
Principal's Newsletter

10 March 2022

Dear Parents,

There is so much activity to report that I fear some editing of even the highlights of the past week will be necessary.

Before the launch into some of these highlights, advance warning of the impending secondary phase **Speech Night and Prize Giving**, not held for the last two years, but now definitely on for **Tuesday March 29** in the Cathedral. On that day, secondary phase pupils and students will finish lessons at 15.00 so as to prepare for their mandatory attendance at the Cathedral. There is no religious element to this evening and all pupils are expected to attend the event which will begin at 19.30. Parents are welcome to attend and further details of arrangements will be emailed next week. Our speaker that evening will be Mr Jimmy Mulville, scouser, TV producer, Cambridge classicist, philanthropist, actor, comedian.

Thank you to those parents who attended our Parent Information Evening yesterday. We discussed the ways in which we are developing and evaluating our curriculum and programmes after covid as well as some of the dilemmas we face in finding the right balance within our secondary school day. There were also updates about campus developments, and a new school administration system which will make communication with parents much easier and simpler.

We will start with sport and the achievements of our cross-country runners in Prep. Charlie W has managed to run fastest of all the primary pupils in our region at a district event and will now represent the Merseyside region at the national competition. This is a feat which even the great Curtis Robb OL, the last pupil from our school to compete in an Olympic final, was not able to achieve. Beau R and Seb W managed to qualify for the national competition as well and Marina V also put in a great performance. The same week, Seb bagged his first medal in a race around Sefton Park! Beau and Charlie won outright.

The very next morning it was the turn of our Year 5 football team at the LSSP football tournament. With Josh L putting in a man of the match performance we emerged the winners! Mr Stamper assures me that next week there will be even more match reports as we played rugby, netball and football against Birkenhead school. It is as if there is an Olympics going on in the Prep School.

There were also very positive reports from Mr Heeley about the Chapter 7 rugby team's performance at the 7s competition at Bradford Grammar. It is a tribute to our coaches and pupils that they regularly defeat large rugby playing independent schools in these competitions despite the asymmetry in resources available. Tomorrow, we play three football matches against our friends from Lancaster Ripley St Thomas.

Yesterday I attended the Music Masters concert held in the MV Hall. Visible for all were the preparations for *Seussical*. The set certainly promises much and the show is winding its merry way to opening night on 24 March. Get your tickets while you can from Mrs Herron in the Prep School office (ticket cost - £7.50) as these productions seem to involve every possible pupil, teacher and family, and I want you to be able to enjoy the first of such productions for many years.

Back to the concert. If you wonder what pupils have been doing with lockdown, the performances here gave an insight about endless consolations of the beauty of making music. There were discoveries of new talent, now growing ever more confident, and it is difficult to single out the extraordinary when every performer is, definitionally, doing something brave, creative, and transcendent. But I was struck by hearing Aoife J in Y12 playing her clarinet. Struck by the time that has elapsed since I last heard her play, and by the artistry and maturity produced in the intervening years. We also had the treat of hearing Leonard B in Y9, whose full name will surely be in the programmes of concert halls across the world soon, tackling the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto number 3. Such talent and potential in that room.

The boarders always make a plan for the weekend. Their trip to the Hale lighthouse is just as popular with them as their playing of the Young Samurai virtual reality game. If Aristotle correctly assumed that a good life consisted of variety and various activities, boarders and day boarders have the recipe cooking every week.

Mrs Drew reports on National Careers Week:

This week the secondary phase have been busy with careers events for National Careers Week. Chapter 7 were lucky to attend a careers talk from Rebecca Sides. Rebecca, after reaching the very top working for Mercedes Benz, was given her own franchise to run for Bravoauto. The pupils were fascinated to hear about her career journey and learnt a bit of Welsh in the process! Year 9 pupils have been working on problem solving through their Skillsbuilder programme and Year 10 and 11 have been building work ready skills through the Youth Employment Certificate. Year 12 attended a talk from EY Manchester where they learnt about their school leaver options and degree apprenticeships.

Leaders in schools have the privilege of watching not only pupils but also teachers develop and grow. The so-called MER observation cycles mean that we see some amazing things. Ms Roger's lesson on the ancient Sumerians as part of the new Opening Worlds humanities curriculum, Ms Tyrer leading an excellent CPD session for her colleagues on a curriculum

review of science in the primary phase. Mr Stamper's innovations in the personal development programme from glockenspiel to entrepreneurial projects. It is a privilege.

I myself have become somewhat obsessed by the vocabulary wall in Ms Brooke's class. Here are words like vertiginous, rodomontade, dastardly, and other enhancements of our ability to express our innermost thoughts with accuracy. The adjectival wealth in a Year 5 or Year 6 writing book is something to behold.

Congratulations also to Ms McCartney whose doctoral research into the teaching of climate change in schools is propelling her into ever higher spheres. Her lecture at Hope to a group of teaching mentors as well as her research into this important topic will no doubt contribute to improved teaching and learning of this reality as it shapes our world. Ms McCartney has written to parents in the secondary phase this week to recruit student volunteers to take part in an online questionnaire to support her research – if you are happy for your child to take part, please complete the online consent form: <https://ljamu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/parentguardian-consent-form>. You can access further information about the project by [clicking here](#).

Our Year 1-Year 6 have nominated those pupils who will be trained in Mental Health first aid, learning how to support peers in the first instance, and raising awareness of the importance of mental health in an age appropriate way. This forms part of a larger strategy nationally and in our school as we deal with an increasing number of pupils who, through covid and other factors, have experienced a deterioration in their mental wellbeing.

Mrs Pease has shown me some marvellous cards, designed and produced by a parent, which can be purchased at the Prep School in support of Ukraine. The sunflower, and gold and blue colours of this country's flag are quickly becoming a ubiquitous symbol of hope for freedom and peace. We are still developing our charitable response to the 2.5 million refugees, and countless victims of this war. The cards are a way to support right now.

St John's College Cambridge has already identified some of our students as eligible for their new scholarships. A mathematics don from St John's visited this week to share their new scholarship ideas. I have written in the past about our increasing Oxbridge successes. The outreach provided by universities definitely inspires our pupils and students to aim high and to believe that they should extend themselves. As the mocks continue in the secondary phase of the school, I hope every pupil will show the same ambition and keen academic commitment which was on display during this visit.

Ms Hardisty writes about the latest offer from her many creative geniuses:

Photographer Mandy Barker draws attention to plastic waste in our oceans through her photographic pieces. This week Yr. 12 have been studying this artist as part of our photography workshop and how she raises awareness of the severity of this problem. Students explored her disquieting images and compositions which feature thought provoking titles and created their own inspired photography, exploring these ideas further and understanding how

Yours sincerely,

**Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal**