

## Heritage Bursary Fund Appeal



As we look back over our first 17 years, the generosity of those who have been in a position to help has made a decisive contribution. This was true when the school was founded in 2007, and it was especially true when we were seeking to purchase 17-19 Brookside in 2020. As we turn the corner into 2025, our school community is facing another serious challenge. That is why, today, we are asking those who are able to consider helping our community by contributing to our Bursary Fund.

### **The Challenge We Face**

Following the general election that took place in July, the new Labour government has introduced three taxes that directly affect us, all of which are being implemented between January and April. They are:

1. VAT on independent school fees at 20% from January
2. higher business rates for schools that are charities from April
3. higher employer National Insurance contributions from April

The impact of these new taxes upon the independent sector and the communities they serve will be severe. In our case, they amount to a claim worth approximately £650,000 – about 25% of total revenue in 2023-24. Smaller and newer independent schools, like Heritage, make up the majority of the sector. 65% of all independent schools have 200 or fewer pupils and over 50% were founded since 1990. It is these communities which are at particular risk. Without support, fewer middle income families will be able to access the education they believe best meets the needs of their children. This includes families seeking an education that accords with their faith tradition.

### **A Balanced Strategy**

Our story is a remarkable one and we have much to be thankful for. Over our first 17 years, Heritage has overcome many challenges and exceeded expectations. Throughout, Trustees have been attentive in ensuring that the work of the school rests on a secure financial footing. Regular cost-benefit analysis of expenditure, together with detailed long term modelling and cash flow

projections, have ensured good value for money for parents and careful stewardship of the school's resources.

With respect to the current challenge, Trustees have agreed a balanced strategy: (1) increasing fees gradually to help parents adapt to VAT (see our unique [Five Year Plan for Fees](#) for more information), (2) pursuing cost savings without compromising our core offering, and (3) seeking to build a Bursary Fund to support families who need help, so that as many children as possible can benefit from a Heritage education.

### Our Fundraising Goal

Today, therefore, we are launching our Bursary Fund Appeal. We know that it will take time for our community to adapt, and we see the next three years as a particularly important transitional phase.

Our goal is to raise £60,000 - £100,000 per year for our Bursary Fund, and to achieve this in 2025, 2026 and 2027. As we look beyond the next three years, we would love to see our Bursary Fund established for the long term through regular and occasional giving, including legacy gifts.

### The Uniqueness of a Heritage Education

We believe that a Heritage education is good for children. Our emphasis upon a knowledge-rich curriculum, the habit of attention, and living books, for example, together with the care and dedication of our wonderful staff team, is making a significant difference in the lives of our pupils. In a context of mounting concern over the mental health and academic development of children and young people, our model is attracting attention.

This term there have been [national](#), [local](#), and [international](#) stories in the media about Heritage School.

### Two Ways to Give

In view of the uniqueness of a Heritage education and the challenge our community is facing, will you consider contributing to our Bursary Fund? Or, do you know others, perhaps in your extended family, who might be willing and able to help?

If you are in a position to help, there are two ways to do so:

1. You could make a one-off contribution to our Bursary Fund.
2. You could commit to giving regularly to our Bursary Fund.

Regular giving can make a significant impact over time. For example, five people giving £20 per month can enable a substantial bursary for a family facing difficulties or who might otherwise not be able to access a Heritage education. In order to make a one-off contribution or to find out how to give regularly, please go to [heritageschool.org.uk/support-us](https://heritageschool.org.uk/support-us). There you will also find instructions for how to give tax efficiently from the USA.

Thank you for considering how you might help our community meet the challenges ahead.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas,

**Jason Fletcher, Headmaster**



### Heritage in the Press

This term, Heritage welcomed reporters and photographers from various prominent news outlets who were interested in knowing more about our school. *The Sunday Times* praised our knowledge-rich curriculum, calling us a 'pioneer' of screen-free education and highlighting our excellent GCSE results. ITV News showcased our smartphone-free policy, with Mr Fletcher explaining how it fosters attentive engagement and deep learning. Dutch newspaper *Trouw* also visited, describing the calm focus in our low-tech classrooms. This coverage reflects growing recognition of the value of Heritage's approach, which emphasises books, nature, and real-world connections to help pupils thrive. Visit the [News](#) page of our website to learn more.

# Whole School Habits: Attention & Thoughtfulness

Each half-term, we emphasize a Whole School Habit to cultivate essential qualities that enhance both learning and character development. This habit is introduced in Assembly and revisited weekly with stories or examples to embed it into our school culture.

In the first half of the term, our habit was **To Pay Attention**. Ideas from educator Charlotte Mason, who defined attention as ‘turning the whole force of the mind to the subject at hand’, highlighted the importance of this habit for mastery of any discipline.

In one Assembly, Mr Fletcher shared the teaching methods of naturalist Louis Agassiz, who was committed to training students to become keen observers. In the well-known ‘incident of the fish’, Agassiz handed a student a fish specimen and instructed him to study it without any guidance. Although the student initially observed the fish for hours, Agassiz extended the exercise over three days, insisting he continue without further instructions. By pushing his student to discover details independently, Agassiz demonstrated the power of close, persistent observation as an essential skill.



The focus for the second half-term was **To Think Before You Speak**, a habit that underscores the impact of our words. Drawing from modern and historical examples, including wisdom from the book of Proverbs, pupils have been encouraged to consider their words carefully, aiming to speak with kindness and thoughtfulness. Through these Whole School Habits, we aim to instill skills and values that will guide our pupils both in school and beyond.

## Senior Debate Assembly

In November, the Senior School held a thoroughly engaging debate in Assembly on the motion: ‘Do animals deserve rights when it comes to testing products?’, with Year 10 and 11 pupils Liberty, Anna, Rupert and Maxim arguing in favour of the motion and Daniel, Dylan, Tobias and Eva arguing against.

As chair of the debate, Mr Fox asked the audience to set aside friendships (temporarily!) and preconceived ideas, so to consider both teams’ arguments for the strength of their: reasoning, evidence, organisation, prioritisation, listening, response, expression and delivery.

On both sides of the debate, pupils used statistics, examples from history and persuasive language and intonation to forcefully convey their arguments.

Moral philosophy formed a key part of the debate. Rupert focused emotively on our human responsibility not to misuse our strength, but rather to show empathy and compassion to the defenceless. Members of the opposing team repeated the memorable expression ‘animal testing saves lives’, to argue that, in the absence of viable alternatives, animal testing remains an unavoidable reality necessary to the quality and longevity of human life.

Following presentations and rebuttals from the teams at the front, Mr Fox opened the debate to the audience. Demonstrating close attention and careful listening skills, pupils from all year groups built on the arguments offered and gave their own thoughts and requests for clarification.

Afterwards, Mr Fletcher reflected on the fact that the respectful exchange of ideas and the right to vote according to your conscience, without violence or intimidation, is the very essence of democracy.

Mr Fox highlighted two further opportunities to develop debate skills: the Cambridge Schools’ Debating Competition run by the Cambridge Union, the oldest debating society in the world, and an exciting new pupil-led Debate Club, starting in the Spring Term.

As for the result, in an anonymous final vote, the audience decided in favour of the ‘against’ team; although keen debate continued in conversation between pupils as they walked back to the main school building!

# Extra-Curricular Activities

A variety of clubs run during break times and after school for pupils to enjoy. From Sports and Games, Junior and Senior Christian Unions, to Creative and Academic Clubs, there is a rich mixture to choose from. Pupil-run clubs are offered too and we are always open to new ideas for enriching after school activities. Here is a sampling of some popular clubs this term; we will feature others later in the year.



## Senior Running Club

Come rain or shine (mainly rain) every Thursday after school a resilient bunch of Senior pupils are led by Mr Fox on a run through the streets of Cambridge! Here's why they enjoy it:

Annabelle and Kitty say 'It's a great opportunity to get fit and to have fun with your friends!'



## Whole School Brass Ensemble

This term, Mr Dalton has assembled a dedicated group of Heritage brass musicians who meet every Monday at the end of the school day and already play beautifully together. This is what they say:

Eleanor: 'It's fun because we get to play in a group and learn how to listen to each other as we play.'



## Senior Electronics Club

Expertly taught by engineer and Heritage parent Mr Bonsor-Matthews, the group meets after school on a Friday. Club member Benjamin says:

'Electronics Club is really enjoyable, and makes you think. When the circuit goes wrong, just try, try and try again!'



## Year 2 & Year 3 Maths Club

Mrs Mercer sneakily teaches Maths knowledge and skills to pupils from Years 2 and 3 through a variety of fun games each Wednesday after school.

