



Name: Imogen Hanvey **Dates you were at school:** September 2007-June 2012

(I was the first head girl to be appointed at The Westgate School!)

1) What path have you taken since leaving school?

After leaving Westgate I spent three years at Peter Symonds College as I changed A-level subjects after the first year. I am now in my final year at the University of Exeter studying English Literature and Mandarin Chinese with a Choral Scholarship (bit of a mouthful, I know!). After graduating I am hoping to prolong my student days by studying for a Masters in Human Rights, and perhaps even a PhD.

2) What advice would you give to your 14 year old self?

Speak up sooner when you need help- you don't have to be perfect all the time, and there are people who genuinely want to support you if you let them.

Not to be embarrassed by all of the interests and hobbies that weren't shared by the vast majority of my peers (like being the only Cathedral Chorister in the school at the time). They are passions that give you genuine enjoyment and open doors to opportunities and new friendships for years to come, so don't feel like you are wrong for liking them.

Pursue what makes you excited and gives you joy, not what you think you 'ought' to do- I spent a year at college studying subjects I had no interest in (sciences and maths) because I thought I had to study Medicine, when my interests had always been in literature, languages, and philosophy.

3) What advice would you give to current Westgate School pupils?

You will become way less concerned with what other people think of you when you realise how seldom they do (David Foster Wallace). It's so easy to think that all eyes are on you at times, but the truth is that everyone has so much going on in their own lives and minds that they really aren't judging you or looking at you nearly as much as you might think they are, so relax and allow yourself to do and be the things you want to do and be.

2) Looking after your mental wellbeing properly is so important- and that doesn't just mean lying on the sofa watching Netflix after school to relax! If social media, or news about current events, or whatever it may be that is bombarding your brain becomes too much, find a way to step away. There is no shame in finding things tough, overwhelming, or confusing, and recognising that and speaking up is a brave thing to do which will benefit both your work and your overall wellbeing more than you may know.

3) And finally, Westgate is a brilliant school- make the most of it! It is such a privilege to have access to such dedicated support and so many opportunities, so work hard and enjoy it all as much as you can!