

THE WINDFLOWER



PALMERS GREEN
HIGH SCHOOL

Summer 2025

Vol1



Top Story - Pages 5-7

120th Anniversary Founder's Day

We celebrated our 120th anniversary at a special Founder's Day service at St John The Evangelist Church on Friday 2nd May 2025.

Special Feature - Pages 9-17

A collection of letters from former pupils to our Year 11 leavers



Special Feature - Pages 25-26

Pastures New

We said a sad goodbye to some long-standing members of staff this year.

Welcome from the Head



“

I'm delighted to welcome you to a new edition of our Alumni Newsletter, 'The Windflower'. I know it's been a while since we've written to you and I'm sorry we've not had the resources to do so up to now. It's always wonderful to hear from our former pupils and welcome them to PGHS on occasion too.

The biggest opportunity for this was our 120th Anniversary Founder's Day on Friday 2nd May 2025, which you can read more about on pages 5-7. It was a super occasion and I really enjoyed catching up with so many of you.

As I reflect on the past academic year, I am filled with pride and admiration for our school community. Since joining PGHS in January 2023, I have been struck by the deep-rooted sense of tradition, ambition and warmth that permeates every part of school life. It is a privilege to lead a school that values not only academic excellence but also kindness, curiosity and a genuine commitment to developing the whole person.

Over the past year, our pupils have embraced every opportunity to grow and flourish. From stellar performances on the stage and sporting triumphs on the field, to impressive examination results and community outreach initiatives, our school has continued to thrive. We are especially proud of our recent ISI Inspection, where PGHS was praised across all areas, with our SEND provision highlighted as a significant strength. This is a true reflection of our commitment to ensuring that every pupil is supported to achieve their best.

We've also continued to invest in the fabric of the school, from classroom enhancements and digital developments to our ongoing work on sustainability. All of these improvements are designed to enrich the experience of current pupils and to keep PGHS at the forefront of progressive girls' education.

However, our greatest strength remains our people, and that includes you, our alumni. Your achievements, contributions and connections with one another help to inspire today's pupils and build bridges across generations. Whether you've recently reconnected with the school or have been a regular supporter over the years, I thank you for the part you continue to play in the PGHS story.

We hope you enjoy reading about what has been a remarkable year and learning more about the lives and accomplishments of your fellow alumni. Please do stay in touch – we love hearing your news and sharing it with the wider community.

With warmest wishes,

Sarah Proudlove
Head
Palmers Green High School

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120th Anniversary Founder's Day

We celebrated our 120th anniversary at a special Founder's Day service at St John The Evangelist Church on Friday 2nd May 2025.

The celebrations began in the morning, when specially decorated cupcakes were handed out to all pupils, before they attended a uniquely created service full of poems, songs, hymns and readings. A new school song, composed by Head of Music Miss Anna Lush in conjunction with pupils, was performed for the first time during the service.

A record number of former pupils joined parents, former staff, friends, and governors to celebrate and enjoy refreshments afterwards in the school's Elizabeth Smith Hall, where a ceremonial cutting of the cake by the current head girls took place. Many of them contributed to an exceptional souvenir booklet for the Year 11 girls with 'letters to their former selves'. In addition, the founder's great-great niece, Katrina Corcoran, who lives in Australia and was unable to attend, sent a message to the school's current pupils to wish them a 'wonderful celebration'.

Head Ms Sarah Proudlove commented:

“

“It's an enormous privilege to lead the school community in celebrations during our 120th year, and in particular on Founder's Day, which holds a special place in our community's hearts. I'm certain that our founder Miss Hum would be proud to see that her initial vision continues to help hundreds of girls flourish into confident and inspiring women ready to take on the world.”

”





PALMERS GREEN
HIGH SCHOOL



Reception Stay & Play Sessions

Every Tuesday, 9.30am–10.15am

Learn more about life in our Reception class

📍 104 Hoppers Rd,
London N21 3LJ

☎ 020 8886 1135

✉ admissions@pghs.co.uk

🌐 www.pghs.co.uk





Year 11 Leavers 2025

We had a wonderful response to our call for letters for our 'What I Would Have Told My Younger Self' booklet.

We handed the booklet out to our leaving Year 11s at their Leavers' Breakfast on Founder's Day and they were delighted to hear from so many former pupils.

You can read through the booklet over the next few pages. Thank you to everyone who contributed!



PALMERS GREEN
HIGH SCHOOL

Founder's Day 2025

Educating Girls for
120 Years

A Keepsake for the Class of 2025

“What I Would Have Told My Younger Self”

A collection of letters from former pupils to our Year 11 leavers

Palmers Green High School

Founded 1905

Issued on the occasion of the school's 120th anniversary



PALMERS GREEN
HIGH SCHOOL

EDUCATING GIRLS
FOR 120 YEARS



A Message from the Head

Dear Year 11,

This year, we celebrate 120 years since Palmers Green High School was founded by Miss Alice Hum, an extraordinary woman whose lifelong dream, first spoken aloud when she was just three years old, was "to have a school." Against the odds, she made that dream a reality in 1905, establishing a place where girls could be educated, encouraged, and empowered.

