



Mayfield

Mayfield School Strategy 2024-2027



“I have begun the work, others will bring it to perfection.”

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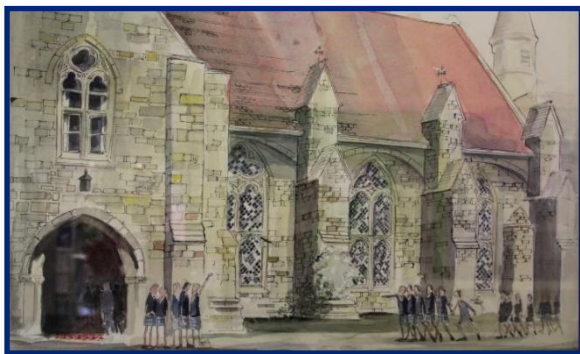
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Introduction

Cornelia Connelly founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) in 1846 and her life, spirituality and vision continue to encourage and challenge us today. As a Mother, Teacher and Religious, she had a unique perspective on education at a time when Schools for girls were in their infancy. Cornelia's philosophy was both forward thinking and enduring, so, in a year in which we celebrate 150 years of the School at Mayfield, it is fitting that we not only recognise all that has been achieved but more importantly look forward to ensuring that Cornelia's legacy continues confidently into the next century and beyond.

Mayfield School may be unique in owing its existence to a picnic. On 26th May 1863 Mother Cornelia escorted a small group of girls and staff from the Holy Child School at St Leonards-on-Sea to the ruins of the Old Palace of Mayfield. The estate, formerly one of the Summer Palaces of the Archbishops of Canterbury, left in ruins after the Reformation, was purchased by the Duchess of Leeds and presented to Cornelia and her Society. Restoration of the Old Palace began in 1864 and the remains of the Medieval Great Hall was transformed into a Chapel within 14 months.



In 1872 girls from the School at St Leonards-on-Sea were brought to be the first pupils at Mayfield. Development of the School continued in order to meet the needs of the growing number of pupils here. The Victorian red-brick school building was added in 1897, the Concert Hall by 1930, and a suite of other facilities were constructed throughout the second half of the 20th century.

Although Cornelia Connelly died in St Leonards, she chose to be buried in Mayfield 'with the Anglo Saxon Saints'. In 1953 the schools at St Leonards and Mayfield merged to form St Leonards-Mayfield School, with St Leonards home to the juniors, who then transferred to Mayfield. In 1975 St Leonards closed and Mayfield became the school it is today, educating girls from 11 to 18. Until the year 2000, the Headmistress came from the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, at which point the School appointed its first lay Headmistress. The links with Holy Child, however, remain strong.

Cornelia's life was far from ordinary. In all that happened to her she sought and found God, and responded 'Yes, Lord always Yes'. Her discernment shaped both the spirituality of the Society and the vision she had for the many schools that she established. Cornelia developed her educational system based on trust and reverence for the dignity of every human being. Her 'Book of Studies'- written for both staff and pupils- outlined guidance not only on course content but pastoral care and the formation of independent minds in young women of Faith and Reason.

Since 1846, those educating in the tradition of Cornelia Connelly's spirituality and philosophy of education have helped students 'to grow strong in faith and lead fully human lives' educating them to value freedom, creativity, self-discipline, individual initiative, and personal and social responsibility. She wanted Holy Child educators to carry this spirit to students of diverse backgrounds as they sought to 'respond to the needs of the age' in which they lived.

Cornelia was a pioneer in her field and, in drawing together the best educational ideas of her age; she created a bold and innovative curriculum, informed by her faith and life experiences. Inspectors visiting St Leonards in 1853 reported: 'Methods [are] mixed and applied with rare skill and judgement. Discipline [is] excellent. Instruction [is] of the highest order... The School is one of the most perfect institutions of its class in Europe.' We strive for this to be equally true today and into the future.

Introduction from the Chairman of Governors

Governors have been considering plans for the School and, with the enthusiastic support of senior management, have developed our Strategy for the coming three years.

Mayfield School is a flourishing and, with the appointment of our dynamic new Headmistress, is set for a bright future.

The vision and values of our remarkable 19th century foundress, Cornelia Connelly, underpin all that we do – and will continue to do so. We have much to be proud of as we recently celebrated the School's 150th Anniversary at Mayfield. This strategy is designed to enable us to continue to develop and excel. The girls, the staff and the wider community will all benefit from our plans, as will the infrastructure of our historic school.

In preparing for the next 150 years, we have to ensure that the School not only prospers, but is able to continue to fulfil Cornelia Connelly's vision for future generations. Every member of the School community has a role to play in our ongoing success, through their contribution over the next year, the next 5 years and next 10 years. Our development plans are the means to ensure we are working towards common themes and goals.

