



August 2017

Dear Parents,

Each year in this newsletter, I report on some of the key events that have taken place this academic year and touch on some areas of my speech which I delivered at Prize Giving.

An area of life we have been mindful of and which we have addressed in many aspects of our curriculum has been to do with resilience. The great Leonard Cohen died in November, 2016 and he inspired me with his deeply philosophical lyrics which formed part of the backbone of the prize giving speech. In his song Anthem, he spoke the following words:-

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.*

The Navajo Indians, after weaving a perfect rug, would interrupt one stitch to let the world in. The Chinese potters of some lost and ancient dynasty, having finally completed a flawless work, would create a small chip to let their soul out.

In the grand scheme of things, nothing is perfect however the academic journey our pupils embark on does let the light in in terms of building resilience and learning from disappointment, mistakes and at times, failure. We are helping children to join a super highway of opportunity by showing them how to steer a clear road ahead. In order to go on this journey, they do need to experience some level of failure; disappointment with regard to an exam result, non-selection for a team or squad, a poor result in a music exam, a less than sparkling presentation when public speaking; this is an integral part of being in society, learning from mistakes, picking yourself up from disappointment and learning to overcome barriers, in whatever form they may manifest themselves.

We changed our Mission Statement this year and substituted the word challenge with opportunity as we felt this had a much more positive ring to it. It now reads 'Preparing the Children of Today for the Opportunities of Tomorrow'.

There will be disappointments along the way however I hope our children have learnt how to pick themselves up and if we have given them the ability to feel pride in what they have achieved and resilience to overcome adversity and look forward to their next opportunity, we have fulfilled our mission.



Excellence within the curriculum and curriculum matters



This year, 38% of our pupils achieved awards to their chosen schools, in academic, creative and performing arts and sporting disciplines. I am often asked what I consider the main strength of Prince's Mead to be and I believe it is that we are capable of finding that certain something in each and every child. Of course it isn't all about scholarships and awards, it is far more than that. It is helping Year 6 families find the right school for their children when they move on and supporting and nurturing all

the children in our care.

Standards in all areas within the school are developing year on year. This is due to the dedication and hard work of the teaching staff, the constant review of our curriculum to make it fit for purpose and our high ambitions for our children.

Academic	Katharine Cecil	Churcher's College
Academic	Alanah Keane	Leweston School
Academic	Harry Lynn	Salesian College
Academic	Zofia Osgood	King Edward VI School
Academic Exhibition	Alanah Keane	St Mary's Calne
Art	Katharine Cecil	King Edward VI School
Drama	Grace Taylor	Alton Convent
Music	Grace Davey	Millfield
Music Exhibition	James Booth	King Edward VI School
Music Exhibition	Lily Boughton	Godolphin
Sport	Grace Davey	Millfield
Sport	Alice Hines	St Swithun's
Sport	Oliver Hilton	Hampshire Collegiate School
Sport Award	Melanie Georgiou	King Edwards VI School



We said fond farewells to some pupils who had been in the school since Nursery.



We also celebrated all the families who have had children in the school for 10 years or more:- The Andrews Family - 11 years, The Davey Family - 11 years, The Georgiou Family - 11 years, The Roberts Family - 11 years, The Collings Family - 12 years, The Stokes Family - 13 years and the Taylor Family - 15 years.

Curricular Activity



The Enterprise Project and Fair, which demonstrated such entrepreneurial spirit and innovation was a huge success with Year 6.

The use of technology throughout the school has gone from strength to strength and I am simply delighted by the way the staff have embraced all new opportunities to enrich the learning experience of our pupils. We now have suites of lap tops and iPads as well as our bespoke PC network with excellent internet coverage to all areas of the school extending as far as the most distant corners of the sport's fields.



The Year 6 pupils continue to support the Reception children in their learning by acting as reading buddies.



We held a huge Summer Concert in the sports hall for all the children in Years 4 - 6 and the standard of music making was exemplary. We have a very strong peripatetic team of musicians under the leadership of Sue Williams and they all exceeded expectations. The Parents' Choir had their debut at the concert and received rapturous applause!

The Aladdin performances were simply mesmerising! We thank Mr Anderson, Miss Williams, Mr Greenaway and an entire work force of parents for all their hard work in creating a unique and highly memorable experience for us all.





Sport went from strength to strength. Josh and Rio were Silver Medallists in the National U11 Gymnastics Competition.



Extra Curricular Activity

Our comprehensive and diverse extra curricular activity programme continued to give the children the opportunity to learn new hobbies and skills, including gardening and fly fishing.



PMA

Charitable giving was significant with the following charities benefitting from our endeavours:- Inungur School, Winston's Wish, Rainbow Trust, Grenfell Tower Appeal, Anaphalaxis Campaign, Cambodian Surgical Centre and The Murray Parish Trust.



Staff Matters

This term we said goodbye to Mr Steve Gleed, who is retiring after 15 years at the school. Inspirational teachers make a huge difference to the lives of young people and they are remembered for many years. There is no doubt that we will all remember Steve Gleed and his outstanding commitment, professionalism and dedication to so many children over the years. He is a true professional who is loved by us all, even though he drives the staff mad with his jokes and one liners! Steve has been involved in so many aspects of life at the school; however it is his profound love of History that has inspired so many.



His ability to guide the children round the battlefields and landing beaches of Normandy is unparalleled as is his story about evolution and it was he who led our Remembrance Commemorative Service around our Poppy Field in 2014.



We all wish him well for the future in the myriad of activities he is planning to get involved in.

He was presented with a truly wonderful cake, created by Mrs McCartney.

Overseas Trips



Our trip to Normandy this year was a very special event with Steve Gleed, Victoria Baines, Wendy Jack, Jean Martin and Richard White, accompanying the children. Great fun was had by all with much very positive and effusive feedback coming from parents.



Adventure Training

This year, Year 3 went to Calshot and engaged in rock climbing, archery and skiing, it was a very successful trip. The Year 4 children travelled to Mill on the Brue in Bruton, Year 5 went to the Bushcraft Camp in Cornbury Estate, Oxfordshire and the Year 6 pupils went to Rockley for their water based activity week.



And Finally

For me personally, this academic year has been very exciting, fulfilling and tiring! I have enjoyed my role as a Governor at Chafyn Grove School in Salisbury and The Banda School, Nairobi, Kenya. I continue as a Board Director for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, as an ISI Team Inspector and as a Member of the IAPS Membership Committee. In addition I sit on the Hampshire Children's Safeguarding Education sub-committee. All these roles help me to keep up to speed on academic developments and initiatives within both the maintained and independent sectors.

In order for the School to be so successful we need much input from all our families and for this I thank you for your enthusiasm and continued support, it is much appreciated.

I wish you all a very happy Summer holiday and look forward to seeing all those returning to Prince's Mead on Wednesday 6th September.

Yours sincerely,

Penelope S Kirk

Miss P S Kirk - Headmistress