Isaac says 'It's very fun and we play games and that is fun and joyful,' and Samson added 'we also meet new friends!' And they don't suspect a thing...



## A Normandy Adventure

As part of our foreign language programme in the Senior School, we are committed to creating experiences that offer pupils the chance to travel abroad, engaging with both the language and culture they study.

From 3rd to 6th October, a group of 47 pupils from Years 8 - 11 embarked on a memorable trip to Normandy, guided by Mrs Austin, Mrs Fleck, Mr Hulett, Mrs Lowe and Mrs Scarlata. Blessed with clear autumn skies, the four-day adventure offered a blend of cultural discoveries, language practice, and camaraderie.

After a scenic ferry crossing and some relaxed time on the beach, pupils arrived in the charming fishing village of Criel-sur-Mer, where they stayed in a language immersion centre tailored for authentic French experiences. Language practice was woven into the trip, with engaging activities led by French-speaking 'animateurs'. These skilled guides facilitated group games and discussions that helped pupils gain confidence in their French, making language learning fun and dynamic.

Each day also brought new adventures. In Rouen, pupils explored winding medieval streets, marvelled at the grand cathedral, and soaked up the town's history. They toured a local cider farm, learning about the region's renowned cider-making tradition. The travellers also enjoyed relaxed time on the beautiful Normandy coast under dazzling sunshine. On their way out, they visited the fascinating Nausicaa aquarium, where they encountered a variety of marine life and learned about marine ecosystems and conservation efforts.

The Normandy Trip was altogether a rich, multidimensional experience, deepening pupils' cultural awareness and fostering friendships along the way. We look forward to offering more such adventures that bring language learning to life.



# Spotlight on Enrichment

Weekly Enrichment sessions for Upper Prep through to Year 8 give pupils a chance to get out and about, pick up a new skill, work as a team with their classmates, or learn from an expert. These opportunities are often the highlight of the week. Here are just a couple of Enrichment experiences from this term.



## Outdoor Activities

As part of our Enrichment programme, pupils in classes from Upper Prep through to Year 8 enjoy outdoor sessions that emphasise hands-on experiences to help them deepen their appreciation of nature, build practical skills, and foster environmental responsibility. This term, pupils in Years 3 - 6 took part in Forest School (also known as Woodland Learning), where each class worked on their outdoor skills throughout the half-term. Activities included den building, fire-building, crafting with natural materials like autumn leaves and pine cones, tying ropes, and creating makeshift shelters. The children also enjoyed making toffee apples and roasting marshmallows, gaining confidence in the outdoors and developing a lifelong love for nature.



## Year 7 Journey Through Natural History

Year 7 pupils explored some of the wonders of our natural world earlier this term through a unique Natural History enriching course. The series began with pupils cleaning, identifying, and sketching fossils and rocks from the school's own collection, learning to recognise details in specimens that reveal ancient life. They then ventured onto a geology trail in Cambridge, discovering the origins of the stones used in famous local buildings and spotting fossils embedded in historic structures, bringing the story of Cambridge's landscape to life. The following week took them back in time at the Sedgwick Museum, where they explored the earth's vast history through its incredible fossil collections. Finally, pupils walked in the footsteps of Darwin, touring his Cambridge home, examining Darwin's finches at the Museum of Zoology, and looking into the development and impact of his theory of natural selection.



# Mr Atkinson Shares His Writing Journey at Senior School Assembly

In a recent Senior School Assembly, Heritage Maths teacher Pete Atkinson gave pupils an inspiring glimpse into his life as an author, sharing insights from his two published books, *Exploring Elohim's Embrace* and *The Rescue Mission*. Mr Atkinson's books examine profound themes of faith, the Biblical narrative, and the nature of God. His latest work, *Exploring Elohim's Embrace*, seeks to answer the fundamental question, 'Who is God?' while his earlier book, *The Rescue Mission*, frames the Bible as one continuous story, from Genesis to Revelation.

Mr Atkinson shared how his journey as a writer began at the age of 18, when a talk on reading the Bible as a single narrative sparked an idea to attempt to present that narrative in the form of a page-turning novel. What started as a simple idea turned into a 16-year project, where Mr Atkinson faced numerous challenges, from learning the Bible's stories deeply to developing his own writing style. He recounted how the process required perseverance, discipline,

and the willingness to go back and revise his work many times to make it better. He shared how balancing his studies and work with his writing meant dedicating entire days to crafting his book, showing a level of commitment that may serve as an inspiration to other aspiring writers. Mr Atkinson also gave a candid look into his writing process, describing how he drew inspiration from a wide range of books, compiling ideas and quotes into notebooks before sculpting them into his own narrative. He encouraged pupils to develop their own voice through reading and reflection, advising them to be 'ruthless' with their edits—removing anything that isn't perfect in order to leave behind the best possible version of their work.