I commend this document to you.



Lady Davies of Stamford
Chairman of Governors



Introduction from the Headmistress

At Mayfield we believe in the transformative power of an 'All Girls' education. We are a school free of stereotypes and barriers. Time and time again the research into all girls' schools shows that students achieve better academic results, are less likely to conform to gender stereotypes, less constrained in their choice of subjects, more likely to take on leadership opportunities and show a greater ability to take risks and meet challenges head on. In short, they are empowered to be women of the future.

The overarching Mayfield Vision is to provide a holistic education for girls and young women that prepares them to 'meet the needs of the age' with hope and optimism.

This development plan seeks to put into action our vision that each Mayfield girl will be:

- Seen** - A student who is nurtured, encouraged and challenged to become the very best version of their authentic selves in a setting that truly knows, values and celebrates each precious individual.
- Heard** - A student who will have every opportunity to develop 'their voice' through the fullest formation of the whole person. They will know the value of their words in making a brighter future for both themselves and others.
- Ready** - A student who is equipped with the skills and resilience needed to navigate an ever-changing world. Adaptability, resilience, and self-discovery will ensure our girls are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Each Mayfield Girl will leave School with a deep understanding of 'self', a desire to achieve and an informed conscience that will make them a woman of value ready to make an impact in the world.



Deborah Bligh
Headmistress

Vision, Values and Mission

At the heart of our school lies our Catholic Ethos. Gospel values of love, kindness, inclusion, community and hope are the threads that run throughout Mayfield.

Our Motto

Actions not Words

Our Vision

Mayfield Girls: Seen, Heard and Ready to Meet the Needs of the Age

Our Mission Statement

Mayfield Girls:

- Are part of a strong community, committed to girls' education, rooted in the Catholic Faith, where everyone is welcomed and nurtured.
- Learn from a creative, innovative and academically enriching curriculum which enables them to grow emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.
- Discover their passions and develop their talents in an environment free from stereotypes and judgment.
- Enjoy a breadth and depth of opportunity both within and beyond the classroom.
- Will become confident, kind, resilient and articulate women who are equipped to make a positive difference to society.

Our Cornelian Values

Joy: We find joy in all we do

Compassion: We cultivate empathy

Integrity: We develop strong moral values

Generosity: We nurture a spirit of charitable giving and kindness for all

Gratitude: We are thankful

Respect: Through our actions we show that we value all

Courage: We have the confidence and resilience to make the right choices

Ethos

'Be yourself, but make that self exactly what God wants it to be'.

Cornelia Connelly



Central to our ethos is our Catholic identity, fostering an environment where every girl is valued for her unique individuality. At Mayfield we welcome girls of all faiths and none in a spirit of love and friendship, ensuring each is nurtured to be the best version of herself, celebrated for who they are and encouraged to reach their full potential in a joyful, aspirational and supportive environment.

Faith underpins every aspect of Mayfield, supporting our ethos to inspire and guide the girls in all their endeavours. We aim for the girls to experience the value of service, sharing gifts and talents without a sense of reward. We strive to ensure every member of our Community shows an adherence to the Cornelian Principles, understands the value of faith as an integral part of learning, and develops an appreciation of what is ethically correct.

Mayfield continues to be a welcoming and inclusive community, which works alongside the local community and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, demonstrating the importance of the Catholic Faith in the lives of everyone.

We will:

Strengthen our position as a leading Independent Catholic boarding and day school for girls.

Foster a fully inclusive community where all who come to work or learn feel valued.

Ensure our Cornelian ethos resonates throughout the school, both within and beyond the curriculum.

Provide a first class spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all students

Cherish and strengthen our links with the SHCJ and Old Cornelian (OC) communities.

Academic Provision

To continue to educate the girls to meet the
'Needs of the Age'.

Cornelia Connelly



Mayfield instils a love of learning through an innovative and creative curriculum which develops curious and independent young women. We continue to pursue academic excellence, ensuring that each girl is individually challenged and fully stretched in her studies by a team of experienced and passionate teachers. Our curriculum, both within taught lessons and beyond them, is designed to create an environment where questioning, reflection, risk-taking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged. We embrace adaptability, resilience and self discovery as fundamental pillars of our educational philosophy. The breadth and depth of opportunity offered encourages lifelong learning and prepares the girls for the world of the future by giving them the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence.

We will:

Ensure each girl is able to thrive and achieve her full academic potential.

Offer a worldclass, contemporary curriculum, that harnesses the latest innovations to provide girls with the strong foundations and confidence to prepare for and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Promote a culture of aspirational, personalised careers guidance and direction to ensure that each girl has an appropriate individual pathway to future success.

