On Tuesday 16th June, Mulberry School For Girls was extremely privileged to welcome a very exciting visitor: Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States of America. Mrs Obama joined us at our school to launch her girls' education campaign, ‘Let Girls Learn’, through which she is calling to international governments to prioritise girls' education and help every girl in the world to complete her education.

The first lady entered the school to rapturous applause and cheering from students and staff alike. After greeting a committee of guests, representative staff and pupils in the reception area, she made her way through the courtyards of the school, accompanied by her hosts for the day – Nusrath Hassan (12SH) and Deputy Head Prefect Myesha Haque (10L). Students filled the courtyards, waving British and US flags and cheering as the First Lady walked amongst them. In the Mulberry Courtyard, Mrs Obama paused to watch a specially commissioned arts performance. The Year 9 Choir, conducted by Jemima Islam (9Y), sang a beautiful arrangement of ‘Something Inside So Strong’ by Labi Siffre. Mulberry alumna Maria Jahan performed a dance piece, accompanied by Naphysa Awuah (10B) reading Maya Angelou’s poem ‘Still I Rise’.

The First Lady made her way to the Parkwood foyer, where she was greeted by a delegation of Year 10 and Year 13 prefects. Greeting them with open arms, she said ‘It’s so good to see you!’ and told them that she was ‘so proud’ of the work they had done to make the visit possible.

After posing for a photo with the Prefects, Mrs Obama led a round table discussion on girls’ education in the Mulberry library. She was joined by the Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan; Secretary of State for International Development, Rt. Hon. Justine Greening; Bina Contreras, a volunteer from the Peace Corps; Dr Pauline Rose from Cambridge University; and Fiona Mavhinga, founding member of Camfed.

Mrs Obama then met an audience of over 200 Mulberry students who awaited her in the Main Hall, filled with anticipation and excitement. In addition to our students, we were joined by students from some of the fantastic schools with whom we have established valued partnerships over the years: Elizabeth Garrett Anderson school, the Ursuline High School and Wadham School in Somerset. We also welcomed VIP guests including Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister of Australia and current Board Chair of the Global Partnership for Education; and Matthew Barzun, American Ambassador to the UK. The rest of Mulberry’s pupils gathered in the Sports Hall to watch a live stream of Mrs Obama’s address.

Following an introduction by Dr Ogden and opening remarks by Justine Greening, Mrs Obama delivered a heartfelt and moving speech about the urgent need to prioritise girls’ education. She spoke with conviction about the impact a good education has not...
only on a girl’s life, but on the lives of her family and her community. Her passion was clear as she spoke about how valuable education is. She touched on her own background, growing up in a working-class neighbourhood in Chicago, dreaming of attending a top University and wondering how she was going to get there when she knew nobody else who had ever been to university. Students listened, rapt, as she encouraged them to be ambitious, to stay dedicated to their studies, to know the value of their education, and to lend their considerable energy and talent to helping other girls across the world to access education.

Mrs Obama’s speech was followed by a Q&A with Dr Ogden and Julia Gillard. Students asked questions about how they could follow in Mrs Obama’s footsteps and become lawyers, and what practical steps they could take to support girls who have not yet been given the educational opportunities Mulberry girls and their peers have enjoyed. As she took leave of her audience, Mrs Obama shook the hands of many students, and hugged many others. Her warmth and sincerity shone through and the audience, already moved by her speech, was left buzzing with excitement and energy.

After leaving the stage, Mrs Obama paid a surprise visit to the students gathered in the Sports Hall, telling them she couldn’t possibly leave them out.

Long after her departure, Mulberry students were filled with energy and excitement. More than ever before, our students have been galvanised to pursue their own dreams and ambitions with passion and drive; and to share their energy and experience with their sisters around the world.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to Michelle Obama and her team at the White House for a day our staff and students will never forget.

The full text of Mrs Obama’s speech is reproduced overleaf. Also included in this edition of the Berry Bugle is a series of press cuttings and photographs from the day; and an exclusive article about the visit written by 1st Mulberry Girl Guides for the Girlguiding UK blog.

We are very excited to report that Mulberry has been given an official invitation to visit Mrs Obama and President Obama at the White House next year. Fundraising for this trip will commence in September.

Address by the First Lady to Mulberry School For Girls

MRS. OBAMA: Thank you so much. (Applause.) Oh, warm welcome indeed. Well, hello, everyone. I want to thank Dr. Ogden for that wonderful introduction and for her outstanding leadership at this school.

I also want to thank all of the teachers, the staff who create such an amazing environment for these young women. This is truly a model, and it’s been a privilege to spend time here.

I also want to thank Secretary Greening for her poignant remarks. And I also want to recognize your Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, who participated in the roundtable with me earlier today, as well as -- to our American Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Matthew Barzun, who is here. Thank you so much, Matt, for all you do.

It’s such a pleasure to arrive here in the United Kingdom as the world celebrated the 800th Magna Carta anniversary, and the impact that document has made on not just your country, but on my country and all across the globe.

But before I begin, I want to say a special hello to everyone who I know is watching this event online and on TV all around the world. I want to thank everybody out there for joining us and for paying careful attention to this important issue.

And finally, most importantly, I want to thank all of the students here — the smart, powerful, creative, accomplished young women of Mulberry School for Girls. You all are beautiful. And your welcome was touching. (Applause.) And I’m not just talking about the girls here in the room. I also know -- I’m sending my love out to all of the girls watching from the Sports Hall -- hey. (Laughter.) We love you.

Now, I imagine that some of you might be wondering, well, why would the First Lady of the United States come here to Tower Hamlets? Why would she choose this community and this school when she could be anywhere in this city or in this entire country? And the answer is simple: I’m here because of you. I’m here because girls like you inspire me and impress me every single day. I am so proud of your passion, your diligence; as Dr. Ogden said, your grit, your determination. And I am beyond thrilled that you are working so hard to complete your education. It is so important.

And I’m here because when I look out at all of these young women, I see myself. I may come from a country that’s an ocean away, but -- I’m a bit older than you all. (Laughter.) Yes, I am. I know I don’t look it. (Laughter.) But I’m just a little older. But in so many ways, your story is my story.

For those of you who may not know much about my background, I grew up in a working-class neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago -- a neighborhood a lot like this one, where people work hard to make ends meet, but where families are tight-knit with strong values. My dad worked as a pump operator at the city water plant, and my mom stayed home to take care of me and my big brother Craig.

We lived in a really small apartment. And my brother and I shared a bedroom that was divided in half by a wooden partition, giving us each our own little, tiny rooms that fit just a twin bed and a small desk. So we didn’t have much space, but we had a whole lot of love.

And, perhaps like a lot of you, we grew up surrounded by our extended family. I had grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins living just blocks away from my family’s apartment, and my great aunt and uncle actually lived one floor below in the same apartment house. So our home was often busy with family coming and going. And because our apartment was so small, there wasn’t much privacy. I can remember how hard it was to
concentrate on my homework because someone was always talking or watching TV right next to you. I often woke up at 4:00 in the morning when the house was finally quiet just so that I could concentrate on and finish my schoolwork. I remember just dreaming of having a space of my own, away from all the family obligations that were always popping up.

As my great aunt and uncle grew older, my parents took charge of caring for them. My dad would help my uncle shave and get dressed each morning, and my mom would dash downstairs in the middle of the night to make sure that my aunt was okay. So we constantly felt the struggle to balance our family responsibilities and the schoolwork, the activities, and the goals that we had for ourselves.

And through it all, my parents fully expected us to do both — to achieve our dreams, and be there for our family. And they also knew that a good education was the ultimate key to our success. My parents told me every day I could do anything — I could grow up to be a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, whatever — but only if I worked as hard as I could to succeed in school.

I imagine that many of you have parents who give you the exact same advice. And like you, I didn’t want to let my parents down. So I worked hard in school. I read everything I could get my hands on. I did my absolute very best on every single assignment. I did everything in my power to be a good student. I dreamed of one day going to one of the best universities in America.

But despite my efforts, there were still people in my life who told me that I was setting my sights too high; that a girl like me couldn’t get into an elite university. It was like these folks were trying to put me in a little box — a box that fit their constrained expectations of me. And after a while, I started to wonder, well, maybe I was dreaming too big. What if these folks were right?

See, back then, I didn’t know what my future held. I didn’t know that I’d be accepted to a top university. I didn’t know that I’d go on to get a law degree and become an NGO director, and a hospital executive, and, eventually, First Lady of the United States. Those kinds of achievements seemed totally out of reach when I was your age. I was just a working-class kid from a good community with limited resources.

Neither of my parents and hardly anyone in my neighborhood went to university. And I wasn’t even sure if my family could afford the tuition. I didn’t have anyone to help me study for entrance exams. And the fact that I was a girl and that I was black — well, that certainly didn’t help things, either. When I was growing up, there were very few black women at high levels in business, or politics, or science, on TV, so I didn’t have many professional role models to look up to.

And I have a feeling that my experience might feel similar or familiar to some of you. Maybe you look at the leaders in your businesses and laboratories and government and wonder whether there’s a place for someone like you. Maybe you’ve heard about the kinds of tutors and prep courses and other advantages that wealthier students can afford, and you wonder how you ever will compete. Maybe you feel like no one’s paying attention to you,
like you’re lost in the shuffle at home or in this huge city, and you wonder whether it’s worth it to even aspire to be something great. And maybe you read the news and hear what folks are saying about your religion, and you wonder if people will ever see beyond your headscarf to who you really are — instead of being blinded by the fears and misperceptions in their own minds.

And I know how painful and how frustrating all of that can be. I know how angry and exhausted it can make you feel. But here’s the thing — with an education from this amazing school, you all have everything — everything — you need to rise above all of the noise and fulfill every last one of your dreams.

And it is so important that you do that, not just for yourselves, but for all of us. Because you all have a unique perspective. You have a unique voice to add to the conversation. You know what it’s like when a family struggles to make ends meet. You know what it’s like to be overlooked and underestimated because of who you are or what you believe in or where you come from.

And the world needs more girls like you growing up to lead our parliaments and our board rooms and our courtrooms and our universities. We need you. We need people like you tackling the pressing problems we face — climate change and poverty, violent extremism, disease.

And while all of that might sound a little daunting, I just want you to remember that you don’t have to do this alone. There are millions of people like me and my husband, Dr. Ogden, and so many leaders here in the United Kingdom and all around the world who are standing with you. We are doing everything we can to break down the barriers that stand in your way. We want to make sure that every door is open to girls like you, and not just here in England, not just in America, but in every corner of the globe. And that starts with making sure that every girl on this planet has the kinds of opportunities you all have to get the education and to succeed.

As you’ve heard, right now there are more than 62 million girls around the world who are not in school — girls whose families don’t think they’re worthy of an education, or they can’t afford it. Girls who live too far away from the nearest school and have no transportation. Girls like Malala Yousafzai who are assaulted, kidnapped, or killed just for trying to learn.

And this isn’t just a devastating loss for these girls, it’s a devastating loss for all of us who are missing out on their promise. One of these girls could have the potential to cure cancer, or start a business that transforms an industry, or become the next president or prime minister who inspires her country. But if she never sets foot in a classroom, chances are she will never discover or fulfill that potential.

And that’s one of the reasons why I’ve traveled here to the UK — because for so long, this country has been doing such wonderful work to support adolescent girls’ education around the world. We’ve been working hard in the United States as well, and earlier this year, the United States increased our own efforts in this area by launching, as you heard, our new initiative called Let Girls Learn to help girls in developing countries go to school, and, more importantly, stay in school.

And I am so thrilled that today, our two countries are announcing a series of new partnerships that total nearly $200 million to help girls like all of you get the education they deserve. We’re going to be working together to support young people — particularly adolescent girls — in areas affected by conflict and crisis, like the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our universities and development agencies are going to team up to research ways to improve education for girls. And American Peace Corps volunteers and the UK’s Campaign for Female Education are going to work together with local communities in developing countries to lift up adolescent girls’ education as well.

So I am very proud of the work that we’re doing together. And I’m especially proud to be announcing these new commitments here in London, because this city was the first stop on my very first international trip as First Lady. And during my time here, I visited with the girls from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School — a school a lot like this one — and I know that there are some of the students here today -- yes, you there go. (Laughter.)

And as I stood before that roomful of girls six years ago, all I could think about was how much promise they each had inside of them, how much passion and hope and intelligence each of them could bring to our world. And in many ways, those girls were the inspiration for so much of my work as First Lady — work to give girls like them, and like you, and like those 62 million girls around the world the opportunities you deserve.

And now, today, being back here in London, looking out at all of your faces, I’m once again filled with the same feeling I had six years ago. I see a roomful of business leaders and surgeons and barristers. I see women who are going to win elections, and science competitions, and arts awards. I see leaders who will inspire folks not just here in Tower Hamlets, but all across the country and all around the world.