His is an inspiring story, not only because of the content of his books but also his personal journey of dedication, faith, and creativity, serving as a reminder of what can be achieved through perseverance and passion.



## Parent Information Evening: Focus on Reading

At this term's Parent Information Evening, the focus was on the topic 'Reading at Any Age'. The session addressed key concerns about the decline in reading habits among children and offered strategies for fostering a lifelong love of books, with contributions from several members of the school's community.

A central theme discussed was the cultural shift in attitudes towards reading. Digital distractions like social media and TikTok have contributed to shorter attention spans, making it difficult for books to compete. Heritage's approach remains grounded in the belief that reading encourages critical thinking, empathy, and intellectual resilience. Drawing on ideas from educational experts like Charlotte Mason, Mr Fletcher stressed that knowledge, presented in a story or literary form, captivates children's attention, leading to genuine growth. Our Librarian Mrs Pilkington's passion for unlocking the joy of reading in children was evident as she gave practical advice to parents on selecting the right books for their children. She emphasised the importance of choosing age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate books, while also encouraging parents to model reading behaviours at home. Mrs Pilkington shared that by age 11 only 25% of children express a love for reading, a statistic she finds heartbreaking.

Parents left the evening equipped with suggestions on maintaining a reading culture at home, from setting aside time for family reading, to using audiobooks and offering a balance between fiction and non-fiction, to nurture a well-rounded intellectual appetite. The evening emphasised the school's commitment to cultivating a lifelong love of reading in all its pupils.

## Year 8 Impresses with a Tempestuous Tale



This term, Year 8 pupils delighted their audience with a highly original and entertaining production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The performance featured modern costumes, a sprinkling of songs including from *The Greatest Showman*, and a distinctive adaptation that director Mrs Burden described as 'darker and more strange' than previous years.

The play's dreamlike confusion was intentionally brought to life, with Mrs Burden preparing the audience beforehand: 'There will, without doubt, be times when you're not quite sure what's going on—which is absolutely as it should be!' The Year 8 cast delivered a superb performance, demonstrating a confidence that has grown with each year's production.

Bringing this Shakespearean masterpiece to life was no small feat, requiring the pupils to tackle complex text and make it clear, compelling, and alive. Mrs Burden praised them for their hard work, marvelling at the sheer amount of text they memorised and delivered with such brilliance. Reflecting on the play's deeper meaning, she highlighted Shakespeare's message of forgiveness: 'Instead of darkness and despair, you have beauty and brightness—a comedy, not a tragedy. How much more beautiful the world would be if we all embraced forgiveness.'

Year 8's *The Tempest* was a thought-provoking performance that was a pleasure to watch. As Mrs Burden said, 'They brought the text alive, and it was wonderful!'



## A Word from our Head Girl & Head Boy

Each year, the Head Girl and Head Boy take on key responsibilities, contributing to the life of Heritage School through their leadership and service. This academic year, Liberty and Sandy, our Head Girl and Head Boy, have stepped into their roles with enthusiasm. They have helped welcome new pupils during the Year 7 Induction Afternoon, shared their insights with parents at the Year 5 and 6 Information Evening, and guided visitors during our October Open Morning, where they also delivered speeches about their experiences at Heritage. As active members of the Senior Council, Liberty and Sandy offer valuable input on school initiatives and serve as role models for their peers. Their contributions are already making a lasting impact.



### Head Girl Liberty

I am incredibly grateful to represent Heritage as Head Girl this year. I have been an active member of Heritage for twelve years and hope to continue giving back for my remaining time. I am planning on continuing with my clubs, Line Dancing and Crochet Club, this year as well as volunteering with the Junior Handicraft Club. Due to the size of Heritage I've really learnt to connect with pupils outside my age range and talk to and appreciate those who I am close with. In my free time, I dance, play piano and read a lot. I also bake a lot and enjoy anything that involves time with my friends. When I leave school I wish to go into medicine and become a Forensic Pathologist! I adore Heritage and all that it stands for. I hope I can help sustain the incredible atmosphere in my final year.

