into the future:

"Women's education provides us with theatres in which to perform, laboratories to experiment in, closets to hide in, gardens to work in – rooms, houses, mansions, castles in which to fulfil ourselves."

– Sasha, J6.



One of the highlights of our 150th Birthday celebrations was asking our own Preparatory School pupils what they thought the future of girls' education might look like. Their responses were novel, and you can watch the full video on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/wXGy6s-yVRE>.



Giving back to MHSG

Manchester High School for Girls was founded on a spirit of generosity, and the aspirational atmosphere that we are so proud of relies on a continued investment in talented girls from across the region.

Whether you are able to support us through giving your time or expertise, or donating to our Bursary Fund, we welcome any and all kinds of donations.

Volunteering your time

We recognise that not everyone has the means to give financially, and we value those who can give their time just as highly as those who contribute financially.

Our current students are very fortunate to be supported by a host of alumnae and parents who volunteer their time and expertise in various forms.

From showcasing your job or field at our biennial **Futures Fair**, sharing your journey in one of our industry-specific **Insight Into...** careers talks, or supporting a current Sixth Form student through the **Project Pankhurst** mentoring scheme, your unique experiences give our students an unparalleled insight into life beyond Grangethorpe Road and the opportunities open to them.

Our students learn how to develop their work-life balance through weekly **Well Being** lessons. External speakers are welcomed into School to support students in developing the knowledge, understanding, skills and characteristics needed to thrive personally and in their relationships with others.

You could also help to shape our current and future students' experiences at school through being part of the **Alumnae Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Group**. This group has provided valuable input into the School's DEI Charter and meets online termly to discuss relevant topics and the School's approaches and solutions.

Volunteering dates for your diary:

Project Pankhurst – sign up to be a mentor by Monday 6th January 2025

Insight Into... Politics – Wednesday 22nd January 2025, 6pm (Virtual)

Futures Fair – Thursday 13th February 2025, 4-8pm (in person at MHSG)

Insight Into... Management Consultancy – Wednesday 2nd April 2025, 6pm (Virtual)

If you are interested in volunteering your time in any of these ways, please contact the Development Team on development@mhsg.manchester.sch.uk or call **0161 224 0447**.

"I signed up to be a Project Pankhurst mentor because I believe the more support a student can get, the better. The road doesn't always run smoothly so I wanted to listen to students' career aspirations and provide guidance to navigate the challenges and obstacles they may face on the way to achieving their goals."

Nihal Winniczuk, Project Pankhurst mentor, Class of 1999

Support the MHSG Bursary Fund

Bursaries are one of the secret ingredients to the success of our school, provided on academic merit and a means-tested basis, playing a central role in making Manchester High the vibrant place it is today.

The positive impact of a bursary ripples throughout the whole school, driving academic achievement and ensuring our community remains socially and culturally inclusive.

This social diversity is under greater threat than ever with the introduction of VAT and business rates for independent schools.

Our school thrives on this diversity. Yet today we are missing out on many talented individuals joining our community. Currently, we can only take on 5% of the bursary applications we receive.

All they need is a chance. By backing the Bursary Fund, you'll provide it.

Regular donations help us to plan for the future and secure funding for students throughout their time at school.

Help us empower more Manchester High students. Regular donations (with Gift Aid) can make a huge difference and can quickly build, with contributions from other regular donors, and transform lives.

100 people donating £12 each month will fund one bursary each year.

100 people donating £24 each month will fund two bursaries each year.

100 people donating £49 each month will fund four bursaries each year.



It is easy to set up a regular donation online. Any contribution is welcome and makes a huge difference.

Legacy donations are a meaningful and enduring gift. All bequests, of any size, directly benefit future generations of Manchester High students. Even a small amount left in a will can make a profound difference to a future student.

Our Ivy Leaf Society recognises those who have decided to leave a gift to the school in their will. It is a special community, bonded by the passion we share for investing in the talented girls of our region. All you need to do is let us know you are leaving a gift to MHSG in your will.

"Anyone considering making a donation to the Bursary Fund should know that, while the financial contribution they make will go towards a girl's tuition fees, it is in fact a gift that will last a whole lifetime."

Laura Earnshaw, MHSG Chair of Governors,
Class of 1998



"I never want to feel that an able girl had to miss the opportunities offered by MHSG simply on the grounds of cost. Someone donated funds to help me and it is my turn to help a future pupil."

Ivy Leaf Society member



Support us



www.manchesterhigh.co.uk/support-us/

Update your details!

Have you been missing regular updates from us?

We may not have consent to contact you by email!

We primarily send communications to our community by email, including the latest news from MHSG, invitations to events and reunions, and information about supporting our current students.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws mean that, as a charity, we need your clear consent to stay in touch, and unfortunately, since the regulation came into force in 2018, we lost contact with a number of members of our community.

We know that the MHSG community is strong, and in your time at MHSG, whether that was as a student, member of staff, or part of the wider community, you will have made lifelong friends.

Make sure your MHSG friends are still in contact with us – if they haven't received this copy of High Flyer directly, it is likely we don't have up-to-date contact details and preferences for them, so please encourage them to update them online.

Please also let us know if you have moved house, your contact details have changed or if you want to update your contact preferences.

www.manchesterhigh.co.uk/alumnae/keeping-in-touch

Manchester High School for Girls is nothing without its fantastic community, and we want to make sure that nobody misses out on our latest news and invitations.

Scan here to update
your details!



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