

# FSAUK in the News

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## St Mary's First Star Academy wins WhatUNi Award Best Prospective Student Engagement



St Mary's won the Best Prospective Student Engagement Award at the annual Whatuni? Student Choice Awards (WUSCAs) on 19th April.

Hosted at a ceremony in London, the WUSCAs recognise the top performing higher education institutions across a range of categories based entirely on student feedback.

St Mary's won the award for Best Prospective Student Engagement for its work with the First Star Academy, which helps young people in foster care from local authorities across London gain access to and flourish in higher education. For four years, students will spend one day a month and four weeks each summer on St Mary's Strawberry Hill campus.



The St Mary's First Star Academy was established in the spring of 2017 and the first residential summer school was held in August. The four-week residential programme is intended to make sure those attending are as prepared as possible for higher education. It helps them decide the type of university they may want to attend through visits to other campuses, the course they want to study, and to explore financial support options available to them.

The submission was chosen by the Whatuni? Student Advisory Panel. Impressed with the work of the academy, they noted "It really reaches out to students" and "it's clearly had a big impact on students' lives."

Speaking of the Award, St Mary's Pro Vice-Chancellor

for Research and Enterprise Rt Hon Ruth Kelly said, "It is a great honour to have received this award and to be able to work with such inspiring young people. This is a fantastic recognition of the work of everyone involved in the First Star Academy at St Mary's, which wouldn't be possible without the support of the Sir John Cass Foundation and our other benefactors."

Director of the St Mary's First Star Academy Nick Turk added, "We are over the moon to receive this award, especially as a sector-wide panel voted for it. It's really heartening to see that Higher Education as a whole values a programme designed specifically to facilitate young people in care going on to university. Our current cohort will be applying to universities who are clearly already rooting for them

<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2018/04/wusca-2018>

### First Saturday—April

- \* Excellent financial literacy session led by MyBnk—a charity who deliver financial education and enterprise directly to 7-25 year olds in schools and youth organisation
- \* Chair of FSAUK—Hollywood producer Peter Samuelson ran a session on film production; answering questions from First Star Students and offering career advice to mentors.
- \* This was followed by a showing of 'STORMBREAKER' the Alex Rider spy adventure written and scripted by Anthony Horowitz and produced by Peter Samuelson

## News from the USA — FSAUK congratulates University of Connecticut Academy students and staff - wonderful outcomes

### First Star Academy Graduates by Year

Senior Class Year	Number of Seniors	High School Graduation Rate	College Acceptance Rate	College Enrollment Rate
2015	12	100%	100%	100%
2016	16	94%	88%	81%
2017	25	100%	92%	84%