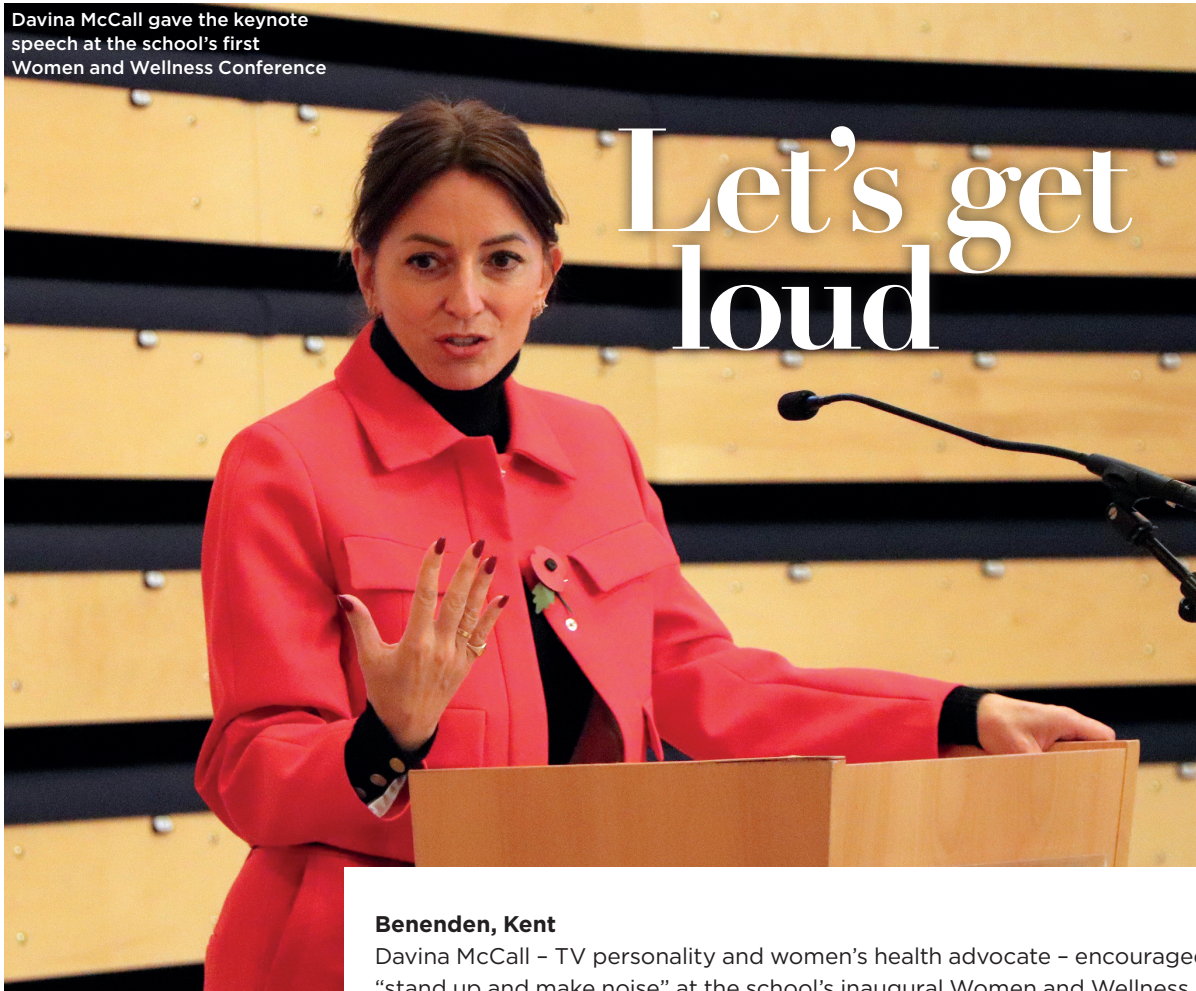


IN BRIEF

STUDENT SUCCESSES • EXTRACURRICULAR EXCELLENCE • INSPIRING INITIATIVES • NEW HEADTEACHERS

WORDS: LAURA SUTHERLAND

Davina McCall gave the keynote speech at the school's first Women and Wellness Conference



Benenden, Kent

Davina McCall – TV personality and women's health advocate – encouraged young women to “stand up and make noise” at the school's inaugural Women and Wellness Conference.