As you prepare to leave PGHS and to celebrate this anniversary, we wanted to give you a memento not just of your time here, but of the generations who walked these corridors before you. Like them, you now take your place in the long line of remarkable PGHS alumni.

We invited former pupils from across the decades to write letters to you – our Class of 2025. We asked them to reflect on the theme, "What I would have told my younger self", and to think back on their school days and the lessons life has taught them since. Their messages are full of encouragement, honesty, and warmth. Some recall air raid drills and cycling to school on tricycles, while others reflect on more recent memories of their time at PGHS. They speak of lifelong friendships, self-discovery, the strength found in kindness and the courage it takes to be yourself. All of them share a love for this school and a wish to pass something meaningful on to you.

This collection of letters is a celebration of the PGHS spirit and our way of saying: you belong to something bigger. A community of women spanning 120 years. A legacy of learning, laughter, and strength. And whatever path you choose next, we hope these voices stay with you – nudging you forward, cheering you on, and reminding you that you have everything you need.

As you leave Year 11 and step into the next chapter of your life, carry with you the school motto, "By love serve one another," and remember that you will always be part of the PGHS community.

With love and pride,

Ms Sarah Proudlove
Head

Dear Year 11 pupil,

Having been brought up living in Winchmore Hill during the end of World War II my world was a very small place, confined by distance and experience. Gradually through the 1940s it expanded. For you what a wonderful world we do live in - both its size and content. In order to experience and understand this I recommend to you all, before you begin university studies, take the break of a gap year if at all possible. universities will usually grant this as you will go to university as more mature students.

Of my five grandchildren, four managed this and did they grow up in just that short time! They travelled and worked in various capacities meeting all manner of people and I assure you their experiences were extremely valuable. I myself only had a term free but travelled and worked in Germany and my horizons ballooned...

Remember always the school motto (By love serve one another) as wherever you find yourself around the world you can do something valuable for others be it for people, or in natural world exploring breadth.

The beautiful flower, the windflower, chosen so long ago as the school's emblem, can now be found only miles away from NW21. To my delight it grew in woods at the end of my Hertfordshire garden in the 1980s and later still is to be found outside Newbury Berkshire where I now live. It is a simple delicate flower but has the strength to persist.

I attended PGHS at the one time it was CoEd!! A boys prep school was bombed out and for a short while young reception aged boys were with us not in the Hoppers Road buildings but in the Church Hall of St Johns where our anniversary services are held. As there was no air raid shelter there, we put our small chairs up on the table and crept under during the raids!

It was to my delight that I read in the Times of the School's success

winning their class of school in having the top results this year. Maybe being girls only does bring the best results as much discussed these days. I would ask you leavers to keep on working hard as education is worth every effort.

Cathlyn Davidson (née Richardson) (PGHS 1944-1959)

Dear Year 11 pupil,

While I enjoyed Palmers Green High School immensely and, together with my two sisters and mother as alumni, was proud to be a PGHS pupil, I would now tell myself to have greater self-worth and self-belief.

We were in a very different era when at school just after the war. Things were frugal and the subjects taught were limited. Discipline was strict and inhibiting. Of course, as a reasonably average member of a small class and one who loved sport, one could thrive, but anyone who struggled was shown little mercy and it was dispiriting for those regularly at the bottom of the class when the marks were read out to the whole school on a Friday - no autism or ADHD was identified then.

I would have wanted to tell my younger self to have more confidence and less fear and panic over small things, such as a forgotten school book. I would have told myself to be 'the best I could be' and less fearful of the teachers who, I realised long after, depended on good results just as much as us.

All things said, I would have told my younger self that I was lucky that my parents sacrificed much for the three of us to attend a fee-paying school, and the motto 'By love serve one another' has stayed with me all my life. Be proud of your school; your friends will be your friends for life.

Elaine Patricia Orr (née Elvidge) (PGHS 1946-1958)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

I started school during the war, cycling over a mile on a three wheeler tricycle on my own. Going home for lunch and back as I was just under a mile away. One early memory was being taught to get under the tables if there was an air raid - we had to pretend to be mice! There was an air raid shelter in the playground as well.

Keble school joined us having two of the classrooms because their school buildings were requisitioned. This meant I was able to stand on a desk to see my brother through the glass partition.

I can remember having to go to school too during the holidays to collect our 1/3 of a pint of free milk every day. We collected pennies, you chose to be Oxford or Cambridge and put them in lines on the playground to see who won - I wonder what the money was for? I still have a 'Busy Bee' badge for collecting silver paper.

Gym lessons took place in the playground on fine days, wearing our navy knickers with a house colour stripe on the side - in full view of passers by! Inside the dreaded vaulting horse and ropes to climb to the ceiling.

Sports - Swimming at Barrowell Green open air pool, Hockey at Winchmore Hill Cricket Club and tennis in Grovelands Park. You either cycled or walked. There was an annual summer show, I can remember decorating my bicycle and making cakes.

My favourite subjects were Geography and Biology. I struggled with undiagnosed dyslexia. I don't think it had been 'invented' when I was at school!

I left school and went to the Northern Polytechnic in Holloway Road, then on to teacher training at Offley, Hertfordshire. This was a branch of Roehampton College which had been evacuated to Knebworth House and Offley during the war.

