



# St. Mary's Preparatory School

A love of learning for life



## PRESS RELEASE

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### St. Mary's Preparatory School celebrates prestigious Microsoft Award!

St. Mary's Preparatory School in Henley is celebrating their first year of being a Microsoft 'Showcase School'. One of only a small number of primary schools in the UK to receive the award, the school has been recognised for its outstanding commitment to using the very latest digital technology to enhance their children's learning.

**Kate Bodle, Deputy Headteacher and Digital Lead:** "We are absolutely delighted to be given this award, joining an elite group of schools that exemplify the best of teaching and learning in the digital world. Very few schools have been recognised in this way, and we are proud to be helping our children to be 'future ready' by equipping them with the skills that they will need as they move into senior school and beyond. Over the last academic year, we have enjoyed sharing our knowledge and expertise with our colleagues in schools in the local area, as well as other schools in the Cognita group across the UK. Looking ahead to the autumn, we are excited to be planning a number of skill sharing events for local schools and the broader community."

Part of the global Cognita Schools Group, the St. Mary's team work with Cognita's Digital Learning Advisor, who often visits to see the teachers and children in action. He then shares his expertise with other schools in the group, to showcase how to use their laptops and iPads to effectively supplement traditional teaching techniques.

**Damian Doyle, IT Lead for Cognita Schools:** "St. Mary's School is one of the leading schools in our group, in relation to embracing the use of new technologies and digital learning as part of a holistic curriculum. The school share their expertise by mentoring staff in other schools, and it is wonderful to see how the children are thriving as a result!"

At St. Mary's, the children in Early Years use iPads to access a variety of apps including handwriting programmes that enable children to make faster and more individualised progress. In Years 3 – 6, each child is given their own laptop, ensuring that the pupils acquire advanced IT literacy, using packages such as Adobe to present their work in video or book formats.

An extra curricular club for those keen to learn about coding, provides another opportunity for children to extend their knowledge. The Year 6 digital leaders support their younger peers as they learn to code robots, sharing their skills and enjoying their role as mentors. Pupils compete in coding competitions, and the older children enjoy their role as mentor to the younger pupils.

**Rob Harmer, Headteacher:** "We know that using appropriate Educational Technology tools can significantly enhance our children's learning. Our children learn to use technology, rather than simply be consumers, stretching their skills and ensuring that they are future ready as they look to their senior schools and beyond."

Microsoft Showcase Schools are pioneers in education, part of a global community, recognized and celebrated for educational transformation that includes vision and innovation in teaching, learning, and preparing students for the future.

The school's latest ISI Inspection report found that "Pupils develop excellent levels of competence in ICT. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards."



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## Editor's Information

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**St. Mary's Preparatory School** is a leading co-ed, non-denominational independent school, located in beautiful Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Recently found to be 'Excellent in all areas' in their ISI Educational Quality Inspection, the school is proud of its pupil's outstanding results, ensuring that children are offered places at the most prestigious schools in the area, including the offer of scholarships, awards and exhibitions. Offering a rigorous academic education in an exceptionally nurturing environment, St Mary's was recently shortlisted for 'Pre-Prep of the Year' Award.

St Mary's is part of the **Cognita** Schools group - a group of over 100 schools across 16 countries in Europe, the US, Latin America and Asia, offering a uniquely global perspective on education. More details at: [cognita.com](http://cognita.com)

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