That’s what I see. Because I know what’s inside of girls like you and like me. I know how hard we’ll fight for our families, how deeply we care about our communities, how much of a difference we can make for those around us. And I have seen it again and again and again that what our parents told us really is true — that if we get our education, we can do anything. We can lift up ourselves to heights we could never imagine. We can pay forward all of the love and support that our families have poured into us. And we can truly be, as Dr. Ogden says, “builders of a new day.” That is your work. That’s my hope for you.

“with an education from this amazing school, you all have everything — everything — you need to rise above all of the noise and fulfill every last one of your dreams.”
The door opened and she walked in. Everybody was clapping and cheering wildly, but when she stepped up to the microphone, we went quiet instantly. She thanked us for our ‘warm British welcome’, and said to us with a radiant smile: ‘I am so proud of you’.

It was Michelle Obama, the First Lady of the United States, an internationally renowned lawyer and girls’ education activist. She had come to our school, Mulberry School for Girls in Tower Hamlets, London, to launch her Let Girls Learn Campaign. The campaign was set up in response to the fact that millions of girls around the world are not currently going to school: the campaign seeks to get every girl in the world to school by persuading governments to commit to making girls’ education a priority.

Mrs Obama spoke to us about the problems that ordinary working class young women in the UK and America face when trying to get their education, and talked about her own background: she mentioned how she had lacked a quiet place to do homework; how family commitments had taken up a lot of her time; and how she had had few people to ask about university and exams because she had been the first person in her family to finish secondary school and go on to higher education. A lot of what she said resonated with us, and it was amazing to feel that she understood us so well.

There was one part of her speech that particularly struck us: at Mulberry, a lot of our pupils are Muslim, and many of us choose to wear the hijab or headscarf. Our headscarves are not just an expression of faith: they are one of the many ways in which we express our identities as young, independent Muslim women. But people often misinterpret them, and can form prejudices about us. Mrs Obama said that she understood some of our frustration when people failed to ‘look beyond our headscarves’ to appreciate all that we are, because there had been times when she had been judged and discriminated against because of the colour of her skin. She told us to never allow other people’s prejudices to stop us from being ambitious, and from working to achieve our dreams. It meant so much to us to hear this. Many people in the Main Hall were nodding and smiling, and you could see that everybody felt inspired and encouraged.

Mrs Obama told us that getting all girls across the globe into education was ‘our work’ – not just the work of current governments. She told us that young women would lead the way in making sure that education is available to all. She encouraged us to find ways to mentor other girls around the world who have not had the same educational opportunities we have had. Above all, she encouraged us to make the most of our own education.

We felt really inspired after listening to her speech. We all want to do well in school, and we all have dreams we are determined to achieve. Some of us want to be doctors or lawyers, and one of our Senior Section wants to open a bakery and run a business selling cupcakes. We feel motivated to work extra hard now. However, we are also really inspired to help other girls around the world to achieve their dreams – especially those girls who desperately want to go to school, but are held back from doing so.

Being in Guides is helping us to achieve those ambitions. Our Guide Unit (1st Mulberry) opened at our school in September, followed by our Senior Section in June. We have all been in Guiding for almost a year now – some of us have moved up from Guides to Senior Section quite recently. We have had amazing adventures together, from making outfits for a fashion show out of recycled paper, to water zorbing at Chigwell Row, to visiting London Dungeons and having a pizza party. We have grown vegetables in our school’s community garden (our radishes were particularly tasty), tasted sushi together, had a den-building competition on National Den Building Day and explored some Christmas and Easter traditions, as well as teaching each other – and our Guide Leaders – about Ramadan and Eid. We are going to a camp called Wellies and Wristbands in August, and organised fundraisers to raise the money for tickets, including a bake sale and movie night!

We have learned lots of new skills, grown in confidence, and made new friendships which have helped us to grow into responsible, independent young women. We now want to work on ways to help other young women learn and grow. Some of our Senior Section are hoping to train as Peer Educators so we can help out other Guide Units in our County; some have asked to start their Young Leader qualifications; and a group of our Guides recently gave an outreach assembly to Year 8 to encourage other girls to join Girl Guiding in London North East. We are also looking for pen pals so we can learn about other girls around the world, and share our thoughts and ideas about girls’ education.

We know that we are very lucky to have been given all of these fantastic opportunities, both by our school and by Girl Guiding. We would like to see a world where all girls everywhere get the chance to shine – and we are going to work to make that happen!

By Tamanna Islam, 9B Zahra Khanom, 9L and Samia Chowdhury, 7M

1st Mulberry and the First Lady

We sat there in anticipation, waiting for her. We had come to school early and lined up to take our seats in the Main Hall. The school was busy and bustling, even more full of life than usual. We could hardly wait.
‘You inspire me’ US First Lady tells pupils

Michelle Obama makes Mulberry her first stop

Mike Brooks

Youngsters waved the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes as America’s First Lady drove up to their school.

Michelle Obama was in the East End paying homage to the pupils of Stourbridge Girls’ School for Girls.

The girls stopped outside, waving flags on the balcony of the East End school to welcome the First Lady to an emotional reunion.

"The American people are so proud of you," she told them.

The First Lady revealed her humble origins in an over-crowded working-class district of Chicago.

"It is so much easier to go back to where you come from," she said to the pupils. "It was such a wonderful moment of inspiration for me.

"I used to say to my husband, "If I ever get into politics, I want to be able to do this.""

The visit to the school was as much for her own benefit as for the pupils.

The First Lady was known for her love of fitness and health.

"The school has a very special relationship with this country," she said. "I was, after all, the First Lady of the UK, and I am so proud to be here with President Obama and his wife.

"We are so proud to be here with President Obama and his wife."
I was just like you: Michelle tells girls to aim for the top

Gabrielle Swearing

Michelle Obama told schoolgirls in one of the nation's most deprived areas how she dealt with her homework at school because her home was too cramped and noisy to concentrate at any other time.

The First Lady's visit often in- bestowing her presence, during her voice from one-bedroom apartment on the street side to Princeton University, Harvard Law school, secondary schools, and the White House.

Speaking yesterday to the schoolgirls at Mulberry Secondary in Tower Hamlets, east London, she said that she still had much in common with them.

"Perhaps like a lot of you girls, I was surrounded by my extended family," she said. Mrs Obama grew up in a large family with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins living near by, and her mother and father living a floor below.

"I never wanted to go alone, and we would have to share a room," she said, adding that she had to make the most of the little space available.

The school girls were all seated in a circle, listening intently to the First Lady's words.

