



Our Head Girl for 2021 tells us how Mary Hare has given her the freedom to learn.

Why did you choose to come to Mary Hare?

I moved to Mary Hare after my first year at mainstream sixth form. As a deaf young person I had found inclusion in mainstream increasingly difficult. Being part of the whole school community was challenging and whilst teachers were very kind it was difficult for teaching to feel free of issues and problems that needed solving. It is fair to say it was taking a toll on my well-being and identity as a deaf young person. At Mary Hare I don't have to think about the issues and barriers to hearing in class, class sizes are small and all the teachers are Teachers of the Deaf. Deafness isn't a barrier or a problem, it is just part of being me.

What was your first week at Mary Hare like?

During my first week at Mary Hare, it really sunk in for me that I could just focus on being a student and a friend, I no longer felt the pressure and responsibility of walking into a classroom every day and asking for support from my teachers and my peers as I had needed to do in mainstream schools since Year 7. I can quite honestly say Mary Hare was a much needed freedom!

KEY FACTS

Name:

Francesca

Year started at Mary Hare:

2020

Head Girl dates:

2021-2022

Courses taken:

Biology
English
Art

Local Authority:

West Sussex County Council

Hearing Loss:

Severe bi lateral sensori neural deafness

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How have you found 6th Form life?

I have found 6th Form life quite easy to settle into, teachers and pupils have made me feel comfortable and very welcome. I am a boarder, which has given me a real sense of independence, whilst I still get quite tired after a day of listening in lessons, the teachers understand this and at the end of the day I can quickly find somewhere for help or to relax.

It's great not to have to travel to and from school like I did when I was in mainstream schools. 6th Form enables you to study alongside people who also actually chose that subject.

Did you find making friends easy?

I have, there's a unique kind of wholehearted connection and interaction that comes with being a part of this school. I've found that every single person I've met here won't hold you back from getting involved and joining in a conversation. I found what especially helped, was being a part of the tight knit classes of two to eight students, you really get to know them, and laugh and learn alongside your group, which was such a much needed change from being easily lost in a noisy class of around 30 in mainstream.

Can you tell us what you have achieved academically?

I have been able to concentrate on my lessons and the curriculum. My motivation to learn has returned and I really enjoy my subjects. I am taking English and Art A level next year. I am doing second year Biology this year after a very disrupted first year in mainstream. Mary Hare will offer me the opportunity to continue with this next year to achieve my full potential. I have to say, for people thinking of going into 6th Form, that for the first time you'll study alongside others who have chosen to be in that class, and that subject is excitingly part of their future too!

In addition to my academic subjects I have been learning guitar and I am having some singing lessons. I am swimming too! Everything feels possible.

What will you be focussing on as Head Girl?

As Head Girl I will be bringing my experience from mainstream to ensure all feel welcome at Mary Hare. Inclusion is very close to my heart and I hope to work with the prefects and Mary Hare leadership team in this area. It has been a busy start to being Head Girl but I am enjoying the experience and I know I will enjoy the experience of leadership and as part of a team, achieving great things for students at the school.

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Securing the future of deaf children and young people