When my eldest daughter was 4 I did some supply teaching at

PGHS. I was able to take my daughter kitted out with school uniform from 'lost property' and going into the Kindergarten. A surprise fire drill brought everyone out into the playground except my daughter found sitting in the toilet! My middle daughter was a pupil at PGHS from 10 until 15 yrs.

Jean Alderman (née Allan) (PGHS 1942 - 1953)

Dear Year 11 pupil,

When I left PGHS I wasn't sure what I wanted to do career wise. I took A levels at Latymer but didn't feel university was for me and as long as I found myself work, my parents were happy for me to find my own pathway in life.

I took many paths, working in sales, newspaper advertising and insurance, but finally found my vocation working with horses, animals I have always been lucky to be around.

After having children, I trained in my 40's as an Equine Behaviour Specialist, travelling to America, to learn from the best.

This training, knowledge and experience teaching horses and humans, would 8 years later, lead me into my current position, the CEO of The London Horseplay Centre, a registered charity using horses to help children & young people who are struggling with mental health issues.

You may already have your goals set out but if not don't worry, just follow the things you love and you will find your own way.

Susan Coade (née Johnston) (PGHS 1973-1982)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

Have more confidence in your ability to succeed. Don't feel only 'average'. I have always been so grateful to all I gained from the several years of being a pupil at Palmers Green High School. It has been my foundation throughout life.

Diana Terry (PGHS 1947-1954)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

The Christian foundation and moral basis of all that the school gave me, was a wonderful grounding as I was growing up as I faced many challenges in later life.

I should have told myself earlier to value all of this.

Philippa Thompson (née Doubleday) (PGHS 1948 - 1960)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

Be brave and have belief in yourself. Follow the career path you feel is right for you, not the one others think would be best.

Listen to your teachers. No matter what you may think now, as you get older you realise just how wise and knowledgeable they were!

Susan Ardill (née Cooper) (PGHS 1962 - 1970)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

If I could go back, I would tell my younger self that I will always have enough time. I spent all of my GCSE years worrying I was running out of time to be a good student and to make friends, and then I spent all of my A Level years worrying that it was too late for me to do the subjects I wanted, to get the university I wanted and to be the person I wanted to be. I lived in this constant state of anxiety of whether I could be good enough. I missed a lot of deadlines along the way to university.

But I meant it when I said I know that I will always have enough time. The kindness and understanding of my teachers, my admin, and my peers helped me succeed through all of my challenges, only because I had the courage to ask for help from them. The support I received from PGHS was amazing, and the personal attention to detail and the genuine investment my teachers had in me allowed me to thrive. During college, my support team helped me apply to university on time despite missing deadlines due to severe anxiety, and they made sure I knew what I wanted through countless careers meetings. They let me drop a subject 7 months before A Levels and take on a new one, and I gained huge success as a result of it.

Now I'm on a gap year, and I'm the one giving myself the time I know I need to thrive. I'm so incredibly blessed to have been a part of academic institutions that gave me the time I needed, and I'm proud of myself for taking it. I promise to you, you will always have enough time.

Ece Erkan (Chosen name Simon Erkan) (PGHS 2018-2022)

Dear Year 11 pupil,

My priority would be to find your voice and create your own path; celebrate the love you find in family and friends; be curious and open minded. Breathe, laugh, sing and dance!

Diana Faithfull (née Le Voi) (PGHS 1951 or 52 until 1963)



Dear Year 11 pupil,

Be confident in what you can achieve!

Sheila Boyes (née Brown) (PGHS 1951 - 60/61)



In Loving Memory of Hannah Barker (PGHS 1980–2024)

By a friend and classmate
PGHS Class of 1996

It's hard to find the words to describe Hannah Barker. How can I really get across the essence of a woman who gave so much of herself to the world, and left so much behind for us when she had to go?

Hannah was generous with her creativity, her boundless energy, and the way she loved and supported others. Her legacy doesn't just live on through an impressive body of work in the world of theatre, but in the way she made so many people feel seen, heard, and valued.



Hannah was consistently witty, kind, fiercely bright, and impossibly full of life. You could be having the worst day and just five minutes with her gorgeous warmth and humour could shift your perspective totally. We met as we started Reception, or Prep 1 as it was known then, and so many of the truly funny moments spanning our time together at PGHS- the times when I remember being weak with laughter with an aching belly - involve Hannah.

I think many girls in the class of 1996 would echo this sense of Hannah somehow always being at the heart of the fun, making an impact. It seemed Hannah was destined to make a difference, to do something with impact, and she went on to do just this throughout her life, in extraordinary ways.

A natural on the stage, Hannah was hugely involved in drama at PGHS, featuring in every production she could. She continued expanding and exploring her passion for theatre at sixth form at Camden School for Girls, going on to study Drama at Royal Holloway, University of London.

After some further study at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, to absolutely no one's surprise, Hannah went on to build a remarkable career in theatre. She co-founded Analogue, a theatre company that created boundary-pushing work with genuine emotional and social depth. Analogue toured internationally, and in the UK their plays were seen at the Edinburgh and Dublin Fringe Festivals, the National Theatre Studio, Young Vic, Hackney Empire; the list goes on. But more than the venues or the accolades, it was the heart and soul in her work that always shone through. Every piece of theatre she created had depth, something real to say, and came from a place of compassion and connection.

Alongside her work producing shows with Analogue, Hannah worked on projects at the Donmar Warehouse, and the BRIT School, worked as a Script Reader at the Manchester Royal Exchange and later became Creative Producer at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. At Belgrade, she supported emerging artists and worked tirelessly to bring community voices into the spotlight. So many people have spoken about what a force she was; a whirlwind of generosity, creativity and determination.



Hannah with her friends on a ski trip

But whilst her professional achievements were outstanding, it's the behind the scenes Hannah that so many of us carry with us every day. She was deeply loyal, full of warmth silliness, and magnetism. Being her friend felt like being wrapped in light. She had a way of making everyone feel valued, seen and loved for what and who they were.

Hannah's family meant everything to her. She and her partner Nick built a beautiful life together, and their little boy Ozzy was the centre of their universe. She was incredibly close to her sister Jessie; their bond was something rare and special, full of laughter, support, and deep love. She came from such a warm, close family, and this always shone through in the way she loved others.

Looking back now, I think so often about what it meant to grow up with Hannah at PGHS. The school was founded by Alice Hum to offer girls the chance to achieve excellence and realise their potential, and Hannah absolutely did that. She used the confidence and creativity nurtured at our school to do truly extraordinary things. She genuinely lived our school's motto — By Love, Serve One Another. She loved, she served, she gave everything she had to the people and causes she cared about.

I am so touched and delighted to say that now, as a lasting tribute to Hannah's life and legacy, PGHS will be awarding annual drama prizes to girls, in her name. Knowing that future PGHS students will be inspired by Hannah; by her creativity, her boldness, and her heart; feels so right. She would have been proud to know her story will continue to encourage other young women to follow their passions wholeheartedly, just as she did.

Losing Hannah is a heartbreak I know so many of us continue to grapple with. But when I think of Hannah, of her wild laugh, her mammoth hugs, her fierce mind and her huge heart, I'm reminded how immeasurably lucky we all are to have known her.

She was our brilliant friend, a proud PGHS girl, and a truly extraordinary human being.

Her light shines on.

Anna Melkman (PGHS Class of 1996)



Hannah and her big sister, Jessie



Hannah and friends on PGL

ISI Inspection March 2025

We were delighted to receive a glowing Inspection Report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate this week. The inspection, which took place in the last week of March 2025, details how the school has met every single required standard and in particular cites the school's SEND provision as a 'significant strength', which is an extremely rare accolade.

From the early years through to later years, leaders and teachers are consistently praised for having high aspirations and promoting wellbeing for pupils. For example, Section 2 (Quality of education, training and recreation) explains that:

“

“Teachers in Reception encourage the children to talk with purpose and pupils learn to articulate themselves confidently and clearly. Teachers of older pupils encourage debate and discussion in class. Pupils are able to explain complex ideas to adults and peers.”

”

The close level of support and encouragement is often highlighted throughout the report, with reference to teachers adapting their lessons and personalizing tasks set to challenge pupils, for instance giving younger pupils access to GCSE-level questions.

This report recognizes the high level of social responsibility that pupils possess. It writes that “Pupils in the junior school organize fundraising activities for local and national charities. Older pupils organise events, for instance working with the local hospice to sell items collected from the school community.”

Head Sarah Proudlove comments:

“

The school inspection was an opportunity for our staff and pupils to demonstrate the fantastic work which takes place at PGHS every single day and therefore it is all the more pleasing to receive a report which articulates so effectively our school ethos and the lived experience. It is clear from the verbal feedback we received and the written summary in the report, that the ISI inspectors were highly impressed with what they found during their visit.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at PGHS for their commitment and dedication to ensuring our pupils are thriving. I was thrilled to see the way that the pupils interacted with the inspectors, proudly sharing their love for their school, showcasing their many achievements and their wonderful personalities.

”



New prize donation



A new prize has been awarded for Service to the Community, kindly donated by former Chair of Governors Dermot Lewis.

Dermot retired as Chair of Governors in 2021 after 19 years' service in the role.

During his term of office, and with the support of our buildings committee, he oversaw numerous building projects to make the most of our constrained site, including the Elizabeth Smith Hall and the extension of Dewick House to provide larger modern staff rooms and workspaces for our teachers.

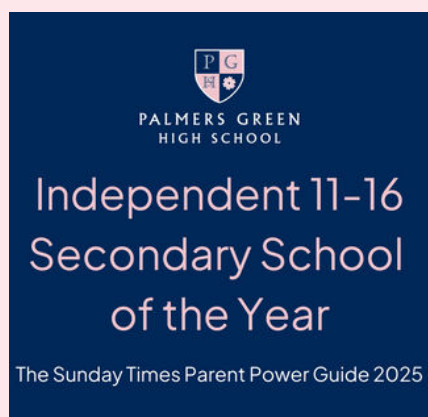
His wisdom and steady helmsmanship of the governing body were invaluable, and current Chair of Governors, Melanie Curtis, is grateful to him for the guidance and support he has given to her as his successor.

