Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, Summer 2026

First word – trips, activities, sport and the QMA

I am writing this at the start of the last week of the school year. A year that has gone by quickly, but one that has been filled with highlights and memories. The exam season finished several weeks ago and was the culmination of some hard work by the Year 11 and 13 students. We look forward to celebrating their successes in August. Students in other years have also sat exams but have also taken part in a wide range of trips and activities, most of which are available to view via our Bluesky accounts.

The Geography department have been busy, starting the term with the Year 10s in the Peak District, followed by an A-level fieldtrip to Farchynys and a wonderful visit to Tenerife (below), studying the volcanic landscapes of the island.

The Year 7 Farchynys weeks have been a huge success, with most students taking part. The boys enjoyed experiencing new landscapes and activities, as well as strengthening friendships. Bluesky is full of photos from the different weeks, but the common feature of these was the sense of enjoyment on the faces of students (right).

The CCF and Duke of Edinburgh teams have also been in Wales, completing tactical weekends and challenging navigation exercises. As well as trips and visits, the CCF have been busy with a variety of competitions and on the Dawn Chorus activity with new recruits. The final week of term sees the annual army camp at Swinnerton. There have been visits to Bletchley Park (Maths) and the Black Country Living Museum (History). We also celebrated our Founders' Day at Westminster Abbey at the start of July, with Year 7 students and prefects laying a wreath on the tomb of Queen Mary, as well as visiting the sights of London (left).

A large group of Year 9 students headed off to the Belgium battlefields with the History department in May (left), engaging with some important subject matter and paying their respects to former Marians who are honoured in the various memorials in that part of Europe. Spanish students in Years 8 and 9 enjoyed a fantastic week, practicing their language skills in Andalusia (below) and the maths department headed to Tuscany for a week with Year 12.

A team of Year 12 science students became national champions in the CanSat competition. Two teams from QMGS competed in the challenging initiative, with the winning team (below) winning a trip to the Netherlands, where they took part in a European science summit. Other Year 12 students represented the Chemistry department at the national IRIS conference, presenting their research to an audience of academics and receiving high acclaim for their efforts.

The Biology department headed out to Cyprus at the end of June for their annual diving trip and had a great experience. The photos and videos on Bluesky are a must see (snapshot below). The term has finished with the French department on the Opal Coast of France, the History department in Istanbul and the Year 9 Mandarin Excellence programme group in Shanghai as part of their intensive language camp (photo on next page). The Mandarin department have also taken part in a study trip to Nottingham University with Year 10 and into Birmingham's China Town with Year 7. We are so grateful to all the staff who have made these opportunities possible and to the Queen Mary's Foundation, who have provided over £10,000 this year to support students with associated costs.

MEP Year trip to Shanghai

It has been a busy term of sport, with cricket teams reaching the latter stages of county cups, entry in several festivals and the Year 8 team taking part in a tour of Yorkshire (below), winning all of their games. The standard of opposition has been high, and the students have equipped themselves extremely well.

The athletics teams performed extremely well at the regional event, with the Year 9 and 10 team qualifying for the midland finals.

The rugby season was also finished off at the beginning of the summer term, with the Year 9 team (below) competing in the EDF Cup Final, which was played at Gloucester Rugby Club. The team unfortunately lost the game, but it was a great experience for the students to play at a professional stadium.

Finally, we were delighted to welcome over 400 guests to the Queen Mary's Association's Summer Arts Festival (right). With music and drama performances, DT/Art exhibitions, fantastic food and a wide variety of games and activities, there was something for everyone. It was especially pleasing to welcome many new year 7 students and their families. The event has raised around £4500 in profit, which will go towards supporting a wide range of activities in school.

All the money generated from profits of events and other QMA fundraising contribute to projects which ultimately benefit many of our children. Previous fundraising events have enabled the school to purchase a minibus, install cricket nets and covers and a refurbishment of the Library. Last year we provided funds to support teacher-led initiatives such as the refurbishment of the Welfare Hub extension, which allows the school to provide targeted pastoral support to students. This year, we continue to support individual projects as well as supporting the School's Future Sports @ QMGS project. We hope that you can support the valuable work of

the QMA by attending events and purchasing raffle tickets, so that we can continue to enrich our children's school experience.

Easy fundraising is also an easy way to support the QMA. We have raised a total of £8,718.68 for the school from 309 parent and staff supporters. Please support this initiative which does not cost you anything as it is the retailers who donate on your behalf based upon the amount that you spend with them; you can find our Easyfundraising page at this link

We are always looking for support in the running of the events, but also in the donation of raffle/tombola prizes, business sponsorship, and match funding. Please do contact us if you can help in any way. Each QMA event has a committee to run it, and we have a separate group who manage the running of the bar. If you are interested in supporting the QMA, please contact us via Minaxi Patel-Gill at: alumni@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk

Staff leaving this summer

As is customary at this time of year, we say goodbye to a number of colleagues, as they move onto new challenges. Ms Muntaner leaves us after a year as a Spanish foreign language assistant to take on a similar role at a new school, to which we wish her well. Mrs Boden joined us at Christmas in the music department and moves to a permanent role at Hydesville. We are grateful for her involvement in the music programme, including assistance around the extra-curricular events. As Ms Fernandez-Ruz returns from maternity leave, we also say farewell to Mr Hill, who is joining Arthur Terry to continue his teaching journey, and we are tankful to him for what he has contributed this year.

