

NORTHAMPTON

GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Annual School Review

2022 - 23

Annual Review 2022-23



Whether you read the Annual Review from cover to cover, or just skim read the headings and admire the excellent photographs,

you cannot fail to be impressed by what Northampton High Nursery and Preschool, Junior and Senior pupils have achieved. I am so proud of the collaboration, independence, perseverance, and sheer hard work that so many High School pupils and staff have shown in making a success of the 2022-23 academic year.

There is so much of note at our all-through Northampton High. At the end of my first year as Head, I reflect with real pride in all that has been achieved by our brilliant pupils and committed, hard working staff. I am struck by the creativity and innovation shown in so many aspects of the curriculum, the power and quality of the expressive and creative arts, and the growth in EdTech and STEM activities among others. It has been another remarkable year in the life of our school community, filled with stories of individual and team successes.

Intellectual curiosity has represented itself in all sorts of ways this year. Academically, Northampton High is widely regarded as an academic titan in the region. In summer 2023, we celebrated some stellar GCSE and A Level results. At GCSE, 18% of cohort achieved a 'clean sweep' of A*/A grades and 42% of grades awarded were at grade 9/8. These represent excellent outcomes and a validation of the extent to which our teachers understand and inspire the students. At A Level, a striking 44% of all grades were A* or A, 76% were graded A*-B and 93% were graded A*-C. This gave the Year 13 leavers excellent opportunities for the 'next step' and their commitment and resilience is a testament to them all.

In terms of the High School cocurricular programme, the school has been truly brought back to life in creative arts. We were treated to captivating live music during the school production of 'The Wizard of Oz' which lit up the end of the summer term, complemented by an outstanding Arts Festival - and the Spring Art Collective Exhibition earlier in the term which helped raise money for the school's chosen charity, the Hope Centre Northampton.

Furthermore, ensemble performances showcasing impressive variety and skills across all key stages have taken place, and we eagerly look forward to continuing musical development in the coming year including additional Scholars' and Key Stage recitals.

Sports fixtures flourished with huge numbers of pupils participating. The major highlights are our U18 Tennis Team finishing 2nd at the Regional Finals, The Equestrian Team qualified for National Finals at Hickstead and we have now established the first Pony Club Centre in the country run by a school. We also proudly emerged as champions in the GDST Tennis Rally.



Our girls enjoy competing at the highest level in the country and across a diverse range of sports which is testimony to our commitment as a school to a holistic and balanced education.

Success comes in many different shapes and sizes. Chief amongst these are the multitude of extraordinary routine actions of our pupils and staff going about their daily business with exemplary kindness, care, consideration, and dedication. Such background excellence is often taken for granted and rarely merits the special attention of a headline, but it is what defines school culture. Individual and group successes are great and worthy of celebration, but what knits them together into a happy and successful school community are the myriad individual interactions that create a supportive, nurturing, and kind school. So, thank you to all the pupils and staff for their cheery greetings, for holding doors open, for smiling, for thinking

about others and not just themselves, for noticing, for being a good friend, for doing what is right and not what is easy. We must recognise that conduct counts, and that is why acting with kindness and consideration and believing in one another really matters at Northampton High School.

I hope that you enjoy reading about the different activities and stories highlighted this year which reflect our ambitions as a school as well as those of our pupils, their achievements, and successes. My grateful thanks to Mr Rickman and Mrs Wilmot for their sterling work as editors of such an important document. I do hope that you enjoy this annual review. It has been quite a year for us all.

Dr May Lee Head

Faculty Highlights

Creative Arts



It has been an exciting year in Creative Arts. The Spring Art Collective has grown into an inclusive event across school. We are encouraging parents, staff and governors to join our student artists in submitting quality artwork to help raise funds for our partner the Hope Centre, Northampton. Our GCSE and A Level Art students created extensive exhibitions attaining excellent examination results.

Fashion and Textiles students staged a catwalk assembly showcasing garments from Year 9, 10, 11 and 13. Year 7 flew their hand-stitched House flags at Sports Day and Year 8 created a fantastical array of footwear designs. In the summer term, it was all hands on deck in the Textiles department as we created costumes for the musical theatre production of 'The Wizard of Oz'.

In Music, live performances were challenging and fun. Junior School pupils performed their Nativity and 'Baarmy Bethlehem.' The Senior Choir entertained at the Christmas Fayre, Year 6 performed 'Alice', and we had our annual composition and examination recitals. Music was provided for the Spring Art Collective and at open mornings. We also took delivery of a beautiful 1890 Bechstein concert grand piano, which is played by pupils during Friday assemblies.

In Drama we had fabulous theatre trips, including National Theatre's 'Ocean at the End of the Lane', Frantic Assembly's 'Othello' and National Theatre's 'The Crucible'. We invited Weavers Academy to a workshop on Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' and again took part in National Theatre Connections, with students producing 'Tuesday' by Alison Carr at Royal and Derngate. Senior School staged 'The Wizard of Oz' and it was magical to witness such a professional production.



In Food, we enjoyed lots of delicious creations. We collaborated with the Gardening Club to make herby scones, and hosted a Year 5 Food & Textiles day where the girls made yellow brick road blondies. In December's GCSE trip to Borough Market, we enjoyed food, explored stalls and took part in a Japanese baking class with Bread Ahead.

Mrs Mel Bencroff Hend of Creative Arts Faculty



We enjoyed another exciting year in English, beginning with a live streamed author event in the autumn term, featuring Robin Stevens. Robin spoke to our younger pupils about life as a best selling author, as well as providing details of her exciting new series the Ministry of Unladylike Activity.

In January, we had an overwhelming number of entries for the GDST creative writing competition, which caused lively debate within the department as we selected winners for the different age categories. The theme was 'Our World'. Congratulations went to Annika Dani in Year 12, with Eliza Ali as runner-up. In the lower years, congratulations went to Maysha Chowdhury, with Motunrayo Oguocha as runner-up and highly commended certificates received by Emily Gates; Kareena Rana and Ammara Zafar.



Further talent was on display with entries for the GDST Laurie Magnus poetry competition late in the spring term. Congratulations went to Hunsil Bhatt in Year 10 for her beautifully comforting poem 'Down the Window Pane', which



found solace in the simplicity of the natural world and a rain drop. In the younger years, congratulations went to Abigail Stran, for her poem 'My Poem'- we found this highly entertaining, with a lively sense of humour, keen observation and effective overall structure. Runner-up was awarded to Ammara Zafar for her poem 'High Tide Horizon', with its warm and consoling message, impressive use of biblical language and compelling structural choices.

English continues to be a thriving and much loved subject, with excellent uptake at A Level and incredible public examination results.

Mr Jonathan Williams Head of English Faculty



2022/23 has been another exciting year for the Humanities Faculty, both within and outside the classroom. Our curriculum is evolving to ensure pupils engage with contemporary issues and to equip them to understand our complex. interconnected world. In Year 9 Geography, pupils study an exciting new Superpowers topic, exploring complex geopolitical issues. In Year 8 History. pupils study a diverse range of topics. including the important role played by soldiers of the Empire, whilst in Year 7, historians collaborated with English on a fantastic project to research female explorers. The Year 10 PPE (people, politics and ethics) Elective has continued to develop and has become an important forum for pupils to discuss current affairs.



Learning has been enhanced through a range of memorable educational visits. For example, the Year 7 residential to Shropshire, which has an updated programme containing more team building activities, including a campfire singalong. The GCSE Religious Studies trip to the Hare Krishna temple at Bhaktivedanta Manor deepened the pupils' understanding of Hinduism and allowed them to see faith in action.



A Level Politics pupils were excited to meet Andrew Marr during their visit to Westminster, exploring the workings of our democracy.

For Geography pupils in the Sixth Form, there was the opportunity to visit Geneva as part of a collaboration with Physics. Pupils visited the United Nations and also observed first hand the retreat of the Llangletscher glacier.

Outside of the academic curriculum, pupils have developed their leadership skills whilst taking meaningful environmental action through the school's Eco Team. They were particularly proud of the school's award of a Green Flag with distinction for the first time. Through Femsoc, pupils also highlighted important issues; Menstrual Health Awareness Week was particularly noteworthy for the conversations it triggered among both pupils and families.

Mr James Earp Head of Humanities Faculty



Last academic year was a busy and exciting year in the Languages faculty with the return of trips, and the various events and competitions our students were able to take part in. For the first time since 2019, Year 8 students were able to set off to Normandy and experience French culture and language first hand in this milestone trip. As for our Year 12 and 13 Classical Civilisation students, they were delighted to visit the British Museum and attend a performance of Plato's Symposium.



The GDST Language Festival was another highlight of the year. Whilst we were not able to attend in person, 18 students from Year 7 to Year 10 proudly represented the faculty in online competitions ranging from spelling bees to plays and video creations. We congratulate Maysha Chowdhury for winning the Latin Year 8 spelling bee.

In the autumn term, the classical art competition got creative juices flowing and we were overwhelmed by the volume, range and quality of the entries. We very much look forward to displaying the winners in the Languages corridor. On an international level, it was also a time to rekindle our relationship with our partner school Dr. Johanna-Decker-Gymnasium in Amberg. Year 9 students were able to exchange letters and meet their partners in video calls.

Finally, we were delighted by the successes of our students in a range of competitions with two students achieving Bronze and Silver certificates in the International Euroclassica Latin/ Classics competition; a Year 7 student being a national finalist in a Roman mythology competition; six students gaining a Level 1 Ancient Greek qualification; five Year 10 students achieving the Gold Foundation Award in the UK Linguistics Olympiad; four of our Language Leaders completing their award and nine Year 9 students being recognised in the Youthbridge project.



Mrs Sandy Black Head of Languages Faculty



We had many successes in sport across the academic year. In the autumn term, we successfully qualified for the GDST senior hockey finals at the Northern Rally where we finished runners up in the fitness, badminton and table tennis at the Rally. We won the tennis competition at both the Northern Rally and the GDST Rally making us overall winners! The trophies are really special and it is lovely to see them in the sports area.

In the spring term, we hosted a magnificent evening of dance with our theme of 'through the decades'. Each year group in Junior School performed a class dance. This enabled all pupils to experience performing in front of an audience, enhancing their confidence. In the summer term, we hosted our Annual Sports Awards Evening, inviting former England football captain Faye White to be our special guest. She has inspired so many girls over the years with her footballing success and we were honoured by her presence.

We have continued to fulfil an extensive fixtures programme against local and other independent schools, in sports such as football, equestrian, hockey, badminton, netball, tennis, cricket, cross country, athletics and swimming. Our extracurricular programme has provided opportunities for traditional sports alongside new and developmental clubs such as basketball and beginners' swimming.

We've enjoyed residentials and trips over the year with the U11 and U13 netballers visiting Condover Hall and the U14 hockey team playing superbly in Newcastle. The ski trip was also a great success with friendships, skills and independence being developed.



The House competitions have provided a fun and inclusive opportunity for all. A particular highlight was this year's Sports Day in the sunshine with many internal records being broken.

We are proud of our students for always being 10% braver when it comes to developing their sporting experiences.

Mrs Emma Blake Director of Sport

STEM - Mathematics



The past year marked yet another remarkable achievement for the Mathematics faculty, surpassing pre-pandemic levels from 2019 in GCSE results.

We achieved an impressive 100% GCSE pass rate, with nearly half of our students securing a grade 7 or higher, significantly outperforming the national average. It is not surprising then that Maths remains a popular subject in school, with over 20 students taking the optional Further Maths GCSE.

It is gratifying to note that a substantial number of students have opted to pursue A Level Mathematics, recognising its pivotal role in gaining admission to prestigious universities, especially for supporting medical studies.



Our track record in the Mathematical Challenge remains outstanding, with numerous students progressing to subsequent rounds, including some exceptionally talented Year 6 students. Additionally, we are immensely proud of three of our Year 12 students who earned coveted spots in the GDST Maths Masterclass course, conducted online across all GDST schools.

This achievement is particularly commendable given the limited availability of spaces. It underscores the extraordinary aptitude nurtured within our school and promises even greater success in the future.



Mr Andy Ball Head of Mathematics Faculty

STEM - Science



This year the Science faculty has once again reached for the stars and had a blast in our dedicated Space Week, with themed lessons across all key stages. A visit from a mobile planetarium enthralled everyone across both Senior and Junior Schools and we had a fabulous assembly where we spoke 'live' to two female astronauts from 1960's NASA to get their take on the Space Programme. Older students visited two local engineering companies, Nifty Lifts and Festo to see engineering in action and try out some 3D modelling software.

In the spring, pupils were catapulted into ideas about 'Connections' during Science Week. We learned how staff connected to their favourite parts of science not in the curriculum. Lunchtime lectures included titles such as 'Glucose the silent killer' and 'The anatomy of a horse'. Pupils also enjoyed visiting a cross-curricular exhibit in the white space of bones and fossils. Our Reach lecture was another fabulous opportunity to hear from Dr Emily Grossman, who enthralled the students with her connections to the scientific community. In the summer, we were fortunate to experience conservation right on our doorstep as Year 12 biologists undertook fieldwork at Rushden Lakes. Students also took part in the RSPB Wild Challenge and were awarded a certificate for their efforts with species conservation.



Throughout the year, the pupils had the opportunity to support our online student magazine, sharing ideas on recent scientific developments. Biologists in the Sixth Form took part in the Biology Olympiad, with some notable successes. We also awarded lots of character awards to pupils who have shown exuberance in one of the five High School characteristics, either in class or within their prep.

Mrs Karla Hodgetts-Tate Head of Science Faculty

Junior School

The joy and challenge of balance was a key theme for Junior School pupils in 2022-2023. The timetable for our 2 year olds to Year 6 enables us to maximise the time to develop each pupil's academic journey, alongside her social and emotional development. This, when complimented by our excellent cocurricular offer, enables a flourish in self-confidence and development of passion for learning.



We encourage our pupils to try everything - nothing is off limits - and to spend time harnessing our five intellectual characteristics to develop their skills. Last year our pupils embraced as many opportunities as they could balance and it was truly wonderful to celebrate their enjoyment, progress and achievement in a broad range of areas, including coding, judo, swimming, gymnastics, Irish dancing, archery, cricket, LAMDA, football, diving and the list goes on!

A particularly positive element of the Junior School ethos is how the community celebrates all achievements, from qualifying for world championships, to girl guiding badges, to music



examinations and many more. All achievements that are important to our pupils are celebrated. We are great believers in the value of developing passions in life and we see childhood as being all about experiencing as many opportunities as possible that can support these lifelong interests.

Singing at Wembley, competing on the hockey field, performing with an orchestra and dancing with peers to a packed theatre are just some of the opportunities we have offered in 2022-23, sparking zest for life for our Junior pupils. Finding the time to fit everything in may be a challenge, but what a joy it is to celebrate the impact!

Miss Emily Hair Head of Junior School

Examination Results

3% of A Level grades at A*

% of A Level grades at A*/A

% of A Level grades at A*-B

We have seen another year of excellent achievement at GCSE and A Level at Northampton High. The fact that results remained largely consistent with last year's excellent outcomes, in spite of marking returning to 2019 standards, is testament to the incredible work of the students and the unstinting support offered by their teachers. This year we are celebrating:

A Level Results - a striking 13% of grades at A* and 44% of all grades at A* or A, 76% graded A*-B and 93% at A*-C.
GCSE Results - 42% of grades awarded were A* equivalent (grades 9/8), 18% of the cohort achieved a 'clean sweep' of A*/A equivalent grades (9-7), and 56% of students secured an impressive 6 or more GCSEs at grade 9-7.

We offer our congratulations to every student and our thanks to their families for the vital role they play in supporting them through the exams period. We also pay tribute to our outstanding teachers and examination staff who have guided them with such skill and professionalism, both academically and pastorally. Year 13 leavers have chosen a great variety of destinations and courses including Astrophysics, Medicine, International Relations, Criminology, Anthropology and Archaeology, Physiotherapy, Optometry, Film and English. They depart to bright futures, following some of the country's most competitive courses at prestigious institutions such as Durham, London School of Economics and many Russell Group institutions.

We wish them every happiness as they move on in their journeys and thank them for all they have contributed to the Northampton High community. As part of the wider GDST Alumnae network, we are confident that they will achieve their ambitions and will be an inspiration to girls in the school and beyond.