The first Dermot Lewis prize for Service to the Community will be awarded at Senior Prize Giving in November 2025.

Independent 11-16 Secondary School of the Year 2025

We're delighted to have won a national award in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide 2025 once again. PGHS has been named Independent 11-16 Secondary School of the Year. The guide is widely acknowledged as the most authoritative survey of the country's top schools.

In 2024, the School's overall percentage of GCSEs at grades 9-8 was a magnificent 44% and 9-7 a fantastic 72%, placing our pupils amongst the top performers in the country.



Recognised as the definitive ranking of the UK's top primary and secondary state and independent schools, The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide remains an essential resource for parents seeking the very best in education for their children. The guide includes a fully searchable national database of over 2,000 schools by name, local authority, town and postcode.

As well as an assessment of all academic results on a school-by-school basis, The Parent Power Guide enables parents to compare the performance of a given school with other schools in the same town, local authority or nationally.

Head Sarah Proudlove comments:

“

I'm delighted that PGHS has been named Independent 11-16 Secondary School of the Year. This award is a huge testament to the hard work and dedication of our pupils and staff over the last year. Many of our girls have been with us since they were three or four, and to see them develop and flourish demonstrates our commitment to equip them for success. For anyone looking for a high-achieving school for their daughter, I encourage you to come and visit us!

”

Pastures New

It's always sad to say goodbye to long standing members of staff. Below are our tributes to some teachers who left PGHS this year.

Louise Gelsthorpe



Miss Gelsthorpe has left to embark on a new adventure teaching in Cairo after ten years at PGHS. Miss Gelsthorpe started as a newly qualified teacher and over the last ten years she has demonstrated skill, creativity and dedication every day. Her energy, thoughtfulness and humour know no bounds, and although she will be very much missed we are excited for her new adventure!

Ann Hassan



Our Reception Teaching Assistant Mrs Hassan started working at PGHS some 32 years ago and this year she has made the decision to retire. Mrs Hassan has given tirelessly in her role. Her humour, caring nature and creativity will be very much missed.

Hannah Lucas



At the end of 2024, we bade farewell to Miss Hannah Lucas, Deputy Head of PGHS. For over 19 incredible years, Miss Lucas was a pillar of unwavering support for PGHS and its pupils.

Miss Lucas began her journey with PGHS initially joining as a Supply teacher in the Lower School. She went on to become a Reception class teacher, a Year 6 teacher and later an Assistant Head, before earning the role of Deputy Head in 2019.

Jo Newman



Ms Newman taught French, Spanish and History at PGHS for 26 years and she has been an exceptionally dedicated form tutor, supporting hundreds of girls with their academic and personal development.

May Soudah



Mrs May Soudah worked in the PGHS Bursary Department for 15 years and has supported the operations of the school with dedication. We thank her for all that she has done.

Why work at PGHS?

There are many benefits to working at The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide's Independent Secondary School of the Year 2025, not least the strong camaraderie and close community between our teaching and support staff.

More benefits include:

- Employee discount scheme for hundreds of high street brands including John Lewis, Argos, Boots, B&Q, Clarks and Costa
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Generous contributory pension scheme
- 25% staff fee remission for all year groups and all staff
- Delicious free school lunches (you can view a sample menu [here](#))
- Small class sizes
- Supportive parent and friends association
- Committed and dedicated colleagues
- Free off-site parking

Check out the vacancies page of our website for our current vacancies.



PALMERS GREEN
HIGH SCHOOL



Discover PGHS

Looking ahead to September 2026 entry?
Here's your chance to explore everything
we have to offer.

Book your
place today



104 Hoppers Rd,
London N21 3LJ



020 8886 1135



admissions@pghs.co.uk



www.pghs.co.uk

Reception Stay
& Play Sessions
Every Tuesday

Senior School
Working Open Morning
26 September 2025

Lower School
Working Open Morning
3 October 2025

11+ Taster Day
9 October 2025

11+ Entrance &
Scholarship Examination
15 November 2025

PGHS Trips

Each year our pupils and teachers embark on a number of exciting educational trips, and this year has been no exception!



Pupils from Year 10 and Year 11 travelled to Geneva in Switzerland last summer to visit CERN. As well as enjoying a fantastic interactive exhibition to learn about fundamental particles and how a particle collider works, pupils also completed a lab workshop run by a CERN Scientist where they made their own cloud chambers to observe particles and presented their findings, displaying excellent scientific skills.

They also took part in a guided tour of the UN Geneva and were lucky enough to see a meeting in progress as well as explore the building and grounds. On the final day, our pupils had a great time sightseeing in Geneva.



Year 2 trip to St Paul's Cathedral



Year 7 trip to Gilwell Park



Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils were treated to the awe-inspiring 'Ballet Shoes' at the National Theatre.

The play is a spectacular re-imagining of Noel Streatfeild's beloved children's novel in a brand new adaptation by Kendall Feaver.

It tells the story of three adopted sisters who are taken in by a professor and palaeontologist, who leaves the girls with two charges. The sisters seek to find their place in the world and chase their dreams despite the world being a difficult place for ambitious women.

