

# Innovation Award for an Outstanding New Initiative

## FRANCIS HOLLAND, SLOANE SQUARE

From day one at the school, pupils of every year group are immersed in programmes and workshops – and even podcasts – to build entrepreneurship skills for their future

“Creativity, innovation and enterprise have come to be cornerstones of our ethos,” says Headteacher Lucy Elphinstone, “making this win for our Creative Enterprise Programme particularly gratifying. Thank you to our Director of Creative Enterprise for developing the unique programme, to the judging panel for recognising its strength and, of course, to our girls for their boundless enthusiasm in pursuing their social enterprise and entrepreneurial passions.”

FHS has a strong Christian foundation and a philanthropic ethos. Developing successful businesses was one approach; inspiring young women to set up social enterprises was another. There’s an inherent risk that such programmes become swept up in the co-curriculum but this approach has enabled pupils from all year groups to access the unique initiative.

When pupils apply to FHS, they’re asked enterprising questions and face a creative challenge as part of their 11+ interview; if pupils were to run a successful business, what might they do with their profits? In year seven, they are presented with a creative challenge. Last year, they challenged Professor Kneebone’s claims that children were leaving school without the levels of dexterity required to sew bodies in surgery. Cue working with a professional artist and an acrylic butterfly project. The aim: to ensure that all year sevens believed in their collective creativity as a year group.

By year eight, pupils lean on their creative confidence to partake in Peter Jones’ Tycoon in Schools project, only to act as business mentors in year

The school’s podcast is called *Francis Holland Questions*



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nine with this valuable experience under their belt. From bamboo pens manufactured by pupils to healthy slushies sold at targeted Enterprise Fairs, year eights know how to sell and year nines understand the importance of business acumen.

The journey continues in year 10 when all pupils participate in FHS’s Upper School Enrichment programme. Working with its Link Entrepreneur, Zena El Farra, winner of investment on *Dragon’s Den* for her creative refuge, Masterpeace, pupils experience four hours of Design Thinking. Last year saw pupils design face masks which incorporated wearable technology, the year before focused on headphones and technology which might enhance the experience for listeners.

The school’s flagship programme is the sixth form’s Innovation Sprints – workshops with Link Entrepreneurs

where pupils learn to start businesses alongside their studies. All very impressive, but what about the final piece of the jigsaw? And what’s on offer for year 11 and upper sixth?

A podcast called *Francis Holland Questions* has been launched, where the FHS community is given an insight into the lives of a range of professionals.

The aim is to harness the unconfined creativity, innovation and enterprise shown by so many pupils – brought to life by a programme which aims to develop skills over time. Visiting speakers are one thing; living and breathing entrepreneurship through regular Enterprise Fairs is another: there’s a team of sixth formers developing an Etsy channel to give the school’s alumni, current pupils and parents the chance to trade through FHS’s community. 🍷

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