



HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The School was founded in 1658 and endowed by Sergeant Maynard and Elize Stert, the surviving trustees of Elize Hele.

Elize Hele was born in Brixton in about 1560 and lived most of his life at Fardell, Cornwood. He is buried in St. Andrew's Chapel in Exeter Cathedral. Having no heirs, Elize left his wealth to be used for "pious uses". A number of schools in the South West were founded out of his estate by his trustees, including the Grammar School at Plympton, which was, until its temporary closure at the end of the last century, known as Hele's School, Plympton.

The old Grammar School building, which still stands in Plympton St. Maurice, was completed in 1671. Next to it stood the Schoolmaster's house in which Sir Joshua Reynolds was born. It is a surprising fact that the old Grammar School produced four distinguished artists: Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy; James Northcote; Benjamin Haydon and Sir Charles Eastlake (President of the Royal Academy and the first Director of the National Gallery).

The school faced many difficulties in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was eventually forced to close in 1903. It was reconstituted, by Devon County Council, as a co-educational Grammar School in 1921. It was then housed in a house known as "Castle Barbican" in Plympton St. Maurice. The school grew and prospered and moved to its present site in 1937. New extensions were opened in 1970 and in 1983 an Art Block was built. Refurbishment took place in preparation for reorganisation into an 11-18 comprehensive school when it reverted to its old name.

In April 1995 a new Sixth Form Centre, costing £400,000, was opened, providing excellent up to date facilities for the school's 250 plus Sixth Form learners. Shortly afterwards a new suite of Music Practice Rooms was completed.

In September 2000 the school became a DfES Designated Language College. This enabled the school to build a Modern Languages Centre with up to date technology through which we will develop an international ethos in the coming years.

The Dance Studio and Fitness Centre was completed in July 2003 providing superb indoor facilities for Physical Education and in 2004 the tennis courts were covered, enabling the PE Department to work entirely indoors when the weather is inclement.

In 2004 a new English Centre was opened which enabled the demolition of some of the 'temporary' huts and in 2006 a new Technology Block was built. At the same time the school was awarded a second specialism, Maths and Computing, as well as being recognised by the Chief Inspector of Schools as a "particularly successful" school.



In 2006 as a high achieving school we were awarded Vocational Specialist Status thereby enabling us to make significant developments within the curriculum.

Hele's School provides an excellent education rooted in strong traditional values. The friendly rich and nurturing environment is often the aspect that people say is our greatest strength. Successive Ofsted inspections have recognised this value:

'The very successful integrated approach that the school makes towards developing the social and emotional aspects of learning has been widely recognised both nationally and locally, and ensures outstanding care, guidance and support for students'. 'Outstanding' Ofsted Report 2007

'Positive relationships are a cornerstone of the academy's success and help to establish an atmosphere conducive to learning'. 'Good' Ofsted Report 2012

The academic record of the school is strong, and the curriculum is chosen to be challenging for all abilities, and a good preparation for further, higher education or apprenticeship in today's demanding times. We believe it reflects the subjects and skills that Plympton families want for their children. Results are above the national average both at GCSE and A level.

We are a self-improving community - always looking to do better, knowing that there is more we can do, and pushing ourselves towards excellence in all aspects of our work. Ofsted (2012) recognised that against the very tough new inspection criteria that the school is making strong progress towards the new outstanding grade.