"I was just like you," she told them, "I was always looking for a quiet place to write and read, to practice my piano and to do my homework."
After the visit made by the First Lady, which left us all inspired, motivated and moved, we were invited to many media platforms to share our experience with Britain.

I had the privilege to represent Mulberry school on BBC radio, BBC London, BBC 24, BBC breakfast and ITV news, where I shared my experience of the visit. The buzz that was felt in school could also be felt in the BBC studio, where we were reminded of how lucky we were to have hosted Mrs Obama. The media also allowed us to discuss the legacy of the visit: it gave us the chance to appreciate our amazing teachers and share the common values held by both Mulberry and the First Lady. We recapped parts of the First Lady’s speech which Mulberrians will always remember – for example, the moment when Mrs Obama told us ‘Your story is my story’.

Thasneem Zaman

As well as television interviews, there were reporters from newspapers and organisations such as the Guardian and the Department for International Development, which I was able to take part in. We were given a platform to express our views about the visit by the First Lady of the United States of America. The reporters asked what we thought about the First Lady: it was hard to sum up what it was like to meet her, but my overwhelming impression was that she was very down to earth. Michelle Obama gave a very thought provoking speech which resonated with everyone and I found myself feeling inspired and wanting to work harder to do my very best in education, something which I wanted to highlight in the interviews that I gave.

Bushra Hussain

To use a few words, the visit from Michelle Obama was empowering, inspiring and insightful.

Her words had the strength to move us all: her passion for girls’ education was clear. I was completely captivated by the way she reached out to us in her speech and showed us that she could relate to us. I was reminded to always have a great sense of gratitude for the invaluable education that Mulberry provides for us. Mrs Obama gave voice to our worries about whether some people will look beyond our headscarves to appreciate our minds and talents: I thought this was incredibly brave. To hear her voice our fears, and reassure us that prejudice should not deter us, was so empowering.

The visit from the First Lady was followed by a lot of media interest, and I was fortunate to be a part of it by representing Mulberry on BBC Breakfast the next morning. I was given the chance to introduce the segment and share my thoughts. I couldn’t help mentioning that I was lucky enough to get a hug from the First Lady – not surprising, as she is such a warm character!

All in all, both the visit from Mrs Obama and the BBC interview were experiences I will never forget and will share wherever I go.

Tahira Miah

Addressing the nation on BBC News

Model United Nations returns for summer conference

On Thursday 9th and Friday 10th July, 230 delegates from Mulberry and other schools met for the annual summer conference of our Model United Nations programme.

This year’s July topic was ‘Global Security’. Addressing the delegates in her opening speech, Secretary General Nusrath Hassan (12SH) outlined their common purpose, and touched on the topics delegates would spend the day debating: ‘We are united in rebuilding post-conflict societies and supporting the provision of health, education and a better standard of living. We are united in finding solutions for a safer world for all.’ Against a backdrop of international unrest, delegates also discussed global terrorist threats and the need for a firm but humane and democratic response.

Within the MUN programme, students are able to learn about the structure and functions of the United Nations through assuming the roles of UN council members. Students are allocated to countries in advance, and are expected to spend considerable time researching their country’s stance on the conference topic. On the day of the conference, students are required to engage in fast-paced, often intense debates with council members representing other countries. They must represent the opinions of their allocated country, even if these opinions do not align with their personal attitude towards the conference topic.

MUN provides a stimulating atmosphere in which students are challenged to hone their research, debate and presentation skills, and to thoroughly understand crucial aspects of international politics and diplomacy.

The conference took place in the week that marked the ten year anniversary of the 7/7 bombings. In her opening speech, Secretary General Nusrath Hassan eloquently summarised the mood of grief, remembrance and solidarity that holds our city this week: ‘This week marks the anniversary of the 7/7 bombings. It is an anniversary of loss and pain for many. The bombings killed 52 and injured more than 700. Londoners stood shoulder to shoulder with the bereaved. We did not bend to the terrorist’s will. We refused to be divided by this attack. We refused to hate. THIS is the approach we must bring to committee. Solutions are best found together.’
Honouring Herman Bernstein at the US Embassy

On Thursday 4th June, a group of students who have been participating in Mulberry’s Model United Nations conferences were invited to a special event at the United States Embassy. The event was a commemorative evening to celebrate the life of Herman Bernstein, US Ambassador to Albania, 1930 – 1933.

Ambassador Bernstein had a fascinating career. He was dedicated to educating others about the courageous humanitarian work Albanian people, particularly Albanian Muslim communities, had done to protect persecuted Jews during World War Two. The evening celebrated his life, particularly his commitment to spreading religious tolerance.

Ambassador Mal Berisha of the Republic of Albania led a very interesting and informative talk about Ambassador Bernstein’s life and career.

After the talk, students networked with US Embassy staff. Ambassador Berisha was particularly kind in providing some of our Year 10 students with practical advice about how to build a career in international diplomacy.

We would like to thank the US Embassy for extending this fantastic opportunity to us. As a school committed to global education, knowledge of global politics and international relations is extremely important to us, and our MUN students benefited enormously from this chance to learn from international diplomats.

Putting the Met Police in the hotseat

On the 3rd of July, I had the privilege of interviewing the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe on Sky News.

I sat on a student panel and had the opportunity to ask questions regarding counter-terrorism, government efforts to tackle radicalisation, discrimination and the lack of female police officers – particularly females from a black and ethnic minority background.

I challenged Sir Bernard about how the excessive targeting of young people and, in particular, ethnic minority individuals by police initiatives such as ‘Stop and Search’ can often make it feel as though the police are working against the communities they are supposed to protect and represent. For young women, this feeling is exacerbated by the poor representation of women in the police force, particularly at senior levels. Sir Bernard confronted this issue frankly, saying “London is a very diverse area and the police force is not entirely representative of that”.

I suggested that in order to make the police force more reflective of society in terms of ethnic minorities and females, the Met need to engage more with schools to inspire girls to become police officers. Female police officers can help inspire more women to join the force, and can also bring fresh insight to the Met to help build bridges with communities who feel alienated from the police. Sir Bernard agreed, and also assured us that police officers will receive training to ensure ethnic minorities are not unfairly targeted during “Stop and Search”.

Overall, this experience was amazing: I got an insight into the police force and discovered how a major organisation such as Sky News functions. It was definitely strange watching myself on the news every hour on Saturday – but I encourage more girls to use their voices to hold our community leaders accountable for issues faced by young women and our communities.