Our Year 8 class investigated river channel characteristics in a day of Geography fieldwork with The Field Studies Council. The class skilfully investigated how the River Chess changes as it moves downstream, testing theory covered in class. There was superb team work on display as they measured the width, depth and velocity at two different sites in and around Chesham.



Ski trip to Serre Chevalier



Year 7 trip to Mountfitchet Castle

2025 Exam Success

Our GCSE Class of 2025 celebrated this summer as they received their excellent public examination results. Almost a quarter of all results were Grade 9 and almost half of all results were Grade 9–8.

Among the pupils celebrating were Head girls Zoe and Lola, both of whom were delighted with their string of 9s. An emotional Zoe achieved straight 9s in her 10 subjects, and said if she could see herself in Year 7 she never thought she could do this well. She thanked all of her teachers from the bottom of her heart, and will be going to North London Collegiate School to study the International Baccalaureate, with French, Physics and Maths as her Higher Level subjects.

Lola, who was fortunate enough to see Oasis this summer, sings and plays lead guitar in the school's popular rock band, and achieved 9s in Combined Science, English Language and Literature, French and Music, and 8s in all of her other subjects. Lola was at school with her proud father to collect her results. She will be taking Music, Art and English Literature A Levels at Woodhouse College and celebrating with her friends this evening.

Budding medic Amy couldn't stop smiling as she digested her 'better than expected' results. She earned 9s in all three individual sciences as well as Maths, and will be going on to study Maths, Chemistry and Physics A Level at City of London School for Girls.

Drummer Elizabeth was delighted with her 6s and 7s and is looking forward to a shopping spree with friends before she begins A Levels in Psychology, Business, Media and Drama at Aldenham School. A keen actor and the school's charity prefect, Elizabeth was also awarded the prestigious Alice Hum Award, which is given to pupils who epitomise the school's ethos and values.

Head Sarah Proudlove was at school to congratulate pupils and commented: "These results are a just reflection of this year group's commitment to their academic studies. I'm immensely proud of everything they've achieved, both in and outside the classroom, from their contribution to the musical and sporting life of the school to the thousands of pounds they have raised for charity. I wish them all the best for their future and hope they will often come back to visit us. I'd also like to recognise and thank our dedicated teachers who always go above and beyond to help our pupils achieve their full potential."

The School's overall percentage of GCSEs at grades 9–8 was an incredible 48% and 9–7 a fantastic 71%. We're delighted that pupils have secured places at their first-choice destination for Sixth Form including Dame Alice Owen's School, Henrietta Barnett School and Alexandra Park School.

Alumni Stories



Hello! My name is Lila Mandel, and I left PGHS only three years ago, so I'm afraid I don't have much to tell you. Not that such a barrier has ever stopped me — I was known as quite a chatterbox during my time at school, from Year 5, when I switched schools to PGHS at the start of the second term, all the way until I left the school after completing my GCSEs in 2022. During those six-and-two-thirds years, I always had a goal for what I wanted to become after I left school.

That goal was fluctuating, but always there — from teacher to research psychologist (which is what I am heading towards now, as I am starting my undergraduate Psychology degree at Durham this September). However, one thing I never said I wanted to be when I grew up was a writer.

I've always enjoyed creative writing as a hobby but for a long time, writing professionally seemed unrealistic. It was my Hollywood dream — making enough money to live off with a writing career? Impossible! So, I would shove it to the back of my mind. But one teacher saw my love of the written word shining through; while many teachers would tell me off for reading under my desk, my Year 6 form tutor, Miss Lucas, was never one of them. I still remember the day she told me that, no matter what I said, she knew I was going to be a writer. I (an aspiring engineer at the time) laughed and walked away.

Fast forward to today, and sitting next to me is a Doctor Who spin-off anthology (can you guess what fandom that fanfiction I mentioned was for?) with my pen name, Theta Mandel, among the author list. Open in another tab is a draft of the next story of my cozy queer sci-fi series, Zadellin. I get to tell stories I love with messages I wish I'd been able to read when I was still a young closeted thing at PGHS — and, I've fulfilled Miss Lucas's prediction, having signed my first writing contract! I'm doing something I love, both with original stories and on the fringes of my favourite franchise, and I'm even (occasionally) getting paid for it!

My time at PGHS was not exactly a pleasant one, but it taught me something very important: how to survive long enough to thrive. After starting at Woodhouse College, I created a Doctor Who society within my first week, with my first story (Our Bleak Midwinter in Arcbeatle Press's The Book of the Snowstorm) published a little over a year later.

I've written a lot more since then, and am trying to learn to balance my passion for writing with my need for a "real" job as I assist with gathering research studies to support a psychologist at UCL. I hope to continue writing through my degree, and for the rest of my life — so, Miss Lucas, if you are reading this, you were right. And, thank you.

Best wishes and thank you for reading,

Lila Mandel (ze/zem, ey/em)

I must begin by explaining that OBE stands for Old Biddy Extraodinaire, awarded on my 80th birthday last October! Otherwise my name and titles are genuine! Having left PGHS, I went to Rosebery Grammer School in Epsom for 2 years of A Level study before entering training at King's College Hospital School of Physiotherapy. After qualifying I began work, got married, had a baby, returned to work and managed for years to juggle the various roles and responsibilities I held.



