THE FUTURE *OF* EDUCATION

David McCarthy, Director of Education at Sophia High School

To understand where the future of education in a post pandemic world is headed, and the challenges and opportunities this brings for students, it is important to consider the history of how we arrived where we are today.

The purpose of education throughout the centuries has largely depended on the economic and political situation of the time. One of the oldest and most far-reaching educational models came down to us from Ancient Greece, which aimed to discover and develop each individual's abilities in order to better service society.

The next huge shift in education was during the Victorian times, a period where education became industrialised and functioned towards economic goals; a didactic teaching model designed to develop factory workers and to enable working day structures - which still exist today.

So what is the next educational model? It certainly appears that the old way of doing things no longer works. So, what is needed is a paradigm shift in consciousness. This can only come about when there has been a massive disruption in our lives.

In April 2020 the World Economic Forum and UNESCO reported that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, over 1.2 billion children were impacted by school closures. As a result, 21st century education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of and popularity of online learning; whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms.

Even longstanding, traditional UK Independent Schools such as Harrow and King's College Wimbledon, are adapting their traditional programmes to the new digital era in education. Headteacher of King's, Andrew Halls OBE, says he expects 300,000 children to be home-schooled by 2025 – a five-fold increase on the pre-COVID level of 60,000. To meet this demand, quality online educational provision will be needed.
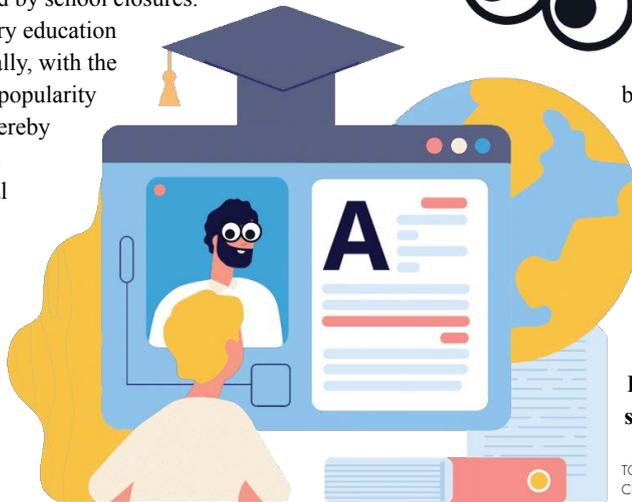
Founded by an educational leadership team who share over 48 years of Headship and Teaching experience at Sophia High School, we use a unique blend of traditional values and innovative approaches to education to create a best-in-class online learning environment. This is supported by our blended learning model, which ensures that digital learning time and independent home learning opportunities are both balanced and age appropriate. ●

For more information, visit us at sophiahigh.school

TOP LEFT: DAVID MCCARTHY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION; ABOVE: MELISSA MCBRIDE, CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER