



**STAHS**

PREP SENIOR SIXTH



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028

**THINK  
BEYOND**



# OUR VISION

**To develop happy, resilient young people who will embrace opportunities and lead lives of consequence.**

**In 1887, St Albans High School for Girls was founded on a vision instilled by the first governing body and head. Although it has evolved over the past 135 years, this vision has not changed fundamentally from that of our founders, who saw the need for high-quality girls' education to rival that on offer to boys in St Albans.**

Since our foundation in an old hospital on Holywell Hill, STAHS has added the Prep School, moved site, acquired buildings and created a host of facilities for academics, the arts and sport. From our material fabric to our academic, pastoral and co-curricular provision, STAHS has evolved to meet the needs of successive generations of pupils.

Looking to the next five years, we have developed our Strategic Plan with input from representatives of our whole School community. The Strategic Plan sets out key aims and is a framework for the educational, organisational and capital development of the School.

The School's governing body is drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds and includes alumni and former and current parents; all of us are deeply committed to the future success of STAHS. We will challenge and support the Executive Team as they lead the School to deliver this Strategic Plan.

We are rightly proud of our School and of the pupils and staff that make it such a special place. We look forward to working with all in the STAHS community as we steer this exciting and ambitious plan in the years ahead.

*Heather Greatrex*

Heather Greatrex  
Chair of Governors 2017-2022

*Alison Arnold*

Alison Arnold  
Chair of Governors 2022-



**We believe that it is our responsibility and duty to prepare young people for life beyond school. We call this our Teach to 25 philosophy and it underpins our core vision and values.**

Every aspect of a STAHS education has been thoughtfully created to ensure our pupils benefit not just from excellent teaching in preparation for exams but, equally importantly, from the many and varied opportunities to develop transferable life skills that will serve them well into adulthood.

Our Teach to 25 philosophy truly extends across the breadth of the School. From our character education programme, which starts in Reception, to our super-curriculum that stretches pupils beyond the limits of exam specifications, to our formal two-year leadership programme for Sixth Formers, we equip STAHS pupils with the skills, independence and knowledge needed to navigate their paths in the critical early years of adult life.

All areas of our five-year strategy support our Teach to 25 agenda. From building state-of-the-art facilities to launching our new curriculum model, our School strategy is all about developing intellectually curious, ambitious young people who are confident in themselves and their convictions and are ready to embrace life's opportunities.

Our strategy is built on a deep understanding of the strengths and personality of the School and the best ways to build on our success. I am determined to see STAHS consolidate its position as not only the very best school in our region, but to take its place at the vanguard of enlightened and forward-thinking independent education in the UK. This ambitious goal will only be achieved with the support of our community: our governors, staff, parents, pupils and friends.

The next five years will be an exciting time of development and growth for STAHS. I hope you are as enthusiastic about our future as I am.

*Amber Waite*

Amber Waite  
Head



## “ An Education of the Highest Stamp



A leading girls' school for 135 years, founded to provide 'an Education of the Highest Stamp'.

St Albans High School for Girls opened in a converted hospital on Holywell Hill on 2 May 1889. Local parents, encouraged by the Abbey's Reverend Dr Deed, persuaded the Church Schools Company to open a girls' school in St Albans as the city at that time lacked any facility for the advanced education of girls beyond the age of 12.

As proof of local interest, the Company required a minimum of 100 shares to be taken up. In typical St Albans style, the community immediately coalesced and 120 shares were subscribed for within three days of the notice.

The School's first pupil was the daughter of the Archdeacon, Walter John Lawrance, the Rector of the Abbey Church and later the first Dean of St Albans. In his speech during the School's opening ceremony, Archdeacon Lawrance shared his hope that the High School would provide for girls an education equal to that provided by the Grammar School for boys. This is remarkable considering that, less than 25 years earlier, the authors of the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1865 reflected that although the state of girls' education was 'on the whole, unfavourable', there was nothing wrong in educating girls as 'decorative, modest, marriageable beings'!



# OUR HERITAGE



Walter John Lawrance  
First Dean of St Albans



Miss Anne Grace Lee  
First Headmistress

The hospital was never suitable accommodation for the School; the new premises on Townsend Avenue opened on 21 September 1908 and the original building is still the heart of our Senior School campus. The Prep School moved to its home in Wheathampstead in 2003.

Throughout its more than 130-year history, STAHS has seen world wars, pandemics, 12 headmistresses and a dramatic shift in athletic attire (the pupils used to wear ankle-length woollen skirts and cotton blouses for sport!).

Through it all, we have retained that spark that set us apart at our founding and we continue to pride ourselves on providing 'an Education of the Highest Stamp'.

# VISION

To develop happy, resilient young people who will embrace opportunities and lead lives of consequence.

# VALUES

At STAHS:

- **We value intellectual, social and moral development.** Our pupils thrive on the high expectations we have of them, and our dedicated staff create an environment where kindness and generosity of spirit are as important as academic excellence.
- **We value diversity.** We are proud of our diverse community where each pupil is valued for who they are and encouraged to share their unique perspective on the world.
- **We value challenge and risk-taking.** We nurture our pupils' sense of adventure and help them develop emotional and mental agility.

# AIMS

To ensure that STAHS:

1. Is an institution of educational excellence.
2. Prepares pupils for the future.
3. Provides excellent pastoral care.
4. Is a diverse and inclusive school and workplace.
5. Provides an inspiring and welcoming learning environment.
6. Makes a positive impact in our community.

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

## Delivering educational excellence

- We will review our curriculum from 4–18 with our principles rooted in progressive pedagogical thinking to ensure that we are future-proofing our pupils' education:
- From September 2023, the **Senior School** is implementing a new curriculum model. Our curriculum includes innovative features such as our super-curricular programme, which provides focused stretch and challenge for all pupils from Year 8 onwards, enabling and encouraging them to develop their intellectual curiosity.
- The **Prep School** will review the curriculum model in 2023–24. Informed by robust evaluation of school data and current thinking in primary education, we will adapt our provision to ensure it best meets the future needs of pupils at Prep and for their continuing journey into Senior School and adult life.
- Educational excellence extends beyond the classroom and is essential to the physical, mental and social development of young people. We will continue to develop our exciting creative and performing arts, sports and co-curricular provision, reflecting the needs and interests of our pupils with a lively programme supported by investment in modern facilities.
- We are so proud of the 1889 Club, our society of academic scholars from Year 7 through to Sixth Form. The Scholars Programme at STAHS is unlike any other secondary school experience. It is inspired by the best undergraduate research programmes to develop oracy, research techniques and debating skills, and gives time and space for pupils to explore their intellectual passions. The Programme is inclusive by design; regardless of whether they are designated a Scholar, interested pupils can join most events and activities, developing their interests and skills. Over the coming years, we will develop our Scholars Programme to ensure that it attracts the brightest and most talented pupils, who will take an academic lead amongst their peers.

## Preparing pupils for the future

- Our Challenge for All approach to education will be embedded, supporting pupils to stretch themselves and develop strategies for overcoming life's obstacles.
- Character Education at STAHS starts from Reception and is core to our Teach to 25 philosophy, preparing children for the challenges of adolescence and adulthood. We will review and develop the Programme to ensure that each Prep child understands and exemplifies core character traits.
- The STAHS Diploma was launched in September 2021 and has become the framework for our Sixth Form programme. The four pillars of the Diploma — Academic, Service and Leadership, Skills for Life and Making the Leap — provide a balance of opportunities for our students to explore their interests and develop skills they will use throughout their lives.
- We have high ambitions for our pupils and we will expand our participation in prestigious national and international academic and co-curricular competitions, stretching them and bringing them external recognition for their achievements.
- Our Higher Education provision will be extended, building on the exceptional work we already do to support specialist university applications such as those to Oxbridge, the US and other international institutions, and Medical, Veterinary and Dental courses of study.
- We will develop our Careers Roadmap, providing impactful support for young people to step into a world of work where change is accelerating at an ever-faster pace. This support does not stop at 18 and, reflecting our Teach to 25 philosophy, we will further develop the programme's offering for our young alumni.
- The valuable Careers and Higher Education support given to pupils by our alumni has grown significantly over recent years. We will broaden and deepen our connections with our alumni volunteers to facilitate a rich, diverse programme that reflects our pupils' ambitions and extends their horizons.

## Excellence in pastoral care

- Our new STAHS Hub pupil wellbeing centre is a physical testament to our commitment to providing modern, relevant support to the pupils in our care.
- We will continue to develop our pastoral care framework, delivering robust support to help young people build emotional and mental health toolkits to serve them well into adulthood.
- We are proud of our strong culture of safeguarding. We will continue our focus on training for pupils and staff and embedding the use of systems to ensure STAHS pupils are safeguarded from harm and know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- We will continue regularly to review our provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and personal, social, health and economic education, creating a roadmap for pupils from 4–18.
- We will continue to nurture a culture of strong partnership with parents. Our relevant and engaging programme of parent seminars will be developed, reflecting the needs and priorities of our pupils and the current issues that impact upon them.
- We will ensure pupils at every entry point are warmly welcomed and helped to settle into STAHS, reviewing and embedding our formal procedures for induction and integration.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of STAHS

- Building on the groundwork of recent years, and with the input of our School community, we will continue to review and develop a STAHS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- We will further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in our curriculum, building on work undertaken in recent years, by reviewing our progress and its impact on our pupils.
- Pupil voice across STAHS will be strengthened. We will review the remit of our School Council and identify and develop the ways in which the voice of pupils across the School is heard.
- Building on the recent review of our recruitment processes for staff and pupils, and our scholarships process, we will evaluate our progress and develop our approaches to ensure inclusive practice as we seek out pupils and staff from all backgrounds.
- We will celebrate the diversity of our community, ensuring a strong voice for pupils and opportunities to take a lead in the festivals, events and celebrations we mark.
- World-class teachers and our dedicated support staff are critical to delivering the best experience and realising the ambitions of our pupils. We invest significantly in an aspirational programme of Continuing Professional Development from the early stages of a career through to leadership. With input from staff, we will review and develop this programme.