### Head Boy Sandy

Now, in my 12th year at Heritage School, I am honoured to have been selected as Head Boy and grateful for this opportunity to give back. Heritage has allowed me to explore a wide range of sports and to gain a truly personal interest in my studies, which has suited me very well. It's a joy to listen to the ideas of the student body when running the Student Council and I look forward to implementing their suggestions to further grow our school community. In my spare time I enjoy playing the violin and reading all kinds of books. After Heritage, I would like to study Classics at university as a base for a career in law alongside pursuing my running to as high a level as possible.



## Christmas Concert & Nativity

Last night's annual Christmas Concert and Nativity, held at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, was a joy to watch and an always-cherished highlight of the Heritage School calendar. The evening opened with a reflective organ voluntary by Luke (Year 11) and a bright fanfare by the Brass Ensemble, setting a serene and festive tone. Mr Fletcher then welcomed the audience with a message reflecting on the profound message of the Christmas story: despite the vastness of the universe, God cares deeply for humanity, as seen in the incarnation—God becoming one of us to invite us into the fullness of His life. Performances highlighted the musical talents of pupils from every age group, including the Infant Choir, all Infants, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6, and the Senior Choir. Special highlights included the Junior Choir performing *In the Midst of the Presents*, a beautiful song

composed by our own Mr Dalton, and seeing all Seniors (along with some Staff) joyously performing *Joy to the World* onstage together. The Nativity, narrated by Senior pupils and acted by the youngest children, sweetly captured the miraculous story of Jesus's birth. Congregational carols, including beloved favourites, encouraged everyone to join in and together participate in the harmonious celebration. Special thanks go to Mrs Caldwell, Mr Dalton, and Mr and Mrs Wright for their musical accompaniment, as well as Mrs Good, Mrs Shore, the amazing Mrs Lowe and all the staff for their meticulous preparations and direction. Proceeds from the evening's collection will support improvements to the playground at Amazing Grace School in Uganda, reflecting the season's spirit of generosity. Thank you to everyone who made this a heartwarming and festive event!



## Infant & Junior Recital Assembly

In late November, Mrs Lowe brought together twenty musicians from across the Infants and Juniors to delight pupils, parents and staff on a range of instruments, including the recorder, clarinet, violin, cello and piano. Pupils from as young as five years old, who have only been practicing their instrument for as little as six weeks, performed confident solo and group pieces. With greater years of experience, Junior pupils entertained with more complex compositions. Every pupil overcame any initial nerves and received heartfelt cheers and applause for their performances! Mr Fletcher praised their bravery and encouraged other musicians to be inspired to put themselves forward for a future Recital Assembly.



# Class Assemblies



## Year 6: Inspiring Figures

Year 6 pupils shared presentations on a range of inspiring figures from history and today, highlighting individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields. Some of the inspiring figures included Marie Curie, Louis Zamperini, Paralympians and other athletes who have overcome challenges, literary figures like J.K. Rowling and Anne Frank, the missionary David Livingstone, Albert Einstein for his theory of relativity and Greta Thunberg, as a modern-day reformer. Through their presentations, the pupils reflected on how these individuals have shaped the world with their courage, creativity, and determination.

## Year 3: The Power of Attention

Year 3 explored the theme of attention, demonstrating what they have learned about focussing their minds in different ways. Through their performances, the children demonstrated three types of attention: floodlight, flashlight, and laser light. The assembly concluded with a group reading of *The Man with the Violin*, based on the true story of Joshua Bell, the renowned American violinist who famously performed incognito in a subway station. (Only seven people stopped to listen for more than a minute!) This heartwarming story emphasised the importance of noticing the beauty in everyday moments.



## Upper Prep: Advent Assembly

In early December, the Upper Prep class led a thoughtful and festive Assembly on the theme of Advent. Each child began by sharing what they look forward to most about Christmas—ranging from turkey and mince pies to Rudolph's red nose and the 'powerful Jesus.' The class introduced the Advent Wreath, explaining its symbolism: the circle represents God's eternity, evergreen leaves symbolise His everlasting love, holly leaves and berries recall Jesus's crown of thorns and His sacrifice. They also shared the meaning behind each of the candles: the prophet's candle (hope), the Bethlehem candle (faith), the shepherds' candle (joy), and the angel's candle (love). To close, the children displayed the handmade gifts and decorations they've been creating, including cards for their Senior reading buddies and special presents for their families. Their Assembly was a lovely reflection on the spirit of Christmas giving and anticipation.



# Spotlight on Sport

## Inter House Competitions

The Inter House system provides leadership opportunities, creates team spirit and helps to deepen relationships in the school community across year groups. Each pupil is put into one of the four houses, and points are accrued throughout the year. Here are the results so far.

Activity	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
Y3/4 Cross Country	20	15	10	5
Y3/4 Swimming Gala	10	20	15	5
Y5/6 Capture the Flag	20	5	12.5	12.5
Y5/6 Cross Country	10	5	15	20
Y5/6 Swimming Gala	5	15	10	20
Y7/8 Basketball	15	5	15	20
Y7/8 Benchball	15	5	15	15
Y7/8 Capture the Flag	5	20	15	10
Y7/8 Cross Country	10	15	5	20
Y7/8 Hockey	10	5	15	20
Y9-11 Basketball	10	5	20	15
Y9-11 Benchball	15	7.5	7.5	20
Y9-11 Capture the Flag <sup>1</sup>	5	20	12.5	12.5
Y9-11 Capture the Flag <sup>2</sup>	5	15	10	20
Y9-11 Hockey	10	5	15	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>162.5</b>	<b>192.5</b>	<b>235</b>



Y7/8 Hockey inter house competition

## Netball Superstar

Congratulations to Year 11 pupil Cecilia on her selection for the Saracens Mavericks Under 18 Futures programme. Saracens Mavericks, one of the UK's top netball clubs, competes in the elite Netball Super League and supports player development from grassroots to professional level through its Futures pathway. After impressing at an invite-only trial in October, Cecilia earned a place in this prestigious programme, which is part of the England Netball performance pathway. Many U21 and Super League players began their journeys here. In addition, Cecilia trains and competes for Comberton Netball Club, which was unbeaten across the Eastern Region and topped the league in April. Her exceptional standard of play at such a young age reflects her incredible talent and dedication. Well done, Cecilia!



## Cross Country Competitions



**English Schools Cup:** Earlier in the year, Heritage sent four teams to compete in the county round of this cross country competition. They ran against schools from both Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, with two teams moving on to the next stage in the competition. The Junior Girls (Years 7/8) team secured 2nd place, with strong performances from Anna (Y7) (3rd individually), Hanna (Y7), Izabella (Y7), Kim (Y8), Lydia (Y7), and Sasha (Y8). The Intermediate Girls (Years 9/10) also took 2nd place, with standout individual results from Anna (Y9), Annabelle (Y9), Caitlin (Y10) (3rd individually), Izzy (Y10), Kitty (Y9), and Natasha (Y10). Both teams qualified for the regional competition, which was held at Stowe School in Buckinghamshire on Friday 8th November.



**Cambridge District Cross Country:** On 5th December, 32 Seniors represented Heritage in the District races at Netherhall School. Year 11's Sandy won the Intermediate Boys while Year 7 pupil Anna won the Minor Girls category. They will go on to represent Cambridge District at the County Championships in January in Ely, along with our other top 16 finishers - Year 10's Caitlin and Izzy in Intermediate Girls, Year 7's Wilfrid and Jamie in the Minor Boys category and Year 9's Kitty in first reserve place for the Junior Girls. These are fantastic results for races in which there were mostly over 150 runners!

## Sports Leadership

Year 11 Sports Captains organise inter-house teams for Years 9-11, Year 8 Vice Captains for Years 7 and 8, and Year 6 Junior Captains for Years 5 and 6. This year's captains are Sandy (Y11), Evelyn (Y11), Kim (Y8) and Sasha (Y6) for Blue, Liberty (Y11), Sasha (Y8), Rufus (Y8) and Alice (Y6) for Yellow, Pamela (Y11), Angus (Y11), Raphael (Y8), Daisy (Y8) and Daniel (Y6) for Red and Maxim (Y11), Aleksandr (Y8), Dom (Y6) and Toby (Y6) for Green.