Three members of non-teaching staff are leaving us after several years of service. Mr Steele has worked as an academic mentor with GCSE and A-level students. Mrs Brookhouse and Mrs Freeman have both worked on the main reception. All are moving onto the next chapter of their lives (including retirement in some cases) and they leave with our best wishes and gratitude for what they have given.

Mrs McPhee is our longest serving of staff to leave the school, as she pursues new horizons in her career. Mrs McPhee joined the school as a German teacher in 2009, moving on to lead that department. She later moved into teaching PSHE and led the department with distinction for several years, establishing it as a core subject in every year group. She has been innovative with the curriculum and has gained a national reputation with her work on mental health and the instigation of the 'Change Your Mind' programme. Mrs McPhee has had a number of pieces of work on the areas of PSHE and mental health published. She will be missed at the school, and we wish her all the best for the future.

Pet therapy

Bertie the therapy dog has been a regular visitor to school this year, with his owner Georgia. We are pleased to receive this service free of charge, but if you would like to make a voluntary donations to the charity 'Pets as Therapy', you can do so by following this link: Pets As Therapy: Walk This May 2026

Modern Work Experience - Your Help Required

In September we will be launching our new Modern Work Experience programme which will provide work experience activities and placements for all students in the school. To help deliver this we are looking for local and regional employers who may be willing to host QMGS students for a morning, full day or longer placement. We would be grateful if you could complete this form to let us know whether your business or workplace could help provide such an opportunity. Please click on the link below to express an interest and also share the link with your wider network.

Work Experience Placement Opportunity 2026-2027 – Fill out form

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Mr P Sunley (Head of Economics and CEIAG Coordinator)

Walsall Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme
Please see below for for summer opportunities. The Walsall HAF website can also be found here.

Avenues of support (Mrs Hill)
I would like to remind all parents of the avenues of support we offer, focussing on pre-loved uniform and sports kit and food hampers. We have had donations of uniform from Y11 and Y13 at the end of last year, but there has been a drop in donations to the Community Hub of late.

Thank you to parents and alumni alike who have generously donated uniform and sports kit to our Community Hub. This is always very much appreciated, and we look forward to receiving more donations. We have a good stock of pre-loved items, so please contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk if any items are required. Please also contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk if your family would benefit from a food hamper.

Mental health and wellbeing
The school continues to support staff and students with their wellbeing through the usual communication channels. We work with several organisations, and any member of the school community can raise concerns via the wellbeing or safeguarding email addresses. These will be checked during the holiday, but there may be some delay in response.
Qmgswell-being@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk
qmgssafeguarding@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk

This account is monitored by the SEMH team and is checked regularly:

- Mr Collins (Assistant Head and DSL)
- Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer)
- Mrs Mohan (6th Form Operations Manager)
- Ms Forbes (SEMH counsellor)
- Miss Daniels (SEMH counsellor)

QM Experience Fund and the Future Sport programme

I wrote to all parents at the start of the school year about our 2025-26 QM Experience Fund. A large number of people have contributed to this, raising almost £7000. I hope that all parents can consider a donation as we approach the end of the year. Whether it is through sport, music, drama, language learning or one of the many other extra-curricular activities, we hope that your child will make the absolute most of the QM experience in their time with us.

As I have written to you about previously, over the past three years, we have been fundraising towards the Future Sport @ QMGS project: an ambitious initiative to revolutionise our facilities for the benefit of our students and the wider community. Any donations to the QM experience fund will initially go towards this but will support a wide range of other opportunities once we have completed the project.

We have completed the astro-turf development and opened this in April (below). Work has been completed on the natural turf pitches, with drainage added, levels graded and seeding completed. We still have significant fundraising to do for phase 3 (the refurbishment and extension of the pavilion) and would be grateful for any support. As shared in October, please follow this link to read press coverage of the work.

I hope that you will seriously consider making a regular payment to the QM Experience Fund. We are grateful for a regular contribution as it enables us to plan the best ways in which to support our young people. Please follow this link for details of how to set up a standing order to the donations account and a Gift Aid declaration which, if you are a UK taxpayer, will allow us to claim an additional 25% on top of your donations. Alternatively, if you would prefer you can make a one-off annual payment (£75) or termly payments (£25 per term), you can do this via Parent Mail. Please select the 'QM Experience' option. You can also support the Future Sport project via the Just Giving website.

Thank you for your support!

Dates for your diary

The full school calendar can be found on the School Website, but I have included some key dates for the next couple of months below:

Wed 15 Jul	Students finish for summer (2pm)
Thu 13 Aug	A-level results day
Thu 20 Aug	GCSE results day
Tue 1 Sep	Staff training day
Wed 2 Sep	Y7/12 induction day
Thu 3 Sep	School opens for all students
Wed 9 Sep	Y7 parent info evening
Thu 10 Sep	Y12 parent info evening
Sat 12 Sep	Entrance exam
Tue 15 Sep	Y10 parent info evening
Thu 24 Sep	RSHE info evening
Sat 26 Sep	QMC dinner
Thu 1 Oct	Y11 parent info evening
Thu 8 Oct	Y13 parents' evening
Wed 14 Oct	Staff training day
Thu 22 Oct	Speech Day
Thu 22 Oct	School closes for half term

Term dates for 2026-27 are available, via this link.

Regards and have a fantastic Summer break

Mr Langton
Headmaster