



Monday 25th January 2021 - Community Assembly

Empowerment



Dame Mary Beard, the brilliant and inspirational classicist, provides important and powerful messages in her, 'Women & Power – a manifesto', which speak to the vital place of girls' schools in our education system. I provide an extract here, from the preface, to illustrate this:

Women in the West have a lot to celebrate; let's not forget. My mother was born before women had the vote in parliamentary elections in Britain. She lived to see a female Prime Minister... Unlike generations before her, she was able to have a career and marriage and a child (for her own mother pregnancy necessarily meant the end of her job as a teacher). She was a strikingly effective head of a large primary school in the West Midlands. I am sure she that she was the very embodiment of power to generations of girls and boys in her charge. But my mother also knew that it was not all quite so simple, that real equality between women and men was still a thing of the future, and that there were causes for anger as well as for celebration...She was often in my mind when I was preparing the two lectures on which this book is based...I wanted to work out how I would explain to her – as much to myself, as well as to the millions of other women who still share the same frustrations – just how deeply embedded in Western culture are the mechanisms that silence women, that refuse to take them seriously, and that sever them...from the centres of power.

Here at CCHS, since the doors were first opened in 1906, generation after generation of young women have been provided with a stimulating academic education and so

many other opportunities. This academic year, for all the disruptions caused by the pandemic, ambitious work continues to honour and progress this legacy. For example, Miss Harrison is developing our established 'Find Your Voice!' project with a 'Stand Up, Speak Out!' initiative. Mrs Cross is working on an 'Academic Resilience' programme, which will be launched in the Summer Term. All of this will build on the work of Dr Palmer, with the notion of 'the scholarly school', which animates the work of the Sixth Form team. Linking all of this together, we have the dynamic curriculum and enrichment work, led by Mrs Ledwidge, to ensure that our students have excellent opportunities to explore their interests, realise their ambitions, empower them to ask questions of the status quo and be the change-makers.

Mr Lawlor