

100 Students from London and the South East gather for Classics Symposium

Francis Holland, Regent's Park, hosted a Classics Symposium for 100 GCSE and A Level Classics students from state and independent schools all over London and the South East, featuring sessions by esteemed Cambridge academics.



1st February 2022 — At FHS Regent's Park, we are fervent in our assertion that Classics could not be further from a dying discipline. The study of the ancient world in Classical Civilisation never ceases to spark the imaginations of students of all ages, and learning about how ancient societies lived and thought encourages students to ponder the big questions – What is truth? What is love? And why are we all here? – as well as highlighting the fundamental intricacies of human nature. The study of Latin and Greek also holds many unique benefits, honing students' analytical skills and increasing depth of understanding of modern languages to a degree that would otherwise be inaccessible. Indeed, more than 60% of British words have their roots in Greek or Latin, and similar can be said for French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese... the list goes on.

This belief led us to hold our second school Classics Week in January 2022, featuring Classics Kahoots Quizzes, a Mythical Monsters Balloon Debate, teachers dressing up as Greek goddesses and a fascinating lecture on the Construction of a Greek Tragedy by our Classicist in Residence, Dr Peter Jones MBE. The grand finale of this week was our Classics Symposium, where 100 passionate Classics students from FHS and other schools including Brighton College, City of London Boys, Godolphin & Latymer, Maria Fidelis Catholic School and Westminster came together in St Cyprian's Church. Sessions were held by Professor Robin Osborne of King's College, Cambridge, on 'Theatre and Democracy in Classical Athens', focusing on the contrasting political impact of Ancient Greek comedy and tragedy, and Professor Caroline Vout of Christ's College, Cambridge, on 'Seeing God in Greece and Rome', focusing on the ways in which depictions of God indicate the historical progression of his perception in different parts of society.

FHS's Head of Classics, Eleanor Simons, has commented on the success of the week, saying: "This was our second Classics Week at Francis Holland and we were also delighted to host our first Classics Symposium - the first of many such events. The enthusiasm of our students - and the many students from other schools who attended our Symposium - show that Classics as a subject is alive and well and speaks to the current generation as much as any previous generation. The study of Latin, Ancient Greek and Classical Civilisation encourages pupils to be analytical and critical thinkers; qualities which have never been more relevant than in today's society."

Our belief in the importance of Classics inspired us on to open a brand new Classics Centre (the first to be opened this century!) adjacent to our School in June 2021, and also to offer Classics lessons free of charge to girls at St Marylebone CE School for Girls, one of our state school partners, from Year 8 up to A Level, with a gratifying level of take up.

Thank you to all who attended our Classics Symposium and to our two fantastic speakers. Watch this space for more thought-provoking Classical events in months and years to come.

For further information and photos please contact Vanessa McKinley, Director of External Relations at Francis Holland Schools Trust on vanessa.mckinley@fhst.org.uk or 07815 618768.

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