On leaving PGHS I was awarded the Bradford Scripture Prize. I have no idea why I was chosen for this, but I still have the New Testament I was given so long ago. I remember too, how as a teenager, one Sunday I watched the minister climb up the steps to the pulpit to preach and thinking that I would love to do that, but thinking immediately that only men were ministers/vicars/priests. Time passed, and when our son went off to university, I had time on my hands. I spoke to my vicar about helping more with the church services and undertaking training to do so. .

He agreed and so I found myself on a year's course for 'discernment!' I had no idea what that was! It was explained to me that if someone felt the Good Lord nudging them to step forward then that needs to be explored. As I was newly linked to the C/E at the time (1990) I did not know about the heated debate regarding the role of women in the church.

Suffice to say that during the year I found myself attending various interviews to see whether those in authority agreed that I should enter training for ordination. It was a big thing and at times gruelling experience, but in May 1991 I began at Sarm College in Salisbury, a three year course of study in formation.

Attending tutorials, summer school, residential weekends, reading and placements certainly kept me busy. Fortunately I was working 3 days a week as a physiotherapist which gave me time to study. I also discovered that there were great hopes that the C/E General Synod would agree to allow women to become priests. They did, and I was one of the first women ordained as if I was a man!!

There was many jokes in the early years about Dibley and military people wanted always to be re-assured that they called me Padre! Time passed, I was a curate and then a vicar of a local parish, before taking on a benefice (a group of parishes) and being appointed Rural Dean. It was about this time that I was widowed, a great change in my life. My husband had been a local borough and county councillor and naughtily, I used to say we were a marriage of church and state, and remember church comes first! He was very supportive and forged a role as the vicar's husband – new ground for men in those days. Now I am retired, still receiving many invitations to help out busy colleagues and parishes without vicars. I am grateful that I am still physically able to say 'yes'. I am grateful too for the formation I had growing up as a pupil at PGHS. Miss Hum, a quaker, the school motto, a daily assembly first thing in the morning, and throughout the school, regular scripture lessons that gave me a framework of faith, which has influenced the course of my life.

Rev Canon Mrs Jill Bentall OBE
(PGHS 1949 – 1960)

(Typed from an original hand-written letter)

Alumni Visits



We always enjoy reuniting with our Alumni who return to speak to our current pupils about their Sixth Form and university experiences.

It was wonderful to welcome back former Head Girl, **Saffron Singh**, who was in Year 13 at Dame Alice Owen's School. Saffron came to talk to our Year 11 pupils about her transition into Sixth Form.

She shared insights into the social and academic challenges and opportunities she encountered, as well as her A-Level subject choices.

Having recently been offered a place to read Human, Social, and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge, Saffron was also well-placed to discuss the UCAS application process. Thank you for your visit Saffron, it was great to see you again and Year 11 found your visit informative and inspiring.

Former pupil **Charlotte Sollars** (PGHS 2017-2022) came back to her old school to talk to Years 8,9 and 10 about her journey with languages and gave them some tips for their GCSEs. She studied Politics, French and English at A Level and went on to study French and English at the University of Leeds. She said it was so lovely to come back and see everyone. She loves French and said that studying it at A level and university has been a very enjoyable experience.



She recommends pupils at PGHS consider studying a language at A Level! Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Mme Parry-Garnaud was very pleased to welcome her back.

International Women's Day 2025

On Friday 7th March 2025, our Parents and Friends Association (PFA) organised an inspiring event for our Senior School pupils as part of our International Women's Day 2025 celebrations.

Titled 'Empowering Young Women Through Insights From Female Role Models', the event was led by three of our dedicated PFA members and featured an engaging panel discussion with five accomplished professional women – all parents of PGHS pupils – who shared their perspectives on 'Breaking Barriers and Building Futures'. The event concluded with an interesting and thought-provoking Q&A discussion, followed by our three Head Girls expressing their gratitude to the panellists.

As a special gesture, our PFA kindly gifted each pupil a key ring inscribed with the inspiring words: "May you be proud of the work you do, the person you are, and the difference you make."



Pupil Academic Achievements

Congratulations to **Sriya Goulikar** (Y11) who won first place in the Independent Schools Association's 2025 poetry competition. The theme this year was 'My Life As ...' and Sriya wrote an inspiring piece entitled 'My Life As An Aurora'.

Her poem, amongst hundreds of other entries read by the judges, including renowned poet Brian Moses, was hailed as 'a captivating progression of thoughts and choices that make this a wonderful, but simple piece of creative expression.'

This is an exceptional achievement, especially as Sriya's poem was in the category of entries with pupils from Years 10-13.