Uphold the highest expectation and culture of ongoing professional development of staff to ensure the girls benefit from an innovative and engaging classroom environment.

Pastoral Care

'Members of the community to feel valued as individuals and be challenged to grow into mature, independent and compassionate people'.

Cornelia Connelly



Mayfield aims to remain a tight-knit, supportive and vibrant community where every member feels valued and every girl has the opportunity to achieve her full potential. The first-class pastoral care for both day and boarding pupils provides an environment in which all girls benefit from being part of a global community, where the Cornelian Principles are instilled and lived. The School provides a safe and secure environment, where all girls can be themselves and are able to develop their gifts and talents for the benefit of the wider community. A brand new, state of the art Wellbeing Centre completed in June 2024 stands as a beacon for our commitment to the wellbeing of our girls.

We will:

Be a national leading expert in girls' wellbeing.

Provide all pupils with the opportunity to be safe, seen, heard and celebrated.

Ensure all staff are valued and equipped to support the pupils in their care to ensure any concern is identified early and addressed.

Work in partnership with parents to ensure the best pastoral care for their daughters and ensure that student wellbeing is at the heart of all we do

Communication & engagement

'Be accurate in all you say, in all you do'

Cornelia Connelly



Mayfield is a busy and vibrant community where the internal and external communications systems are vital. Effective communication ensures that the aims and vision of the School are accurately presented and, therefore, clearly understood by all. The integrity of the messaging is key: our actions must reflect our words. Our communication is focused on maximising the recruitment and retention of high calibre pupils and staff who believe in and support the School's values and ethos.

We will:

Promote the benefits of a Mayfield education to prospective families and feeder schools, through a programme of events and personalised engagement within the school.

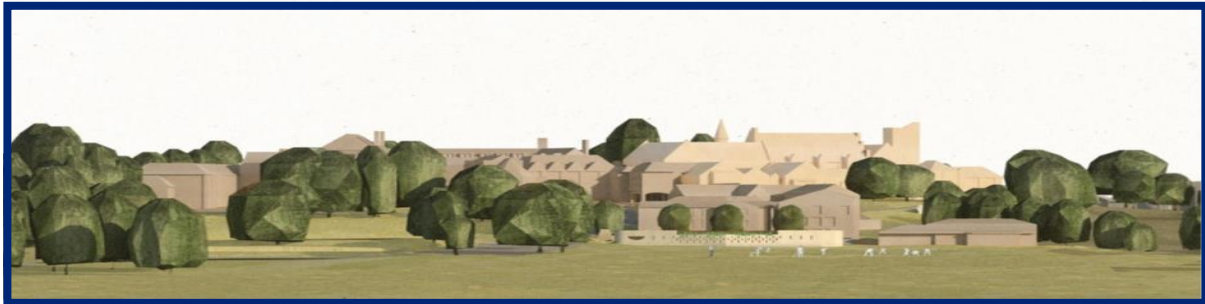
Continue to enhance the current parent experience, engendering loyalty and recognising the importance of their role in their daughter's education.

Ensure processes and procedures are in place to allow the school to run efficiently and effectively, ensuring every member of the community is engaged and feels valued.

Our Legacy and the Future

'Remember that it is not sufficient to have begun well; you must also persevere with courage and finish with resolution'

Cornelia Connelly



Cornelia Connelly brought a group of girls from the School's original site in St. Leonard's to the ruined Archbishop's palace for a picnic. Captivated by this medieval site, she instigated the development of the school at Mayfield that has continued since then.

Born out of the Catholic revival in the early 19th century, Mayfield School was founded as the result of an emotional response to a building. The ruins of the archbishops' great hall built in the 14th century inspired 19th century Catholic social reformers and educators to restore the site to become a thriving school, driven by a social and moral mission.

A key principle underlying both Gothic Revival Architecture and Catholicism in the early 19th century was the importance of moral and aesthetic principles. These principles lay behind the conversion of the medieval buildings and in the new buildings built at the site for the next 80 years or so, creating a learning and living environment with its own strong character and identity.

There is now the potential to re-invigorate the spirit that animated the medieval palace, and the passion and moral character behind Cornelia Connelly's gothic revival buildings, all whilst facing forward to engage new generations of students with the challenges of the 21st century.

We will:

Protect the School and its surrounding environment by:

- Maintaining the legacy of our buildings through a planned programme of maintenance and refurbishment, as guided by a heritage architect.
- Nurturing our environment and surroundings for the benefit of the community.

Develop new buildings to support Mayfield's growth as a school yet ensure that they fit within Cornelia's founding vision.

Develop a culture of philanthropic giving to support our legacy and our ambitions.

Manage risk and finances to ensure the longevity of Mayfield.



Mayfield

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