# FACILITIES MASTERPLAN

## AN INSPIRING AND WELCOMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

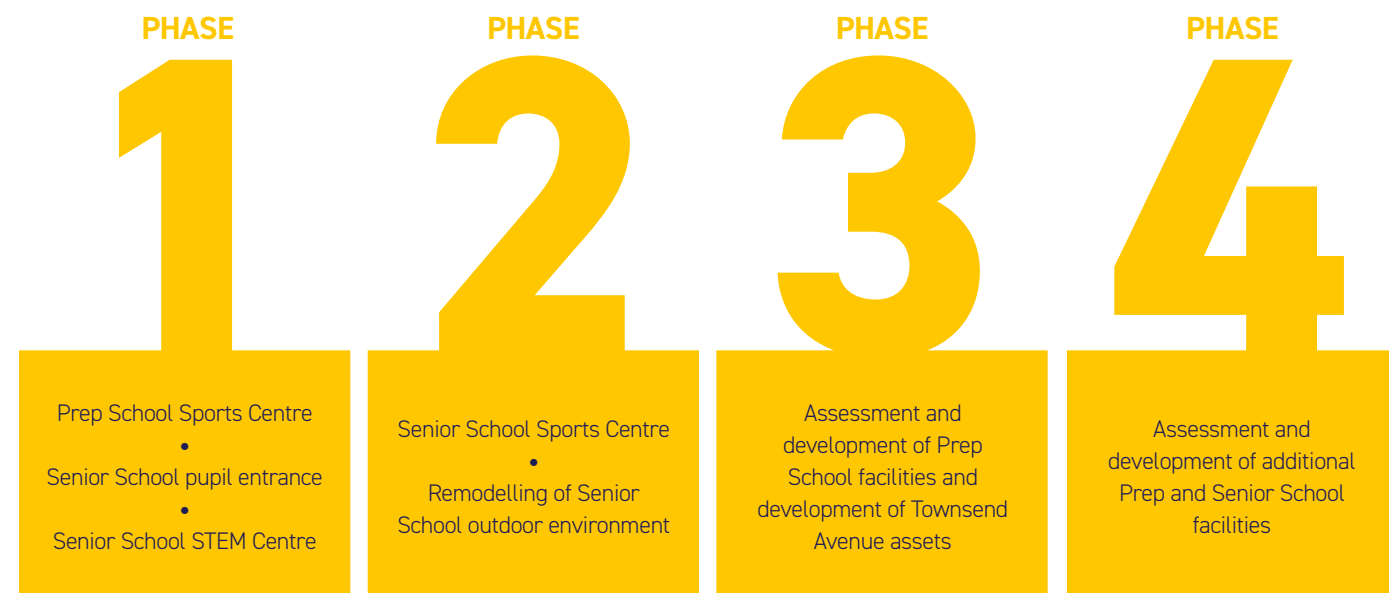
The right environment is fundamental to delivering this ambitious Strategic Plan. Our educational programme has expanded enormously, from the breadth of our academic curriculum, to the co-curricular activities we offer, to our commitment to dedicated services and space for pastoral care and wellbeing. Looking to the next five years and beyond, our Facilities Masterplan will

create campuses that are an inspirational, welcoming learning environment for our pupils.

Our Masterplan sets out big fixture developments: our Prep Sports Centre and Senior School STEM Centre will be state-of-the-art facilities. Alongside these major new facilities, a priority for early investment is internal and external reorganisation and landscaping, improving

accessibility and making better use of space to improve the day-to-day experience of our pupils – in their lessons, as they move about the School and when they play and socialise. Space released by development of new facilities will be thoughtfully re-purposed, benefitting the widest possible areas of our curriculum, maximising the return on our investment and making efficient use of our campuses.

We will continue to develop and implement our Sustainability Strategy, building on the work already achieved to reduce our environmental impact and making sustainability central to future developments. We will take further steps to develop our pupils' understanding of sustainability and engagement in positive action, including progressing our work towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award.



# MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

**A strong ethos of social responsibility lies at the heart of STAHS. We make a positive impact in our community in many ways, from being a responsible and ethical employer to providing local schools and community groups with access to our facilities, to our community partnerships and charitable activities. Building on the work of recent years, we will:**

- Develop a long-term strategy for public benefit and partnerships.
- Explore further local partnerships where we can make a positive impact through the contribution of our pupils, staff and our resources, including building relationships with local state schools where we work together to enrich the education of all our pupils.
- Work with partner organisations to provide academic support to those most in need, including an initiative to provide tuition for children in care and the IntoUniversity Programme to widen access to higher education.
- We will continue to devote staff time and resources to local teaching and learning partnerships across the curriculum, to provide teacher training conferences and events for colleagues from across our area.
- Pupils from the earliest age at Prep onwards will engage in meaningful leadership and service opportunities, giving back to their communities whilst developing their personal skills and their understanding of their place in the world.
- Our much-valued close relationship with St Albans Abbey will continue through our programme of music events, which reach out to the wider St Albans community, and the formal School occasions that are annual milestones in the history of STAHS.



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