

St Mary's Colchester. A happy high-achieving independent school for girls aged 3-16 and boys aged 3-4

St Mary's has a happy and caring atmosphere. In this very positive culture, pupils are keen to achieve, and this leads to success. St Mary's pupils' GCSE results are consistently among the best in the area and SATs results are well above the national expectations, with many pupils achieving grammar school places and Senior School scholarships. All this, despite the fact that St Mary's is not an academically selective school.

"I am always delighted to see our pupils' hard work pay off," says St Mary's Principal Mrs Hilary Vipond, "but what makes me most proud is meeting former pupils who tell me that without the happy and focused education they received at St Mary's they wouldn't be the positive and successful individuals that they are today. They look back on their school days with fondness – 'once a St Mary's girl, always a St Mary's girl!'"



To visit the school, please contact the Registrar on 01206 594180, or email registrar@stmaryscolchester.org.uk For more information take a look at the school website www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk



Colchester Heritage Open Days

The Turrets, Lexden Road



www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk

The Turrets, 89 Lexden Road

Built in 1817, for the infamous Town Clerk Francis Smythies (1779-1840), depicts a curiosity with battlements and turrets. It is a plastered brick, two-storey building with a cellar, attics, Gothic painted windows and beautiful ornate plasterwork ceilings and castle-style doors. Situated at the edge of the high ground of the now existing site for St Mary's School, it became a grade II listed building in 1971.

It's original owner Smythies, of Headgate House, Colchester was Town Clerk of for 20 years (sworn in 1820) having been the Mayor of Colchester 1811-1812.



Francis Smythies



Weddington Castle

The architect was Colchester born Robert Lugar (1773-1855), who was a renowned English domestic architect and garden designer, responsible for the architectural Gothic revival in England and Scotland. As Colvin notes, Lugar *"was a skilful practitioner of the picturesque, exploiting the fashion for cottages ornés and castellated Gothic mansions in the manner of John Nash. His two Dumbartonshire castles were among the first to introduce the picturesque formula into Scotland"*. Lugar's work is associated with the most distinguished and beautiful mansions, castles, cottages and parks in England and Scotland. He was employed by several leading industrialists to design grand houses such as Balloch Castle (1808), Cyfarthfa Castle (1824) and The Rectory in Yaxham in Norfolk, which is now known as Yaxham House. He redesigned Weddington Castle in Warwickshire, transforming it into a stone-faced building. He was also the County Surveyor of Essex. The Scottish architect, Archibald Simpson, worked for Lugar in his Holburn office from 1810.



The Turrets through the ages...

By the mid-20th century The Turrets had been converted into flats. St Mary's purchased the building in 1973 to allow for expansion of the school to introduce a Senior School for its girls (having begun as a junior school). This was around the same time as new kitchens, classrooms, a large dining room and a heated swimming pool were all added to the school. The Turrets was rather tatty with all the lead on the roof missing. In its sorry state, a great deal of work was required to restore it to its former glory. Thankfully none of the interior fittings had been lost.

Having recently been refurbished inside and out, the building now provides a wonderful learning environment for students at St Mary's Senior School, with classrooms for Mathematics and Modern Foreign Languages. It is also home to the School's Finance Department, Examinations Office and on-site School Uniform Shop, which can be found on the upper floor.