My Life as an Aurora
Do not touch. But admire,
for it is not of intent but of desire.
Let the light glisten as it shines on strong.
But just know, this is where I belong.
Do not interact. But smile,
for you have no reason to be hostile.
You may judge or you may defy.
But just know, even the brightest of stars die.
Do not shed emotion. But express,
for their ease could be your distress.
They may unite. They may divide.
But just know, they cannot run and cannot hide.
Do not speak of such. But hear out,
for her life has a free-flowing route.
She can follow ahead and always trace.
But just know, there is more beyond her space.
Do not curse. But condemn,
for you show all but your stem.
You bury your pain within the unknown,
But just know, do not set your heart in stone.
Do not talk. But listen,
for you awe at the aurora that can glisten.
If they can paint the dark with their light.
Take my advice, before approaching the night

Congratulations to Sriya and well done to all of our other pupils who also took part – the standard was phenomenal and we enjoyed reading so many wonderful, powerfully emotive and personal poems from all of the girls who entered the competition.



During the Summer Term 2024 some of our Year 10 pupils who study French entered the Stephen Spender Prize competition run by Stephen Spender Trust. This is a leading annual prize for poetry in translation.

The results have landed and this year we are delighted to announce that **Lola Kloot** (Year 11) received a commendation for her translation of the poem 'Soleil et Eau' by Aime Cesaire.

Congratulations to Lola on this fantastic achievement.

Senior pupils at PGHS took part in the Languagenut 'UK Languagenut Secondary Competition' over the course of two weeks. We are extremely proud of everyone who took part and delighted that three of our Year 10 pupils managed to place themselves within the top 50th position on the Leaderboard.

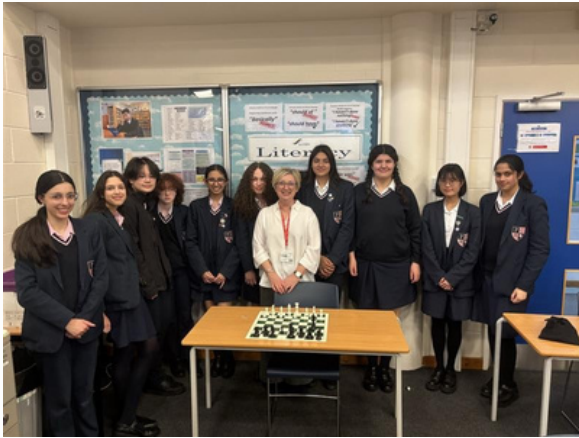


It takes a lot of time and dedication to score and complete language related tasks at this level. A big congratulations to **Hana** (16th place), **Lana** (31st place) and **Cecilia** (34th place). They will all receive a prize from the LanguageNut team very soon.

We are delighted to share another incredible achievement by our Year 10 pupil, **Mya Z.** After taking part in the recent GSA (Girls' School Association) 'Go Bold Writing Award', Mya has been long-listed ... in the Year 10 – Year 13 category no less! It is an absolute privilege to watch Mya grow as a writer and for her voice to be heard and acknowledged in such a prestigious award. We look forward to the results being announced. Congratulations must also go to all of our girls who entered – the standard was incredibly high.



PGHS Sporting Achievements



On Thursday afternoon, a team of ten pupils from our Senior School chess club attended the annual Inter-School Chess Tournament at Lea Valley Academy with three other Enfield schools. This was a great opportunity for our pupils to play chess with pupils from other schools and of very different abilities in a competitive environment.

After a highly competitive ISA North London Swimming Gala, where PGHS competed against other local independent schools, we are thrilled to share that our girls achieved outstanding success. They secured 1st place in the majority of their races, leading to their selection to represent North London at the ISA National Swimming Gala.



Five girls from our Year 2 class took part in the Enfield Borough Gymnastics Competition yesterday, which was held at Southbury Leisure Centre. The girls all performed their routines brilliantly and we came 3rd overall! A great effort by everyone involved. Well done to Olivia, Valentina, Mila, Adira and Julieta.



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Keep up to date

The Palmers Green High School Alumni Association is the umbrella group for all former pupils of the School. In earlier years, members opted to join after leaving the School. Now, all Year 11 pupils automatically become members when they leave the School after their GCSEs.

Member meetings are usually held once a year on Founder's Day (normally the second Friday in May). Alumni are also most welcome to attend events at School which are of specific interest to them e.g. the GCSE Art Exhibition and Drama performances and are encouraged to contact the School Office at office@pghs.co.uk for information about tickets and timings.

How To Become A Member Of The Alumni

If you left Palmers Green High School before Year 11 or have never opted to join the association, we welcome your membership. Please email us at alumni@pghs.co.uk, or fill in the online form below to join us. Alternatively, if you wish to ask any questions you may phone the School Office on 020 8886 1135.

Alumni Newsletter

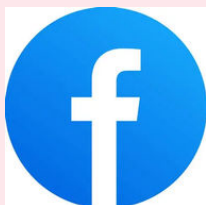
If you know someone who would like to receive a copy of our Alumni Newsletter (by email) please register or update your details by filling in the form on the alumni page of our website. We collect articles, memories and photographs throughout the year and would love to hear from our past pupils. If you have any news, memories and photos you would like to see in the next newsletter, please contact alumni@pghs.co.uk.

Social Media

You can follow PGHS on the below platforms:



[@palmersgreenhighschool](https://www.instagram.com/palmersgreenhighschool)



[linkedin.com/school/palmers-green-high-school](https://www.linkedin.com/school/palmers-green-high-school)