
Principal's Newsletter

13 December 2019

Dear Parents,

It is the morning after the day before. If the country had voted like the secondary pupils of Liverpool College all 650 constituencies would have been represented by a Labour MP. It seems our school is indeed exceptional in every respect. At the very least, the posters and pamphlets, full of slogans and what Mr Trump has termed "fake news" have disappeared and today we are all working hard on various assessments, mocks and summative exams.

The funeral for Mr David Welch, long-time teacher at the College, was held last Friday. I wished I had taken every one of our trainee teachers with me to this sad occasion. Assembled in the chapel of a cemetery were former pupils, OLs, from all over the world, from every age group of leavers between the years 1970 and 2000. They came to pay their respects to a man they admired and who had given so much of himself to their education. It was sobering, inspiring and humbling. A great school, a great teacher leaves a legacy in the lives of students, perhaps not always expressed explicitly and consciously within the confines of a pupil's school days but nevertheless very real and very powerful.

I must mention that from time to time we discover that some pupils are worried about their family's finances, including the family's ability to buy food. It is important that you know that if your family is in these circumstances we can help and I would encourage you to write to Mrs Duffy at kduffy@liverpoolcollege.org.uk if you are in this situation. Christmas can be a very stressful and anxious time in this respect and we have been asked by our friends to make any family that needs food assistance aware of the free food provided by Frontline on Lawrence Road.

In the post-traumatic stress period after an Ofsted inspection, emotions can lead to a slight sensation of restriction in the back of the throat. The tears welled on several occasions this week. The proud moment of the publication of our report on the Ofsted website. The congratulations we continue to receive from nonagenarian and octogenarian OLs writing from their homes all over the world to extend congratulations, sharing in some cases their absolute certainty that things were not better then, they are better now! Especially moving was the cake brought to school by the Al-Rawi family who expressed their pride in the

accomplishment of the school by ordering a baker to bake a cake with the Ofsted outstanding logo on it!

Then of course there were the two services in Mossley Hill Parish Church. On Monday, the secondary phase service of lessons and carols in these more intimate surroundings felt apposite and celebratory, not only of the advent season, but also of all that has been achieved this term. It was amazing to hear the orchestra play Prokofiev, evidence of their ever-increasing confidence. We were lucky to have John the lollipop man join us. He has told me that he is now officially retired due to health, but he was as ever swarmed by adoring and grateful children and parents, wishing to thank him for his long and exceptional service to us.

The Christingle service of the Prep School the next night reminded me of the habit of the chairmen of Olympic committees to declare every Olympic games the best one ever. I used to think this was a conceit but in the case of these Christingles it is simply amazing how they keep getting better and better. Thanks to all the parents who attended both events. The secondary phase pupils will celebrate their lessons and carols on Wednesday.

For those who purchased tickets for the PTA Christmas raffle, I can announce that the winning ticket was a white ticket with a yellow border, number 207.

Today was the final performance of the Reception Nativity with the theme: What is it all about. In the context of an all-through school, this is a moment of intimations of the future as the pupils singing will in about 14 years time be the ones collecting their A level and BTEC results. Parents and carers clap enthusiastically as an amazing number of songs and lines of dialogue are delivered flawlessly by four and five year olds.

During these performances, one is struck immediately by the reality of emerging and even formed personality - of the defining and differing characteristics of a human being. It remains a wonder how children differ so strongly in personality from the earliest age. How and why this is so is a question which will perhaps one day be answered. When it is, the need for education and educators will likely cease. In any event, the IR spectroscopy devices which the Royal Society of Chemistry brought to our school to thrill our budding scientists can study the material world in a level of detail which unfortunately we have not yet been able to discern in the matter of personality.

Mr Farnan-Stone is taking pupils to the theatre. Three trips proposed for 2020 – a chance for Year 7 to see "A Monster Calls", a chance for Year 9 to attend "Romeo and Juliet" and Year 10 "Jekyll and Hyde".

As this is the last newsletter of the term, I am already thinking about the new year 2020. One hope I have is that it stops raining. Another is that people wear the right coat to school. If your child does not wear a black coat without fur trim, they are not in uniform. My hope is that you will remedy the various "I have lost my school shoes", and "I have only got a red

coat" which blight our daily social intercourse and prevent us from concentrating entirely on the learning at hand.

It will be interesting to attend the Year 7 and Year 8 Disco, scheduled for mid-afternoon on Tuesday at the end of a period of robust assessment. It seems amazing to want to "disco" while it is still light outside, but that is apparently what we are going to try to do. It is another example of the unpredictable and joyous life of Liverpool College.

May I wish you and yours a blessed Christmas and restful holiday season.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal