



ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

19th June 2021

Upper School Prize Day Speech

What a truly unique year this has been.

There have been many challenges to face and you have faced these as true St Mary's girls; with resilience, respect for others and a risk-taking attitude to all of the events and obstacles. Our whole school community has come together, supported each other and we have all become stronger as a result of this. And, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and to say how very proud I am that you are St Mary's girls.

Life at St Mary's is always extremely busy, filled to the rafter with opportunities. This has continued this year, with the girls learning both in and out of the classroom and experiencing so many wonderful opportunities.

Music and Drama have always been an integral part of life at St Mary's and I was so excited to watch Peter Pan on Monday and Tuesday this week. Girls, it was truly excellent with very little rehearsal time. I was so blown away by the whole experience. I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work and dedication across the year, but especially Miss Warren and Miss McGlashan for supporting the girls in the delivery of the play and all those who have extremely worked hard behind the scenes.

Sport has continued to be ever so important and I thank Mr Halsall and Mr Richardson for their continued delivery of the curriculum. I thoroughly enjoyed judging the Inter-House gymnastics competition and my thanks to Mrs Rimini and Mrs Thompson for supporting the girls with their gymnastics. I am looking forward for the children in Years 2-6 to take part in their Sports Day on Friday, and I am delighted that we are able to stream as many events as possible so that you as a school community will feel part of it. I would like to thank Mr Halsall and his team in advance for what I'm sure will be a successful event.

Once again I am amazed by all of the artwork that the children have produced and I have been truly astounded by how Miss Fehmi has incorporated the Art curriculum into the learning area of STEAM. There are many examples of how she has used traditional methods combined with our state of the art technology to create innovative pieces of work. I would like to thank Miss Fehmi for all her hard work and dedication.

Over the course of the year we have held many different events for the children to experience different cultures and explore the diversity of the world that we live in. A great example of this was our Careers Day and my thanks to the parents who talked to the children about their experience of the workplace. Children also learnt about the history of St David's Day and St Patrick's Day, to name just a few.

A highlight of mine was when all the children went to France for the day while remaining in NW3. Using virtual reality, the girls were able to visit many landmarks in Paris and my huge thanks to Miss Segulier for arranging not only this fantastic day, but also for making French such an exciting subject at St Mary's.

This year has seen the children learn through our Creative Curriculum and this has given the girls the opportunity to link their learning across the subjects. There has also been a huge focus on the delivery of STEAM. My huge thanks to Miss Warren for delivering this essential and exciting part of the curriculum.

At St Mary's, we live out the gospel value of love one another and I feel that this year this has never been truer. When Mr Richardson challenged us to reach 11, 633 miles I did not believe that this would be achievable. The whole school has come together to raise money and awareness for the War Child charity and I am very happy to announce that we have completed a combined total of 30000 miles. Not only were the girls challenged to learn about the work of War Child, but also to learn about the cultures of the countries that War child supports. I would like to thank David and the catering team for making us such delicious lunches from countries around the world. My huge thanks to Mr Richardson for organising the School in this amazing fundraising event.

What has been so special is that we have been able to continue to complete events that help make St Mary's so unique such as Mass, Hymn Practice and Praying Together. I was delighted that 6 girls were still able to take part in their First Holy Communion this term. I would like to thank Mrs Sciacaluga, Miss Halbert and Ms Bos who helped prepare the girls for the day and a huge thank you to Father Chris for his continued support of the School's children and staff in their spiritual lives. I would also like to thank Miss Mc Manus for all of the music at these events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, but especially those on the Premises and IT teams. They have worked tirelessly to keep the School community safe and healthy and have explored so many new technologies to ensure that we could continue with all of the events for the children. They have really helped make their experience truly memorable over the course of the year, for all of the right reasons.

Each year we have a theme of the year and this year our theme has been "Wonder". We have made time to reflect and wonder exactly what we are able to do, to wonder exactly who we are able to be and wonder how we can make a difference in our community. I believe that the children have completed so many acts that they may not have done before. I am truly proud of all the children for taking this challenge on board.

I would like to read you an extract from our book of the year, "Maybe".

"And maybe you are just getting started.

What if you are only scratching the surface of what you can do and who you can be

What if you have talents you haven't discovered yet

There is something powerful, even magical, about you

You already have everything it takes to do big things

Maybe you have no idea just how good you really can be

And maybe you don't know how much you matter

But maybe, just maybe, the world has been waiting centuries for someone exactly like you

One thing is for sure, you are here

And because you are here, anything is possible."

And now onto the Year 6 girls. I am delighted that you have all gained places at the most remarkable senior schools. Schools that will help you continue to thrive, flourish and grow into incredible young women. You, as a year group, have achieved the best results that St Mary's has seen. However, before you embark on this next path, I would like to reflect on your St Mary's journey. A journey you may have started in Pre-Nursery or re-joined us as recently as this academic year.

Year 6, during your time at St Mary's you have learnt a multitude of skills both in and out of the classroom. You have learnt so many learning habits that you will take forward into your future life – not just in your future schools, but also beyond.

You are celebrated human beings who have a passion for learning. You have become scientists exploring the world around you. You have become mathematicians solving a range of problems. You have become literary critics, having read such a variety of genres. You have become engineers, using computer aided design to develop your love of technology. You have become humanitarians, caring for all of those around you - those within the St Mary's community, but also those in the global community. You are a unique set of girls who have overcome the exceptional challenges that we have faced over the past year and your desire to support each other, to care for each other and to help each other is truly inspirational.

Girls, you are so wonderful and you will very much be missed. But, it is now time to start the next part of your journey. As the book says, because you are you, anything is possible. Never forget that. Always take every opportunity you can to be the best that you can be.