By Thasneem Zaman
Guides working hard to prepare for their Bake Sale

Hearing the people’s voice at General Election Assembly

A few days before the General Election in May, students from Mulberry School attended a General Election Assembly organised by Citizens UK. Representatives of Citizens UK negotiated with leaders and ministers from the three main parties, Nick Clegg, Ed Miliband and Sajid Javid, on topics drawn from thousands of grass-roots conversations that affect our communities. Samilah Naira from Year 11 performed a spoken word piece at the event.

Happy campers!

It has been almost a whole year of adventures for 1st Mulberry Girl Guides. Together, the Unit have thrown themselves into new experiences including exploring London Dungeons, catching a ferry down the Thames, taking part in a blindfolded international food tasting challenge, making printed canvas bags, growing vegetables, baking cakes, doing an Easter egg hunt, orienteering, and making enough popcorn and lemonade for 50 people...

Over the past term, the Girl Guides have been organising fundraisers to raise enough money for tickets to their annual summer camp, called ‘Wellies and Wristbands’.

The Guides worked in teams to bake cakes and biscuits for a bake sale. They hosted a screening of Disney’s ‘Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day’, during which they sold homemade lemonade and popcorn they had spent hours making from scratch. They hosted a non-uniform day which included a free ‘World Fair’ at lunchtime. At the World Fair, students were able to enjoy henna art, take part in a community painting, learn sign language and take part in a game about social and cultural stereotypes: students learned about what stereotypes are and the negative effects they have, then smashed pinatas labelled with harmful and restrictive stereotypes such as ‘I’m a boy so I must be tough’, or ‘I’m a person of religious faith, so I must be intolerant or small-minded’. By smashing the labelled pinatas, students symbolically smashed stereotypes.

Through their fundraising efforts, 1st Mulberry Guides raised a whopping £1020 – the money will cover the cost of their summer camp, and other associated costs of Guiding, such as annual membership fees, uniforms and resources.

The Guides would like to say a huge thank you to all those who contributed to their fundraisers. Look out for an article about what we learned at camp in the next edition of the Berry Bugle!

Turnout high at Mulberry Mock Election

On the day of the General Election, 7th May, Mulberry hosted our very own Mock Election.

The result of months of hard work by our fantastic Citizenship teachers, the election saw Year 10 students take a leadership role for each of the major political parties: Labour, Conservative, Green, Liberal Democrats, and UKIP. Supported by their party members, student leaders attended hustings in assemblies, participated in a spirited Speakers’ Corner under the Mulberry tree on the eve of the election, and dispatched campaign teams to hand out flyers and other promotional materials to students.

Students were required to know the policies of the party they were representing, and to be able to explain policies to the student electorate, who were full of searching questions as they tried to decide how to cast their votes.

On the day of the election, a highly efficient Electoral Administration Team were mobilised to assist staff in the library, which was transformed into a polling station for the entire school day. The team carried out various duties, including signing voters in, directing them to polling booths, and patrolling outside the polling station to ensure parties did not attempt unlawful campaigning whilst voters queued for entry.

Students were brought down to the polling station by their teachers to vote throughout the school day, with sixth form students coming in over lunchtime to cast their votes. Overall voter turnout was excellent, with 88% of Mulberry students voting (including 97% of Years 7 – 11).

The Labour Party won by a landslide majority, with 62% of the 1234 votes cast. Our congratulations go to Labour Leader Aniqa Anjum (10L).

A press release in the wake of the election stated: ‘Dr Ogden paid tribute to all the Year 10 candidates and party teams who presented a professional, informed and respectful campaign and aimed to engage as many voters as possible with their policies.

She also thanked the Year 10 electoral administration team who had ensured all students understood how to vote and maintained an efficient and effective polling station.

Dr Ogden will be meeting Aniqa and her Labour Party colleagues to discuss how the policies Mulberry students voted for could be more strongly reflected in Mulberry life.’
Senior Section ab-zorbed in new adventures

1st Mulberry Guides have been learning about the options that are open to them once they turn 14, and are no longer eligible to be Guides. It turns out that the Guiding family has room for everybody, no matter what age you are!

Once girls turn 14, they have the option of joining Senior Section, a part of Girlguiding for girls aged 14 – 26. Mulberry applied for a grant from Youth United, a charity which provides start-up funding to help schools and other organisations set up Girlguiding groups. Our bid was successful, and we opened our brand new Senior Section in May!

Some of our Year 9 Guides moved up to Senior Section, and we also welcomed some students who are completely new to Guiding. One of our first adventures together was a trip to Chigwell Row campsite.

The trip was funded by the Jack Petchey Foundation as part of a Jack Petchey Achievement Award won by one of our fantastic Senior Section members, Tamanna Islam (9B). We spent a sunny day at the campsite on June 6th. We whizzed down a 15ft zipwire with stunning views of the surrounding countryside; enjoyed a picnic in the sun; and tried out ‘water zorbing’, scrambling around on the surface of a pool inside a giant plastic ball! We finished the day with ice cream, and our new Senior Section all achieved their Chigwell Row badge.

Next, our Senior Section will be training as Peer Educators, after which they will be able to visit other Girlguiding groups in Tower Hamlets and teach younger girls about issues including body confidence and female leadership. Some of our Seniors have begun working towards their Commonwealth Award, and two of them will be commencing their Young Leader Qualification in September, enabling them to assist in the running of Girl Guides at Mulberry and beyond.

It’s been a great couple of months for our Seniors, and we look forward to more adventures together next year.

Zorbing at Chigwell Row

On Thursday 23rd April, 50 Year 8 and 9 students attended a speed mentoring event hosted by Inspiring The Future, against the stunning backdrop of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern.

The event was designed especially for students who are interested in pursuing careers in the arts. Miriam Gonzalez, internationally acclaimed human rights lawyer and wife of former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, opened the event with a stirring speech about the value of excellent mentoring in shaping the careers of women of all ages. She urged students to be ambitious, and to seize the opportunities they had been given to speak to influential women who care deeply about their success.

Our students met with women from a wide range of sectors, including acting, journalism, game design and digital media. Students were enthused by the advice they received, and left the hall feeling motivated to realise their future goals.

We would like to thank Inspiring The Future for providing our students with another excellent opportunity to build their networks and take another step towards achieving their dreams.

On Thursday 23rd April, 50 Year 8 and 9 students attended a speed mentoring event hosted by Inspiring The Future, against the stunning backdrop of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern.
800 Years of Magna Carta

On Tuesday 9th June, a group of Year 9 and 10 students were lucky enough to be invited to an exclusive viewing of the Magna Carta exhibition at the Royal Society of Antiquaries.