Davina opened the conference, which saw speakers discuss topics such as the menopause, pensions, investing, nutrition, and digital safety, with a keynote speech and Q&A session. Her speech touched on her experience with the menopause, and what it means to be a woman.

She said: “I wouldn't change being a woman for anything: all of the things we go through make us the most resilient people ever. There are so many crosses to bear but also so many benefits.”

Around 200 students and members of the local community were in attendance to learn more about the issues that matter to women in the 21st century, with Davina encouraging the engaged audience of students to go after what they want, saying: “I cannot encourage you more to hustle. If you think you don't have a voice, get someone's email address and make a noise. If you wait for someone to come to you, it's not going to happen.”

Benenden's first Women and Wellness Conference was designed to inform and empower young women to influence real change for generations to come. It comes hot on the heels of the school's recent global conference, entitled Inspiring Future Female Leaders, which saw inspirational alumnae – including HRH The Princess Royal and HRH Princess Basma bint Talal of Jordan – energise students from more than 120 schools across the globe.

Other speakers included Anna Lane, President of the Social Enterprise, Renee McGregor, leading sports dietician, and Charlotte and Emma Roberts, Founders of Digital Awareness UK. ►

PHOTOGRAPHY: BENENDEN



Fresh faced

Hodder House, Lancashire

2024 marks a remarkable 20 years of successful nursery education at the award-winning Hodder House. This follows a major refurbishment at the Stonyhurst pre-prep last summer, which saw the creation of a number of large, bright open-plan classrooms, a new playroom and a designated art and design area. The unveiling of this refresh has augmented Stonyhurst’s renowned all-through social, educational and facilities provision as Hodder House enters its third decade.



Right off the bat
Highfield & Brookham,
Hampshire

The school has once again been named as a thriving centre for cricket. This latest endorsement comes from *The Cricketer Schools Guide 2024*, which named the Liphook school among its top 50 UK preps (state-funded and private) for the fifth successive year. All entries were judged against an extensive set of criteria.

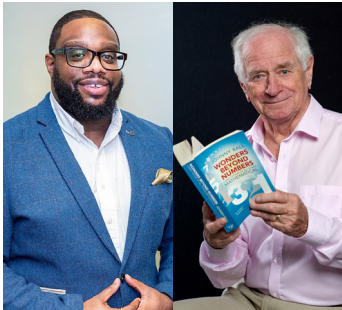


Figure it out
NSPCC, Nationwide

The charity’s annual Number Day has garnered the support of TV presenter and celebrated mathematician Johnny Ball and financial expert Emmanuel Asuquo. The pair will visit schools to encourage youngsters to foster a love of maths. Alongside this, children will Dress up for Digits (wear numbered clothing) and enjoy maths-based fun.



At piste
Bolton School,
Greater Manchester

Year-five pupil Jasper Daniels, has made an impressive start to the 2024 Alpine ski season. Competing in the Jan Keller Cup, he put down two brilliant runs to take first place. Jasper then followed this up by placing first in the Champéry Cup Slalom, the Anglo-Scottish Cup Slalom and the Les Crosets Cup Pro Slalom.

BEST OF THE REST

• JOINING FORCES

Copthorne Prep, Surrey

The highly-regarded Surrey prep has confirmed that it will join the award-winning Caterham School group with immediate effect. The family of schools encompasses Caterham Prep and Caterham Senior School – which also launched the East Surrey Learning Partnership – and now, Copthorne Prep.

• A WORTHY WEEK

Solihull Prep, West Midlands

The co-ed prep’s Charity Week fundraising drive, held in October 2023, has raised more than £10,000. Over five days of charitable fun, from tuckshop takeovers and talent shows to a staff dodgeball match, the community raised five figures to help a Sri Lankan hospital’s paediatric wing.

• SEASON OF GIVING

Ursuline Prep, Essex

Pupils took part in a ‘reverse advent calendar’ in the lead-up to Christmas, by bringing in one item each day to donate to the Community Embrace Food Bank Project in Harlow. Food, domestic cleaning products, hygiene products, gloves, scarves and hot-water bottles went to the worthy cause.

• TAKE A BOW

Taunton School, Somerset

Senior student and violinist Anthony Knight represented the school at the Westminster Abbey carol service, where he met Princess Catherine of Wales. He was given the privilege in recognition of his extraordinary fundraising concerts to help children in conflict zones around the world.

CHANGING PLACES

Headteachers on the move



Hannah Hellier will take over as Headmistress of **St Mary's School**, Cambridge in September.



Cranleigh Prep, Surrey will welcome **Will Newman** as its new Head.



Joe Silvester will be Head of **St Alban's School**, Hertfordshire at the start of the next academic year.



Haileybury, Hertfordshire has appointed **Eugene du Toit** as its new Head, effective of September.



Emma Károlyi will join **St George's Windsor Castle**, Berkshire as Head in the autumn term.



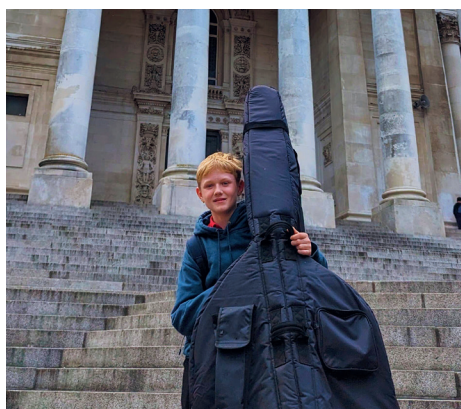
Lisa Kerr will take over as Head of **George Watson's College**, Edinburgh.



Expanding equality

Aysgarth School, North Yorkshire

From September the boys' school – a beacon of academic excellence for more than 150 years – will welcome female pupils for year groups four-to-eight, marking a new chapter for Aysgarth. The decision follows 30 years of the school's pre-prep (nursery to year three) following a successful co-educational model. Headmaster Jonathon Anderson says, "This decision is about making our best even better."



Another string to his bow

Haberdashers' Monmouth Prep, Monmouthshire
Year-eight pupil Oliver Maunder has secured a position in the National Children's Orchestra for the second year in a row. A dedicated double bassist, he will undergo intensive training during the Easter holidays, culminating in a public concert at the Lighthouse Theatre in Poole. A second course in the summer will be followed by a performance in Bristol.



Giving back

Sherborne Prep, Dorset

On the first Saturday of the new year, pupils were 'challenged for charity'. Split into groups, the children were thrown into a variety of activities, from swimming 21 miles (the English Channel) to a non-stop danceathon and continuous ping-pong. Throughout the morning, the school's spirit shone through, as they raised donations for the Sherborne Community Kitchen and Crisis Homeless Charity.

BEST OF THE REST

• WOMAN TO WOMAN

St Margaret's, Aberdeenshire

In January, a group of pupils had the honour of meeting Her Majesty Queen Camilla at the opening of a domestic abuse safe space at Aberdeen Art Gallery. The three senior students were invited after having represented Grampian Women's Aid in their Youth Philanthropy Initiative presentations.

• A LITTLE SPARKLE

Stroud School, Hampshire

The Christmas spirit was kept alive at the end of last term with the exceptional nursery and pre-prep nativities for families. Having rehearsed very hard, the Early Years youngsters gave a wonderful performance of *The Twinkly Nativity*, while the pre-prep class opted to tell the traditional story.

• THAT'S A WRAP!

Stonyhurst, Lancashire

At auditions for a part in the upcoming TV dramatisation of the William Golding novel, *Lord of the Flies*, 26 budding actors from the school took to the stage. The casting director behind *Paddington* and *The Crown* came to Stonyhurst in their quest to find a young actor perfect for the role of Ralph. Best of luck, boys!