# Welcome Back to our New Trustee

## Dr Paul Martin

We are delighted to welcome back Dr Paul Martin, who previously served as the Religious Studies teacher at Heritage School (2015–2022) and was briefly the Head of Seniors. He retired in 2022 and now lives with his wife, Anna, in Saffron Walden, where they enjoy helping to care for their two delightful granddaughters. Dr Martin grew up in India, where his parents were missionaries, before settling in Cambridge at the age of 17. He attended Hills Road Sixth Form College and later studied Theology at Cambridge University, earning both a PGCE and a PhD. His doctoral research focused on E. Stanley Jones, an American missionary to India from 1907 to 1948. In addition to his time at Heritage, Dr Martin taught Religious Studies at the Boys' High School in Bishop's Stortford and at Helena Romanes School in Great Dunmow. He also served in leadership at Gold Street Chapel, which became Saffron Walden Community Church during his early years at Heritage. A lifelong cricket enthusiast, Dr Martin still loves the game, though he no longer plays. We are thrilled to have him back as part of the Heritage community!



# Introducing Our New Staff



## Mrs Sarah Mercer, Receptionist

Since October, Mrs Sarah Mercer has embraced her role as our Receptionist with warmth and efficiency, becoming an invaluable first point of contact for parents, pupils, staff and visitors. Her welcoming demeanor and readiness to assist ensure that everyone feels well cared for. Married to Tim and proud mum to William in Year 4, Mrs Mercer brings her experience from the Administration team at St Andrew the Great Church to her work at the school. Outside of school, she enjoys long family walks, trips to the theatre, travelling, and exploring different cultures.

## Miss Imogen Monk, Gap Year TA

We are pleased to welcome Imogen Monk to Heritage as our Gap Year Teaching Assistant. Having recently completed her A-levels at Long Road Sixth Form College, where she studied Biology, Psychology, and Criminology, Miss Monk brings both enthusiasm and curiosity to her role. She enjoys exploring various arts and crafts and has a particular passion for sewing, often creating costumes for Comic-Con events. Miss Monk is taking this year as an opportunity to explore her interest in working in education full-time. Her first term at Heritage has been a rewarding experience, and she is excited to continue working with the children and contributing to the school community.



## HCA News

The Heritage Community Association (HCA) plays a vital role in the life of the school, and we are thrilled to welcome Irenee Daly and Helen Orr as this year's new Co-Chairs. They are eager to organise a variety of social and fundraising events, starting this past term with two coffee mornings for parents and a mulled wine evening for current and future HCA volunteers. Future events will include a Bring & Share Burns' Supper, Wine Tasting Evening, School Fete, and Summer Soirée. We extend heartfelt thanks to Caroline Way for her outstanding contributions as last year's Chair and her ongoing involvement in the fundraising team. Our gratitude also goes to the class representatives and committee members whose efforts foster such a warm and welcoming community at Heritage.

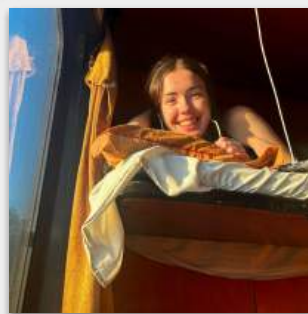


## HCA Parent Prayer Group

After Infant and Junior Assembly on Monday mornings, parents are warmly invited to a friendly, informal Parent Prayer Group at Panton Hall, coordinated by LP/Y2 parent Tina Hay. This group prays together for the school and the wider community, with little ones welcome to join. Weekly prayer points from the school are shared in a dedicated WhatsApp group, where members can also share their own prayer requests. To join the WhatsApp group, simply email your number to [HCAprayer@heritageschool.org.uk](mailto:HCAprayer@heritageschool.org.uk).

## A Summer of Adventure & Growth

After finishing her time as a Gap Year Teaching Assistant at Heritage, alumna Holly Innes embarked on a solo adventure where she spent an incredible summer volunteering in Vietnam. Here she writes about her experience.



*After finishing my time at Heritage, I spent a month of my summer holidays volunteering in Vietnam with a company called Plan My Gap year. I travelled there alone and then befriended other volunteers who had come out there. Everyone was really lovely and of a similar age to myself.*

*I was working in a disabled children's home called Friendship Village. Due to the effects of Agent Orange, a chemical weapon used during the Vietnam War, there is a higher percentage of people with physical and mental disabilities. When they come to FV they will stay here for the rest of their lives, being cared for by nannies and learning simple education, and vocational skills.*

*I volunteered in the mornings in a vocational training room—sewing—and spent the afternoons helping in movement class, a time where the residents could dance and let off steam. It struck me how similar the games were to ones I'd played as a child myself, as we'd always start off with an enthusiastic game of duck, duck, goose!*