Naphysa Awuah, 10B, Ayesha Begum, 10L, Sumaiyah Rahim, 9Y, Thamanna Islam, 9Y, and Bushra Hassan, 9RA, attended the exhibition at Burlington House.

The exhibition displayed precious original manuscripts of several versions of the Magna Carta, beautifully preserved in the RSA’s specialist displays alongside wax seals from the dignitaries who worked with the document far back in English history. The exhibition was accompanied by beautiful poster boards explaining the history and relevance of the Magna Carta.

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, at a time when national and global politics are deeply involved in thinking about human rights and the rights of the individual – and so the opportunity to browse the exhibition was particularly special for our students. The exhibition viewing was followed by a lecture on the history of the Magna Carta and its relevance to the present day.

Ayesha Begum commented ‘I think the exhibition is very interesting and a huge success. I think it is helping us raise awareness about the importance of human rights. Thanks to exhibitions like this we are able to discover how far we have come as a country and as a society.’

Naphysa Awuah added ‘I think this exhibition is really beneficial for us as students, especially at this point in time when we are thinking a lot about human rights and what this means to people in Britain. I also think it is really important for young people to learn about Magna Carta because even though it may seem outdated, I think we need to understand where we were and where we are now to appreciate how far we have come. It is important for young people to feel they are connected to Britain’s past as much as they are connected to its present.

I think it is really beautiful to know that this will be preserved forever. Preserving these copies and being able to come here to appreciate them really helps us to understand that history is not something that is just in the past, but is also part of our present and our future.

I’d encourage young people to come and visit, especially if they are interested in human rights and how society has evolved. It is very worthwhile to come and experience this. Even if you aren’t interested in the history, the preservation aspect of it is still incredible.’

Mulberry Garden in full flower

Mulberry’s community garden is flourishing under the care of our Head of Outdoor Education, Mr Macdonald.

The garden is regularly tended by a group of enthusiastic Year 7 students, who have been enjoying attending ‘Gardening Club’ since early this academic year. Gardening Club recently donated two flower beds to 1st Mulberry Girl Guides, who joined Gardening Club for an intense ‘growing competition’. Teams of Guides and Gardeners went head to head to grow lettuce, radishes, peas, carrots and beets. An early crop of radishes proved that Mulberry girls can add ‘green fingers’ to the list of their many talents. Members of the local community regularly assist in the garden, helping to prepare flower beds, water crops and harvest vegetables. The garden also provides flowers for our Conference Room and Reception to greet guests as they arrive at school. We look forward to watching the fruits of Gardening Club’s labours flourish all summer!

University In 1 Day

On Wednesday 1st July, four sixth form students were given a taste of university life when they attended a conference called ‘University in 1 Day’.

Hosted by the Institute of Ideas in the beautiful surroundings of Goodenough College, the conference sought to introduce students to ‘university as it should be’.

Potential applicants for history, politics, philosophy and literature, amongst other arts and humanities subjects, were invited to attend a series of lectures on subjects ranging from Enlightenment philosophy to Renaissance architecture. Students were also given the chance to attend seminars, where they debated and discussed the content of the lectures.

The day was designed to show students how exciting university can be. For an intellectually curious person, the chance to study an interesting subject in depth, directed by world-class academics, is a very exciting prospect. Our students left Goodenough College eager to begin making their own university applications.
Adventures in Aberdovey

On April 24th 132 Year 8 students travelled to the village of Aberdovey in Wales where we did several adventure courses as part of an Outward Bound trip. We travelled by coach on a Friday evening – it was a very long journey, but the trip made it worthwhile!

When we arrived at our accommodation, we assembled in front of a gate and were put into our groups. We would be working together over the next two days to complete challenges and try new activities.

The first day was a busy day. First of all, everyone had to settle in: we had to find our dorms, unpack, make our beds, and get to know our timetables. After all that, we all did a challenge called the ‘jog and dip’, where you jog around the centre and onto a road to the beach. Once you get to the beach you get in to the sea and dip your head once the water is waist height.

In my group, we got our backpacks ready for our hiking and rock climbing activity the next day. To finish the day, we ate our dinner and had hot chocolate in the big hall. Then we went into our dorms. had showers and got ready for bed.

The next morning, we woke up early and got ready as quickly as we could. Everyone ate breakfast, and then we met our group instructors for the next activity. Many groups did rock climbing but some also did canoeing. We climbed up a hill to the rocks and met an instructor named Rob who helped us abseil and climb the mountains. Everyone enjoyed it as it was something many of us had never done before.

After a long day of adventures, we met up with the other groups and made our dinner – including main courses and desserts! When we finished, we caught a train back to the centre where we were staying. We all went to sleep and got ready for the next day, when we had to leave.

In the morning, we ate a quick breakfast and then packed up to leave. We did a check to make sure all of our equipment had been returned and tidied properly. After that, we loaded our suitcases into the coach, took our seats and said goodbye to Aberdovey. We returned to school on 27th April. We were worn out from so many adventures and new experiences, but it had been a fantastic couple of days.

Fahima Begum, Year 8

Mulberry girls wow judges with presentation skills

We would like to pass on our warmest congratulations to the team of Year 9 Mulberry students who recently participated in the Bank of America Merill Lynch Presentation Skills Competition.

Sponsored by BAML and facilitated by Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership, the competition saw Mulberry, Bow School and Swanlea students go head to head.

Students presented PowerPoints and speeches to an audience of judges. The whole of Year 9 from each school participated in the first round of the competition, with three finalists and one runner up earning their place in the final. Maisha Zainab, 9E, Sayma Sultana, 9R, and Khadija Akter, 9L, were Mulberry’s finalists, with Rezwana Uddin, 9L, as runner up. Maisha Zainab came third overall, with Khadija and Sayma earning special mentions from the judges.

Head of Year 9 Ms Skelhorne commented ‘Khadija and Sayma got special mentions from the judges: Sayma for being cool, calm and collected and Khadija for her excellent use of technology to support her presentation.’

A huge well done to the Mulberry team, all four of whom did a fantastic job of representing our school community.
Global Trips

Year 8 visit Paris
On Monday 15th June, a group of Year 8 students travelled to Paris to improve their French speaking skills and learn about the capital city of France.

Kulsum Haque and Mahreen Chaiwallah, 8E, tell us about their time in one of Europe’s most beautiful cities.