• FILLED WITH CARE

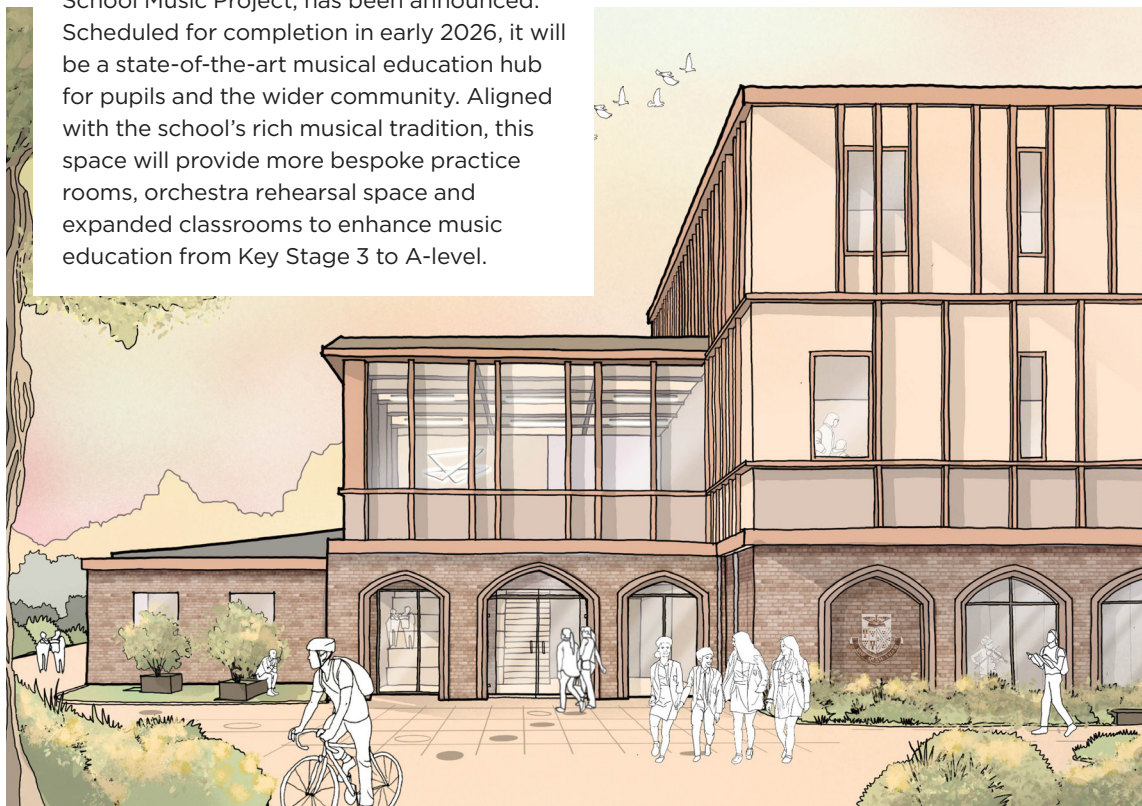
Danes Hill, Surrey

Pupils and teachers from the prep school joined with St Andrew's Church Youth Group and Oasis Children's Charity to organise the Christmas Hamper Appeal, which supports more than 250 families. While £65,082 was raised through JustGiving, the school's efforts included a sponsored Santa Dash.

On a major scale

Truro School, Cornwall

A transformative initiative, the Truro School Music Project, has been announced. Scheduled for completion in early 2026, it will be a state-of-the-art musical education hub for pupils and the wider community. Aligned with the school's rich musical tradition, this space will provide more bespoke practice rooms, orchestra rehearsal space and expanded classrooms to enhance music education from Key Stage 3 to A-level.



A happy tail

Beaundesert Park School, Gloucestershire

The school's annual charity fair raised £10,000 for Guide Dogs, allowing the community to name a puppy. Miles Northwood from Guide Dogs said "We'd like to thank everyone at the school. It costs approximately £54,800 to support a guide dog from birth to retirement, so we rely on donations to keep services running." Next the school is holding a competition to name the puppy.



In perfect harmony

Workop College, Nottinghamshire

The college was filled with melodies, as year-four pupils from six local primary schools joined acclaimed vocal group Apollo 5 for a fun-filled day of music workshops. This outreach programme is part of the renowned VOCES8 Foundation, which aims to enrich the musical education of young learners, as well as foster a love of singing and collaboration.



Blonde ambition

St Joseph's College, Ipswich

Senior students and sixth formers put on four electric performances of musical *Legally Blonde* at DanceEast. Following months of rehearsals, the cast's talent and excellent choreography delighted the packed houses each evening. The college's partnership with Arts International showed in the production's professionalism, while all students are encouraged to 'give drama a go'.