

High
Performance
Learning

High Performance Learning in the Prep School Environment



ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL
WINDSOR CASTLE



“We decided on HPL in 2019 because we needed a fundamental shift in how we taught and how our kids learnt. In 2019 we were very old school in our mindset to teaching and learning and it stayed dull. Teachers dusted off their scheme of work from the previous year and there was no real thought about the science behind how we were teaching. I came across HPL in 2019 and I realised that the very philosophy of HPL would unlock a huge amount about our teaching and learning so we took it on”

- William Goldsmith, Headteacher

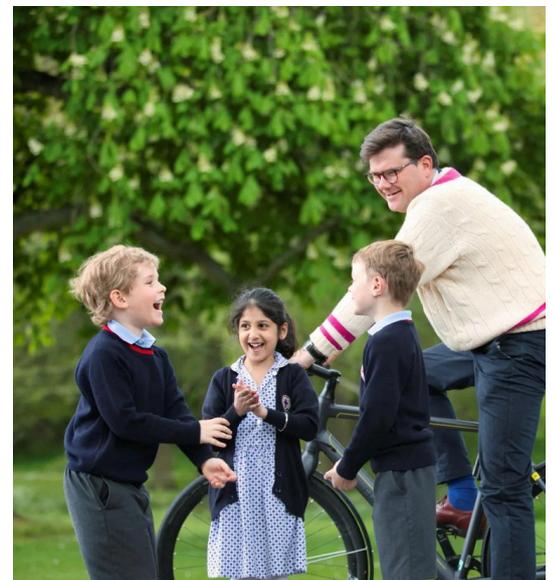
Why choose HPL?

St. George's School, an institution with deep historical roots dating back to 1348, was originally founded to educate the choirboys of Windsor Castle. The school, which now serves approximately 350 students, embarked on a transformative journey five years ago with the launch of their "Real World Ready" strategy. This strategy aimed to prepare students for the complexities of global society by fostering the right mindsets, attitudes, and skills.

“We decided to look at both the curriculum and the pedagogy, so how it was taught and delivered, how our students learn, all underpinned with the right mindset, attitudes and skills to contribute to global society” - William Goldsmith, Headteacher.

To bring this vision to life, St. George's School chose to implement High Performance Learning (HPL).

St. George's School's journey began with the adoption of the HPL framework in 2019, driven by the need for a fundamental shift in teaching and learning approaches. At that time, the school was characterised by traditional, rote learning methods, which lacked engagement and failed to consider the cognitive science behind effective teaching. The introduction of HPL was seen as a means to revolutionise the learning experience by incorporating neuroscience and cognitive science into daily teaching practices.



“In terms of the curriculum and philosophy of learning, we moved to become an IB school, offering the Primary Years Programme. But where HPL complements that so well is the IB provides the philosophy of learning, inquiry-based learning approach focussing on contemporary issues and transdisciplinary learning with all the subjects contributing to one another, and the learner profile, what HPL does is bring the neuroscience behind them and the cognitive science to enhance the pedagogical approach to teaching.”

The decision to integrate the IB PYP came later, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the school’s leadership recognised significant overlaps between the IB and HPL frameworks. The IB’s inquiry-based learning approach, transdisciplinary curriculum, and learner profile attributes aligned well with HPL’s focus on developing cognitive skills and attitudes. However, the challenge was to merge these two frameworks effectively without overwhelming staff or diluting their impact.



Implementation Strategy:

To avoid the potential pitfalls of introducing two comprehensive educational frameworks simultaneously, St. George's School adopted a phased approach. HPL was introduced first, with the school focusing on embedding the HPL Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP) characteristics and Values, Attitudes, and Attributes (VAAs) into the daily teaching practices. When the IB PYP was introduced, it was carefully integrated with HPL to create a cohesive and impactful learning journey for students.

A key innovation in this integration was the development of "I Can" statements, linking the 30 HPL attributes with the 10 IB learner profile attributes. These statements, tailored for each year group from Kindergarten through Year 8, provided a clear and actionable framework for students to understand and demonstrate the IB learner profile attributes in practice. For example, Year 3 students might focus on statements such as "I can describe a thinking skill to solve a problem" or "I can start to show fluency in some tasks."