Kulsum: I had a really amazing time on this trip. We explored a lot of the city: we visited parks and gardens, went to museums including the famous Louvre art gallery, and spent some time at the Chateau de Versailles, which was really beautiful. We climbed up the Tour Montparnasse, which is the tallest building in Paris and the second tallest building in the whole of France. You can see the whole city from the top, including the Eiffel tower. It’s amazing to see all that scenery spread out in front of you. We were given the freedom to explore local shops in small groups, and had to do our shopping and order our food in French.

Mahreen: I feel like my language skills got better through this trip. We were challenged to speak French in everyday situations, such as ordering food or asking questions in a shop – I found that really helpful, because it makes you realise what you know and how you can use your language. We had a lot of independence, which I enjoyed.

Year 9 visit Italy
A small group of Year 9 students were given the opportunity to travel to Italy. The theme of the visit was outdoor education, with the girls climbing mountains, swimming and caving. It also offered the chance for a cultural exchange, with the students hosting a tea party for local residents of a little Italian village.

‘Outdoor education helps girls to learn new skills and connect with the world around them’

Year 10 visit Berlin
On Tuesday 16th Berlin, a group of Year 10 students visited Berlin with the History department. In order to deepen their understanding of German history, students explored Germany’s capital city across three days.

Students visited a range of historical sites, including the Berlin Unterwelten, the underground bunkers where Berliners sheltered from World War Two bombing raids; the ‘Topography of Terror’, a museum of photographs and artefacts commemorating the terrible events of the Holocaust, in which an estimated six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis; and the Wall Documentation Centre, a museum on the former site of the Berlin Wall. Students also had the chance to climb to the top of the Bundestag, and to view the city from the top of the famous cathedral, the Berliner Dom.
Onwards and Upwards!

In June, Mulberry bade a fond farewell to our Year 11 and Year 13 graduates. Year 13 graduated on Thursday 25th June, followed by Year 11 on Friday 26th June.

In an emotional speech at the graduation ceremonies, Dr Ogden said: ‘As you go forward, you will feel daunted at times and you will face challenges - as we all do - which will test your strength, confidence and resilience. However, you will have many resources on which to draw through the education you have received at Mulberry - resources of hard work, determination to excel in whatever you do and the pursuit of understanding. These things will see you through - along with your friends, many of whom you will have made here at Mulberry. Whatever your age, experience or public position, challenge will come to you and you should meet it bravely with fortitude, armed with the knowledge that you can rise to the challenge as you have practised so many times here at school.’

Speaking to Year 13 on behalf of the Women’s Education team, Shanaz Begum said: ‘It has been a joy watching you grow into confident, charismatic, successful young women who have taken up every opportunity that has come your way. […] Now, you know we all belong to a very special community and the leadership skills that you have gained from this school will allow you to display what you have to offer to our community. […] I have every faith that you will overcome anything that stands in your way and as Michelle Obama said last week “service is the rent we pay for being. It is the purpose of life”. The opportunities here have also instilled a confidence in you whereby you know that you deserve to make footprints in the world and I, along with all the staff members at the school know that you most certainly will do so. Whether you want to want to be a lawyer, an actor, an activist or a mother – remember it is about the power of choice. […] But do remember that success is not limited to a particular type of person; it is available to everyone providing you grasp the opportunities on offer and I hope Mulberry has highlighted this for you. As you sit here today, you are not only graduates, in my eyes and certainly in the eyes of the Women’s Education team - you are heroines, who have faced fears and taken risks and forged ahead to conquer one of the most important chapters of your life. Now that you have achieved the goal in this great quest you must ready yourself for the greatness that lies ahead of you.’

We will be welcoming back the majority of our Year 11 students in September, and look forward to supporting them as they embark on their sixth form studies. We are excited to help them realise their ambitions for the future.

Our Year 13 students are heading out to University and the world of work. Their destinations and career paths range far and wide across London and the rest of the country, reflecting the ambition and individuality of the girls themselves. We know they may be nervous about what lies ahead, but we have total confidence in them: they are bright, strong, capable young women, fully prepared to be the leaders of tomorrow.

We are excited to witness the amazing things we know they are about to achieve. We hope they remember that there will always be a warm welcome waiting for them at Mulberry.

Fetch Me A Pen!

Friday 3rd July saw Mulberry host a Learning and Innovation conference for secondary schools around Britain.

The conference drew on the work of the Fetch Me A Pen project, which focuses on improving standards of academic writing in school. By boosting teachers’ confidence in teaching academic writing, and providing innovative and flexible ways of integrating academic literacy into classroom practice, the Fetch Me A Pen project aims to bolster students’ confidence, increase their attainment, and encourage a lifelong love of learning.

The information pack handed out to delegates summarised the core principles behind the project, stating that ‘the conference brings together academics, senior leaders, teachers and policy makers from London and beyond with a shared interest in the development of all pupils’ academic literacy and a belief that a school-based collegiate approach, underpinned by excellent pedagogy and practice, is the best form of professional learning and system-wide school improvement.

We will share our core belief that every child has the right to high quality teaching and learning regardless of background: we must provide pupils with the necessary tools so that, with time, confidence and the opportunity to experiment, they can develop an original and authentic academic voice to succeed in the broadest sense.’

The keynote speaker was Sir Tim Brighouse, Educationalist and former London Challenge Advisor to the Department for Education.
Weave finished!

Mulberry’s beautiful Community Tapestry, begun by our fantastic Art department during our Big Weave project earlier this year, has been finished and is now displayed in our Main Reception to greet guests with a burst of colour as they enter the school.

Mulberry School for Girls is firmly rooted in the local community and we value the strong relationships we have built with parents, schools and local organisations. The Fiftieth Anniversary Community Tapestry was made by members of our valued community, in partnership with The Big Weave.

The Big Weave is an organisation which runs community tapestry projects, making weaving accessible in an exciting new context. In Spring 2015 The Big Weave visited Mulberry and worked with the school to help mark and celebrate the school’s fiftieth anniversary. Designs for the three tapestry panels were inspired by a pupils’ painting representing what it means to be a Mulberry girl.

The beautiful original design is rich in symbolism, as the artists, Eva Azad and Tasnima Jahan from Year 10, explain:

“The hair represents Mulberry girls’ creativity because of the vibrant colours we used. The bird represents freedom and also their journey from Year 7 to Year 11. The henna pattern on the face represents cultural diversity and the intricate pattern on the clothing conveys the individuality of each Mulberry student. The heart symbolises devotion, passion and self-confidence.”