*Volunteering was only half of the adventure, as we only worked Monday to Thursday and were free to travel at the weekends. I went on some unforgettable trips. My first was a cruise trip in the tranquil Ha Long Bay, and then the following weekend I trekked across Sa Pa, in the northern mountain region of Vietnam. Other highlights included The Golden Bridge in Da Nang, a bridge clutched in two huge stone hands, hidden away in a theme park in a mountain. The lantern town of Hoi An was also a spectacular experience: late one night my friends and I had the opportunity to go out onto the river and release small candle lit lanterns. It felt very much like that one scene in the Disney film Tangled!*

*Overall Vietnam was a brilliant experience, and I feel my year at Heritage really helped build me as a person and prepare me for my travels. I am now at the University of Nottingham reading English with Creative Writing, after which I hope to pursue my dreams of becoming a screenwriter!*

We look forward to hearing more from Holly in future years.

## Parenting in a Digital Age

On the evening of 27th November, around 85 parents and educators from across Cambridgeshire gathered to consider how, as individuals and as communities, we can help to protect children from the dangers of growing up in a digital age. Amy Ruffell from the [Cambridgeshire Smartphone Free Childhood](#) (SFC) spoke passionately about the gathering grassroots movement which has seen parents pulling together for change; to move from positive acceptance of the dominance of smartphones, to thoughtful and considered decision making.

'You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.'

C.S. Lewis

The main speaker was Dr Susie Davies, a practicing GP and founder of [Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adolescents \(PAPAYA\)](#), which 'promotes wellness and improved mental health in adolescents by helping young people achieve a healthy balance with technology'. Dr Davies began by sharing anecdotes of patients who came to her presenting with symptoms of conditions such as ADHD and clinical depression, which, in these instances, turned out actually to be the result of heavy gaming use and phone use. She spoke about how social media creates an 'involuntary hypnosis'; you are always waiting for the next dopamine reward, hooking you in and taking your time and your attention. Worse still, tech companies purposefully design apps this way; they *want* children (and adults) to be addicted for life, as Facebook whistleblower Frances Haughan revealed in evidence against Meta in 2021.

Dr Davies identified the key dangers of smartphones as: online comparison and self-esteem issues; social isolation and loneliness; cyberbullying; grooming and inappropriate content; and finally loss of sleep and opportunity costs—what are children *not* doing due to time lost to tech? Of particular concern were some shocking statistics:

- The average UK child spends 3 hours and 48 minutes a day online.
- 75% of children have seen a beheading video: children are seeing things that have a traumatic effect, which once seen can't be unseen.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of children are spending less time outdoors than prison inmates.

If the evidence on smartphone addiction highlighted by Dr Davies was alarming, her overall message was positive, focused not on taking away from children, but

on *giving back* play. She outlined the three strategies PAPAYA recommends for keeping children safe: delaying the introduction of smartphones, delaying the introduction of social media and modelling good habits as parents. For parents and schools, achieving these aims is far easier when done collectively, as a community standing firm together—a concept that is very familiar to Heritage families!

Next, Mr Fletcher drew attention to [Smartphone Free Schools](#), the new sister movement to a Smartphone Free Childhood. Its mission is simple: to inspire all schools to go smartphone free by implementing an effective smartphone ban so pupils cannot access smartphones during school hours. Smartphone Free Schools estimates that only 11% of schools currently have such a ban. SFC is focused on parents—urging them to sign the [Parent Pact](#), and work with other parents to change the social norm, while also encouraging parents to talk to their child's school. Smartphone Free Schools starts at the other end. It recognises that schools have a uniquely powerful voice and opportunity to influence the social norms in their community. It's great that, this November, thirteen Cambridge schools in the CB4 cluster wrote to their parents encouraging them to sign the Parent Pact.



To highlight the importance of this mission, Mr Fletcher referred to respected commentators who are expressing their concern, not just for children, but for all of us. A neuroscientist from MIT, Earl Miller, believes that the habituation to distraction caused by smartphones has created a perfect storm of cognitive degradation. Jonathan Haidt believes that the phone-based life produces spiritual degradation. Mr Fletcher finished with a rallying call: 'Cognitive degradation. Spiritual degradation. The stakes are high. Our children deserve better.'

As 2024 has proven a pivotal moment in the gathering movement on a Smartphone Free Childhood and Smartphone Free Schools, Dr Davies encouraged those gathered with a quote from C.S. Lewis: 'You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.'