'I can' example from St George's School

St George's School Learner Profile	VALUES, ATTITUDES AND ATTRIBUTES: AGILE I USE MY OWN INITIATIVE AND QUESTION IDEAS		
Open-minded	Enquiring	Creative and enterprising	Risk-taking
I critically appreciate my own culture and personal history, as well as the values and traditions of others. I seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and am willing to grow from the experience.	I act on curiosity	I am resourceful and use my initiative	I step out of my comfort zone

'I can' statements

THE BIG IDEA: LOOK AT ANOTHER WAY OF DOING THINGS!		
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am developing my natural curiosity I can identify questions and problems which interest me I am interested in the world around me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can produce pieces of work that are original to me I am aware that other people may have different ideas and beliefs and come from different backgrounds With guidance, I can plan to undertake research and collect, store and organise relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can plan and carry out independent research, and collect relevant information I can begin to consider different viewpoints on issues, events or problems I show an interest in people from other cultures and backgrounds

The school also introduced classroom displays featuring these "I Can" statements, along with visual representations of the HPL attributes and IB learner profile attributes. Each class took ownership of a specific learner profile attribute, becoming "experts" in that area and working towards collecting badges representing their mastery of the associated skills.

As William Goldsmith, Headmaster at St. George's school, pointed out, *"Instead of a year 3 pupil just saying, I'm an inquirer and not really knowing what it is, they will say, I can describe a thinking skill and solve the problem. I can describe an approach to inquiry and I can start to show fluency in these tasks."*



Challenges and Solutions

Teacher Resistance: Initially, there was concern among the school leadership about potential resistance from teachers. However, by carefully presenting HPL as a tool to enhance the IB framework and by providing clear, actionable guidance through the "I Can" statements, the majority of the staff quickly saw the value in the approach. The phased introduction and clear linkage between HPL and IB helped mitigate resistance and ensured a smoother transition.

William said, *"I thought the staff would eat me for breakfast having launched the IB and HPL, but as soon as I presented the HPL I CAN statements and said, This is how it's going to bring to life the approaches to learning and the learner profile, everyone was like, Oh my gosh, that's fantastic. That's the missing piece of the jigsaw!"*

Parental Concerns: As with any significant educational change, there were initial concerns from parents, particularly around the perceived rigour of the new frameworks. However, the school addressed these concerns by emphasising the research-backed nature of HPL and its alignment with the globally recognised IB framework.

Over time, the school became known for its progressive approach, attracting parents who valued innovative and research-driven education, *"Parents come to us because of our progressive approach."*

Impact and Outcomes

For Teachers: The integration of HPL with the IB framework has re-energised the teaching staff at St. George's School. Teachers have reported feeling more connected to their students and more engaged in the learning process. The collaborative, inquiry-based approach of the IB, combined with the cognitive focus of HPL, has led to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

As William observed, "HPL is now becoming second nature for staff. They're a lot happier and understand it. They can see the impact on the children and the impact for themselves."

For Students: The impact on students has been profound. There is a noticeable increase in student engagement and enthusiasm for learning, particularly among older students who were previously disengaged. The clear, actionable "I Can" statements have helped students understand their progress and achievements, making the learning experience more meaningful and motivating.

In fact, one of the initial concerns was that children who previously grew bored of learning might be resistant to it, however William said "10-11, year olds weren't interested in learning at all, whereas early years children are always interested in their learning. Yet, as we become more and more strained by assessment and exams and testing, the children were getting switched off, whereas now they're excited about learning!"

For Parents: Over time, parents have come to appreciate the value of the school's progressive educational approach. The school's reputation as an IB/HPL institution has become a key factor in attracting new families, with parents recognising the long-term benefits of the skills and mindsets their children are developing.

And as William states, "HPL has been the most rewarding thing I've ever done as a headteacher. I'm a massive advocate for it, because it's underpinned by decades of research. There are many skills programmes which you can freely download and use, but what sets this apart is it is highly research led."



ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL WINDSOR CASTLE

St George's is one of the oldest schools in the United Kingdom, dating back to 1348 when the College of St George was founded by King Edward III. The College of St George, which the school is part of, was inspired by King Arthur's legendary Knights of the Round Table. At the heart of the college is St George's Chapel, which was established to provide a spiritual home for the Knights of the Garter.

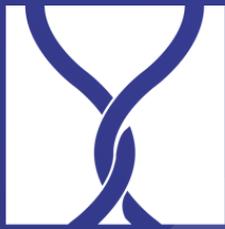
Between 2000-2010 the school expanded further and now educates around 350 children aged 3-13. With a pioneering outlook, the school remains very proud of its history and connection with the College of St George and Windsor Castle. Both the school and the extensive playing fields are on Crown land and we were so privileged to have HM The Queen as our patron.



High
Performance
Learning

High Performance Learning (HPL) works with schools to embed the HPL philosophy where every student is seen as a potential high performer. Its unique teaching and learning framework systematically recalibrates the school and enables students to develop the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and attributes needed for high academic performance and lifetime success. HPL offers a range of programmes to enable schools at any starting point to begin their journey towards being an HPL school.

The HPL World Class School Award recognises the very best schools in the world and is designed for those at the forefront of educational thinking.



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