The loom toured a range of locations in the local area, giving many members of the community a chance to contribute to the progress of the tapestry. Pupils, teachers and governors at Mulberry School all tried their hand at weaving. The loom also visited Bow School and local primary schools, including Bigland Green, Shapla and St Paul’s, as well as the Watney Market Idea Store and the Departure Lounge at The Royal London Hospital.

The tapestry commemorates a momentous occasion in the life of Mulberry School for Girls. This academic year is our half-centenary anniversary and we are celebrating the journey of the school from its founding in 1964 to its recent achievements providing outstanding girls’ education. The partnership with The Big Weave was a part of Mulberry School’s pioneering programme of community work. We work closely with local families, providing English Language tuition and a range of other classes to parents in school every week. As well as increasing parents’ confidence in their ability to support pupils with homework, this helps create an increased sense of engagement for families in all areas of school life. The school has also recently constructed the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre, an innovative partnership with a local primary school to provide a children’s centre and adult learning classrooms, as well as a professional standard theatre for the school and community to use.

The tapestry was commemorated by Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States of America, during her visit to the school on 16th June 2015.

Jo Latham, Director of Extended Learning
The best part of my job is...
Being on a first name basis with all the teachers – I mean, how many times can you say you called THE Mr. Jones by his first name and didn’t get in trouble? But honestly, the best part has got to be the experience we are gaining and seeing how the school is run. Being a student at Mulberry then getting the opportunity to work here allows you to see just how much work each staff member puts into this school and it shows in the reputation Mulberry has.

The worst part of my job is...
There isn’t really a dull moment working at Mulberry. Some tasks are less fun than others, but everything we do is rewarding.
Overall, Mulberry has gone above and beyond in providing us with excellent work experience. Our teachers and other staff members have encouraged us to be ambitious, driven and passionate.

Creativity in bloom
Our congratulations go to Mehreen Hussain, 10Y, for submitting this fantastic artwork as part of her final portfolio for the Year 10 GCSE ‘Natural Forms’ project. The project explores naturally occurring shapes and structures. Mehreen’s rose uses mixed media and clever shading to create a textured, almost 3D effect, evoking the vibrancy of summer.

Dungeons and Diners
Samia Chowdhury, 7M, reviews the Girl Guides’ trip to London Dungeons and Jimmy’s World Buffet

On the 29th of May, 1st Mulberry Guides set off on an exciting and much awaited journey. One of our guides, Shaima Begum in 8E, won a Jack Petchey Achievement Award for her contributions to Guiding. As part of her prize, we were given a fully funded day trip as a Unit: so, during half term, we went off to celebrate at London Dungeons and have a lovely lunch at Jimmy’s Buffet. We really enjoyed the day and, perhaps most importantly, the food.

We all met up at Mulberry and made our way to the London Dungeons together. We were really excited and could not wait. However, being the new Guide – and also a little scared of the roller coaster rides – I was a tiny bit nervous… but that did not last for long. Before we knew it, we were there.

As we went in, it already began to feel like we were in another world. Even the waiting area was true to its name: it was dark and gloomy and smelt of horrible, rotten vegetables. I felt as though I was back in the Tudor times, ready to be executed.

Our first ride was a trip through ‘Traitors’ Gate’ - it was a wet and dark water ride through the river Thames. Holly and I were sitting at the back and at one point we genuinely believed the rest of our group had magically vanished! Luckily, we survived. Next on the list was a trip to the Houses of Parliament, where we were told that we were part of the rebels trying to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Oh no! This was not good. Each event got scarier and scarier, from the plague to the rats. We were in for lots of surprises throughout the day. The highlight of the trip was a 33 feet drop free-fall ride. I was petrified as I mildly dislike rides that drop you really fast. With all my courage, and lots of help from Holly and Lilly, I managed to get on and actually enjoyed it.

We then realised that to get to Jimmy’s we would need to walk through the rain. But the next surprise saved us. Dr. Ogden organised a very special ride for us - a river bus! Once we arrived at the O2 arena we were all really tired and very hungry. We quickly found our way to Jimmy’s and started to pile our plates with food from all across the globe. There was Chinese, Mexican, Thai, Indian and American. We all tried sushi amongst other exciting items, but my favourite was the parmesan and tomato pasta – simple but delicious! Once we were completely full we headed over to the dessert counter and got ice cream with lots of strawberry sauce. We then made our way back home, full and ready for our next adventure.

Samia Chowdhury, 7M

About to refuel at Jimmy’s Restaurant – adventures give you an appetite!
**Farewell to Staff Members**

With nearly 125 years of service to Mulberry School for Girls between them, we are sad to be saying farewell to five valued teachers who are retiring this August: Ms Jenkins and Mr Fairhurst, who have served the school and our community for 36 years each; Mr Jones, who has been here for 28 years; and Ms. Constantinou and Mr Regan who both joined the staff 14 years ago. Such dedicated and excellent teachers will be much missed by all of us, especially me. I have valued their advice, expertise and support for the last ten years that I have been headteacher and I could not ask for more spirited, caring and talented colleagues to work with. They have all been tireless in their commitment to Mulberry and their impact on the school’s work is demonstrable in the academic results of the school and in the successes of girls more widely. Many, many thanks to them all.

Dr Vanessa Ogden

**Uniform Refresh**

We are very excited to confirm that Mulberry will have a new school uniform from September 2015.

The decision to refresh our uniform was made after careful consultation with students, parents and governors: together, we decided that it is important to ensure that all Mulberry students have a uniform that is consistent in terms of colour and style.

A panel of students in Year 7 – 10 chose the designs for four new uniform designs: a salwar kameez, a pair of fitted trousers, a longer skirt with a pleated front, a knee-length skirt, and a blazer to go with all four designs. The uniform has been very well received by students.

A blazer will be compulsory for all students in Years 7 to 10, regardless of which style of uniform they choose to wear.

A tie will be compulsory for all students in Years 7 – 10, except for those students who intend to wear the new salwar kameez.

All designs will be available to buy from the end of July, and our official distributors will be Ocean Designs (Watney Market) and Khalsa (Bethnal Green). We ask that parents do not buy uniform from any other distributors.

From the first day of the new academic year, all students will be expected to wear the new school uniform. We look forward to seeing our smartly dressed students returning refreshed and ready for a new school term!

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**Reminder to parents and carers**

Thank you for supporting your daughter and our school community through another great year at Mulberry. Term starts again on Tuesday 2nd September. We would like to wish you a joyful Eid and a safe summer break.

**Please direct enquiries to the editor:**

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The Berry Bugle loves student writing! If you would like to contribute to the next edition, please contact the editor:

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