Mr Henry Rickman Deputy Head Academic

The school community



Diversity and Inclusion: The Undivided golden thread - GDST's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion continued with energy and engagement across the school in 2022/23.

In school celebrations for Neurodiversity Awareness Week, Pride Week, Holocaust Remembrance Week, Black History Month are firm fixtures in the curriculum and calendar, with workshops arranged for parents exploring autism and dyslexia during the year.

Student teams of Learning Leaders, Language Leaders and FemSock members continue the inclusivity work in students' break times, while class and subject teachers continue to enhance their curricula to ensure diversity and inclusion are fully embedded at every stage. In the Staff Engage Survey in the autumn 2022, one of the highest scoring questions was 'I feel that people of all backgrounds and identities are valued in my school' with a total of 88% staff responding positively to this statement.

In the Student Undivided Survey conducted in February 2023, four of the

highest scoring questions supported inclusion at Northampton High: 'I feel accepted at my school' (85%), 'When I think about the students at my school, they come from a variety of backgrounds' (81%), 'I feel that my culture, faith and background are respected in school' (74%) and 'Students of all backgrounds and beliefs are valued equally in my school'.

We are proud of our culture, and we know that the inclusion agenda does not stand still, so neither will we.

Partnerships, Outreach and Charities:

Activities within the Partnerships and Outreach programme continued at pace in 2022/23, with a wide range of community-based events and charity fundraising opportunities embraced by the whole school.

Termly visits for Junior School children to Richmond Village, a local retirement community, continued, with themed activities, designed to entertain residents or work in collaboration with residents, for each of the year groups involved. The visits were warmly anticipated and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

A Christmas outreach project saw Sixth Formers baking and decorating individual Christmas cakes for our community partners, which were received gratefully at this special time of giving.

A new event on the calendar in 2022 was the Christmas Fayre, which was an opportunity for students, parents and friends of the school to get into the seasonal spirit with a Christmas market, with student and friends' stalls selling a variety of stocking fillers, treats and gifts. Visitors got in the mood for Christmas thanks to the choir's carols, enjoying hearty and delicious refreshments, and adventures to Father Christmas' grotto.

Girls and staff from three local primary schools joined Key Stage 1 Northampton High pupils in March 2023 for an Arts Experience day, when the schools designed ambitious artistic creations both in the classroom and in Forest School.

Following the highly successful inaugural Spring Art Collective Exhibition in 2022, pupils, parents, and members of staff once again produced art compositions to exhibit and sell to the wider school community. Over £350 as proceeds of the sales was donated to support the Hope Centre's Art Project in Northampton. Amongst the many Partnership activities were the Junior School's involvement in an exciting Zoom event with local schools and Chella Quint, the founder of Period Positive, community sessions, arts workshops at Dobbies, hosting Mum Club events in Forest School, entries to MP Andrea Leadsom's art competition (and a Northampton High pupil winning a prestigious prize!) and much more.

The academic year ended with a standing ovation when over 320 children and staff from local primary schools joined a rapturous audience for the school's musical performance of The Wizard of Oz, replete with interval popcorn and good cheer.

Charities: At the very heart of the Northampton High community is charity work and fundraising. As ever, the Year 5-run Macmillan Coffee Morning proved popular, raising over £500 for this worthy organisation; Children in Need saw donations of £1200 and the Christmas Fayre raised almost £1500 for the school's nominated charity, KidsAid.

Prize winners in the GDST Christmas Card Competition welcomed a charitable donation from GDST of £450, which was passed on to KidsAid to support their therapeutic support for local children and young people who have suffered any form of trauma.

Further fundraising initiatives in 2022/23 supported Place2Be for Children's Mental Health Week (£100), East Midlands Autism (£185) and the Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire Dyslexia Association (£150) to mark Neurodiversity Awareness Week. With other fundraising efforts throughout the year from Junior School classes, Senior School form groups, clubs and societies and staff collections, the school's deeply-rooted importance of giving once again shone through.

Mrs Amanda Wilmot Director of Marketing & Admissions

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We are Made for Girls

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