

## Senior Girls

Merchant Taylors' Schools  
Liverpool Road, Crosby, Liverpool L23 5SP  
Telephone: 0151 924 3140  
Email [j.baccino@merchanttaylors.com](mailto:j.baccino@merchanttaylors.com) [www.merchanttaylors.com](http://www.merchanttaylors.com)  
Headmistress: **Mrs CA Tao MSc BSc(Hons) Grad.IPD**  
Headmistress's: PA: **Mrs J Baccino**



**MERCHANT  
TAYLORS'  
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls  
aged 4 to 18 years

Dear Parents

I hope you all benefited from an enjoyable summer break and from spending time with your offspring. Those of you, like me, at the stage where your offspring have flown or are about to fly the nest, will recognise that the time you have with your children when they are young goes more quickly than you think, so I urge you to cherish the time you have with them.

There has been much to celebrate over the summer. The Sports Tour to Australia and Singapore was a huge success. I received several letters from parents of the host schools expressing how remarkable and what a credit the girls were to the school. Your role in this should be recognised as well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those staff who accompanied the girls on the trip and the girls themselves for the way they carried out their role as ambassadors for the school.

In August, we waved Year 13 off to start the next stage of their lives following A Level Results Day. This is the first cohort to complete the new linear style A levels and both staff and students should be commended for the way they have risen to the challenges presented by these reforms. According to the Telegraph MTGS came 240<sup>th</sup> in the country out of 325 independent schools, who released their results, with 33.2% of A\* - A grades. This compares to the national average for both state and independent schools of 26.4%.

Two girls have been successful in meeting their Oxbridge offers. Rebecca Southwart is leaving to read Chemistry at Oxford, having achieved A\*A\*A in her A levels, an A in AS History and an A\* in her EPQ. Daria Artioukh will read Land Economy at Cambridge having achieved A\*AA in her A levels.

Vocational courses have been very popular this year. Amelia Westwell has been offered a place on a prestigious Law apprenticeship. She will be gaining her Law degree with Fletchers Solicitors. Six other girls have also achieved places to study Law.

As a scientist myself, it is pleasing to see 18 of the cohort pursue courses in STEM related subjects. Nia Almond and Saoirse McGeown are going on to study Engineering at Newcastle and Edinburgh respectively. Emma Pearson received an unconditional offer to study Physics at Lancaster and Emma King will read Physics with Astrophysics. Ellen Murgatroyd will study Dentistry at Birmingham and both Morag Molyneux and Lauren Widders will study

Veterinary Medicine in Scotland. Olivia Thornton, Faye Carr and Grace Wilson have all obtained places to study Pharmacy.

Catherine Magennis, last year's Head Girl, has chosen to take a year out before her degree studies; she will be running a chalet in Switzerland for the Girl Guide Association.

In total, 13 girls received unconditional offers, a number of which were from Russell group universities, for courses including Law, Business and Physiotherapy. With the support of staff, all those girls who have chosen to go to university this academic year secured places, 37 of whom will be undergraduates at their first choice of university.

As you may be aware, GCSEs have also been the subject of reform and this year's cohort were the first to undertake in the majority of subjects reformed examinations with the new 9-1 grading system which replaced the A\* - E grades. According to the Telegraph, we were ranked 158<sup>th</sup> in the country, out of the 549 independent schools who chose to release their results, with 59.4% A\*-A / grades 9-7. The national average for both state and independent schools is 20.3%. Over 95% of entries nationally received a C/4 or higher which is 0.5% higher than last year. We achieved 97.3%. Overall, within MTGS, some 73% of candidates gained at least one A\* or 9/8. This is on par with all candidates within the 549 independent schools who released their data.

The top performing Year 11 student, Samantha Harrison, achieved eight Grade 9, an A\* in Further Maths and one Grade 8. She has been awarded an academic scholarship. Also of note is Dite Bagdonaite who attained eight Grade 9, one Grade 8 and a B in Further Maths. Ten students attained five Grade 9 or above. Across the board, it was pleasing to see so many of the girls surpass their predicted grades. They took on board the guidance they were given by staff and clearly had the self-discipline to plan and organise their revision in order to ensure they were able to perform to their very best.

We provide so much in terms of value-added teaching and learning and we continually guide our students to pursue their interests and passions. Congratulations to all the girls and thank you to the wonderful staff who have helped them along the way.

I spoke to all your daughters during my first assembly of the academic year about how they could develop themselves to be the best they can be. Many of us will have gone through life trying to be successful according to the yardstick offered by others and society in general. Like me, many of us have now settled and realised a most important truth. Once we understand that our purpose, our reason for being, should drive our feelings, thoughts and actions then we become more comfortable about being the best we can be going into the future. One of the strands of the Mental Toughness framework we have introduced within School is Challenge which is about stretching oneself and learning from everything and, in the process, being the best you can be. We are therefore trying to embed in the girls' psychology that by having a growth mind-set and being prepared to accept the challenge, this in turn will reinforce their self-belief whether the outcome is successful or not. I hope that you will work with us to help reinforce this message at home.

The teaching staff took part in an INSET on 'Teaching Backwards' presented by Mark Burns. Teaching Backwards provides a thinking and teaching process to maximise the effective learning opportunities in lessons. Mark spoke to staff about Feedback, Autonomy, Engagement and Challenge. Autonomy involves building the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits of learners so that pupils can be more independent of their teachers. Engagement is all about getting pupils into a state of 'Flow', a state where pupils are immersed and curious in their learning. Everyone should benefit in this respect. Pupils are more active and absorbed in their learning and there is greater job satisfaction for teachers as a result. Challenge centres around the quantity and quality of questions asked by both learners and teachers. Furthermore, it explores models to create higher level of challenge in lessons. Challenge is crucial to learner engagement and as a result, their thinking is deeper and their learning more embedded in their memory. Finally, Feedback. Some of you may be familiar with the work of John Hattie and Paul Black's 'Inside the Black Box'. Both practitioners highlight that feedback has a high impact on the progress made by pupils. In essence, teachers and learners need to have clarity about the learning 'gaps' which may exist and what can be done to close these. Self-reflection by pupils/teachers is the key, if the respective feedback given is to be acted upon.

I am sure that the teaching staff have been given much food for thought and, over the course of the academic year, the elements outlined above will be focus of further CPD that they will receive. Going forward, I want the teaching staff to see academic excellence. I want each girl to see her personal best.

In summary, in the words of Hal Elrod: 'Let today be the day you give up who you've been for who you can become'.

I look forward to seeing many of you over the course of the term and I hope, like me, your daughters are looking forward to a productive, happy and purposeful term.

Warm regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mrs C Tao', written in a cursive style.

Mrs C Tao  
Headmistress