

# ISA Awards 2023

## Case Study: Senior School of the Year



INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS  
ASSOCIATION

### LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL

JUNE 2024

#### History of the School

Leighton Park School, founded in 1890 in Reading, South East England, has a rich history and a strong connection to Quaker values. The school's ethos, described as achievement with values, character, and community, has been at the core of its mission, and it continues to influence the school's distinctive educational approach today.

Founded in 1890 as a boys' school, Leighton Park started with just four boys. The school grew significantly over the decades, reaching 103 pupils by the 1920s. By 1970, the school had expanded to 300 pupils, reflecting its rising prominence and appeal. A landmark moment occurred in 1975 when girls were admitted to the sixth form, marking a shift towards a more inclusive environment. In 1993, Leighton Park became fully coeducational, embracing both day and boarding pupils. This transition further enriched the school's community, making it more diverse and inclusive, with around 520 pupils today drawn from over 44 different countries.

Leighton Park's mission goes beyond academic excellence; it aims to inspire achievement with values, character, and community. The school's nurturing environment emphasises supportive relationships between pupils and staff, laying a foundation of confidence for personal growth. Pupils are encouraged to explore various opportunities, supported by gentle scaffolding, and encouraged to find their authentic selves. Under the leadership of Head Matthew Judd since September 2018, the school has adopted a bold, strategic approach to personal development. It focuses on instilling authentic



leadership, volunteering skills, and a desire to serve and support others. Leighton Park continues to inspire pupils to have real personality, self-discipline, self-respect, and self-awareness. The school's core purpose is to develop personal qualities that help pupils reach their potential, benefiting not only themselves but also society at large. Leighton Park School's history reflects a commitment to educational excellence, combined with a strong ethical foundation grounded in Quaker values. From its humble beginnings to its current status as a prominent co-educational school attracting pupils from across the globe, the school's mission of nurturing character, values, and community remains relevant. Leighton Park continues to make the school distinctive and original in its approach to educating and nurturing its pupils.



Matthew Judd  
Headteacher

## AIMS

At Leighton Park, we believe in nurturing well-rounded individuals who are equipped to make a positive difference in the world. We foster a supportive and inclusive environment where mutual respect, kindness, and a sense of belonging are paramount. We integrate mindfulness practices throughout the school day, prioritising student well-being and emotional intelligence. Our Quaker values of simplicity, truth, respect, integrity, peace, equality, and sustainability are woven into the fabric of daily life, guiding our interactions and curriculum.

Leighton Park offers a world-class education that goes beyond traditional academics. We emphasise strong character development alongside intellectual growth. Our award-winning personal development programs and Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) opportunities empower students to discover their passions, build confidence, and develop essential life skills. We utilise a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) approach, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills that will prepare them for any path they choose.

We empower our students to become informed and engaged global citizens. We equip them with a strong global awareness and a deep understanding of environmental issues. Project-based learning, industry engagement opportunities, and experiential learning trips provide them with the tools and knowledge to tackle the challenges of the future. Student voice is celebrated at Leighton Park. We actively involve them in decision-making and encourage their perspectives. We are a school that continuously strives for improvement, and student feedback is an essential part of this process. Our ultimate goal is to create the changemakers of tomorrow, compassionate leaders who are ready to build a brighter future for themselves and the world around them.



## ACTIONS

- We prioritised student well-being by integrating mindfulness practices throughout the school day to promote emotional intelligence.
- By cultivating an inclusive environment, we fostered a culture of mutual respect, kindness, and a strong sense of belonging for all students.
- We wove the values of simplicity, truth, respect, integrity, peace, equality, and sustainability into daily life and curriculum by embedding the school's Quaker values.
- We developed and implemented award-winning personal development programs to empower students' growth.
- We incorporated Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop well-rounded individuals.
- We adopted a STEAM Approach to foster critical thinking and transferable skills.
- We promoted global citizenship to equip students with a strong global awareness and an understanding of environmental issues.
- Implemented project-based learning, industry engagement opportunities, and experiential learning trips.
- We actively involved students in decision-making processes and valued their perspectives.
- We solicited continuous feedback by establishing a system for gathering student and stakeholder feedback to drive continuous improvement.



## OUTCOMES

Leighton Park's dedication to fostering well-rounded global citizens is reflected in the success of our students. Our emphasis on mindfulness and emotional intelligence has led to a thriving school community built on mutual respect, kindness, and a strong sense of belonging. Students feel empowered to take risks, explore their interests, and contribute their unique voices. This supportive environment allows them to flourish academically, personally, and socially.

The integration of Quaker values and experiential learning opportunities cultivates a deep understanding of the world's challenges and a commitment to positive change. Students graduating from Leighton Park are not just academically prepared but also equipped with the critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a strong moral compass to become the changemakers of tomorrow. They are passionate advocates for environmental sustainability, social justice, and global citizenship, ready to tackle the issues facing our planet.

Our commitment to continuous improvement, driven by student and stakeholder feedback, ensures that Leighton Park remains at the forefront of education. We are proud of the numerous awards recognising our academic excellence, personal development programs, and commitment to environmental responsibility. However, our greatest reward lies in the success of our graduates – confident, compassionate individuals who are making a positive difference in the world.



## NEXT STEPS

- Having established a strong foundation in mindfulness, we intend to explore additional ways to support student well-being.
- Building on the existing awareness of environmental issues, we aim to explore ways to further engage students with global challenges.
- The STEAM approach is a valuable tool, so we will be exploring further ways to innovate.
- While the school values student input, there's always room for improvement we are committed to developing more channels for students to share their perspectives on school policies and programs.

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