

Headmaster's Report for the Academic Year 2015-16

Mr Deputy Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen, girls and boys: I would like to start by thanking the various musicians who have entertained us so beautifully today.

In March 2009, President Obama addressed the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and said:

"In a 21st Century world where jobs can be shipped wherever there's an internet connection, where a child born in Dallas is now competing with a child in New Delhi, where your best job qualification is not what you do, but what you know – education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success, it's a prerequisite for success."

And it's often said that 80% of the jobs that you will do in the future have not yet been invented and that *'the only certainty in your future is uncertainty. The only thing that we can predictably prepare you for is unpredictability'*; your education is therefore much more than passing tests and exams but about the learning journey that you take and your ability to cope with all that the world will throw at you in the future.

Does that mean that your exam results are not important – well, of course not. In fact your academic success lies at the heart of your future; if you like it is the passport that will enable you to travel a path that otherwise would not be available to you; your results will unlock metaphorical barriers but the rest is up to you!

I am delighted therefore to congratulate all our pupils, starting in Reception Class with our exceptional Foundation Stage results. At both Key Stage 1 and 2 we saw excellent results which are far in excess of the national standard.

Pupils celebrated outstanding results at GCSE with a third of them achieving an impressive 8 or more A* or A grades. In total, over half of all the grades were at A* or A.

Well done to our Sixth Form on their A Level results; of particular note in these were our excellent Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results, half of which were at A* or A. Congratulations to Laurie Fisher whose EPQ has recently been published by a university and is being used as an exemplar by the exam board for others to follow.

It is pleasing therefore to report that our pupils have once again performed exceptionally well in their examinations and, while the overall statistics will only paint a general picture of your success, it is the individual success stories that I want you to think about today.

After all, our aim is clear in that we work to unlock the potential of **each** and **every** child, so having gained their passports for future travel, how do our pupils ensure that they travel first class and have their pick of future careers, whatever they might be?

Recent research from British Gas tells us that 94% of employers say a business can get great results from employees who have volunteered, whilst more than half of employers say they have turned down candidates because they lacked soft skills and personality.

More so than ever, there is a need to stand out from the crowd and a need therefore to influence pupils' own futures by ensuring they have work-ready skills to enhance their CVs. We develop leadership skills through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme - this year with more than ever completing the Gold Award - working as a team through the CREST Awards in Science or as part of a sports team, and they develop confidence and presentation skills through Speech and Drama or in the annual Musical.

Creativity is seen in just about any subject and we see so much of this creativity started early in the young minds of our Preparatory School pupils. My thanks go to Mrs Elding and her team of Prep staff for their hard work last year.

Our Forest School scheme is at the forefront of allowing children to develop so many of these life skills and we were pleased to extend our charitable outreach to pupils from West Town Primary School who used the woodland during the Summer Term.

In September, Year 6 pupils had a fantastic time outdoors making new friends, learning new skills, gaining confidence and resilience through the first Bushcraft Residential. They experienced workshops in essential skills such as First Aid, wild foraging, survival, fire lighting, shelter building and wildlife.

Meanwhile our link with the 14th Nene continues to be exceptionally strong and the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts groups are thriving. Camping is, of course, the highlight but they undertake other exciting activities too including abseiling, canoeing and karting.

Later in the Autumn Term we celebrated Christingle at St John's Church, which was a magical and uplifting occasion, setting the scene for the festive season. St John's Church has also been a beautiful location to hold our Coffee Morning Music Recitals while the Prep and Infant Choirs warmed the shoppers of Peterborough by singing Christmas songs and carols in the Guildhall and in January, the Prep Choir sang at the Cathedral in Latin and led the parade at the Katherine of Aragon Commemoration Service.

Create 2016 was again a spectacular display of creative talent in The Preparatory School and pupils in the Preparatory Dance Club went back in time to the Rock 'n Roll Era when they performed an upbeat dance routine to Jackie Wilson's Reet Petite at the Peterborough Primary Schools' Dance Festival at the Cresset.

Dancing of another form was highlighted beautifully in June, when we successfully hosted the Peterborough Schools' Country Dancing Festival for the second time, and when our front pitch was covered by hundreds of dancers and their families.

In the Peterborough Children's Film Festival, Year 2 and Year 5 both gained a runners-up trophy for their films; *Masterchef 2016* and *Natural News* and Mrs Quy won the teacher award for her film in the Bullying Awareness category.

Year 5 introduced this year's Independent Learning Day with documentary films they had made in a professional studio, inspired by Brazil and the Rio Olympics. Every child in Prep created a carnival costume and learnt a carnival- inspired dance, which raised money for the Brazilian favelas.

Our chess team continues to go from strength to strength and my congratulations go to Anirudh Kandikattu who was again selected to represent Northamptonshire.

And while our Sixth Form leavers left to go to University in July, Prep pupils were able to gain credit through the Children's University again this year, achieving considerable success.

The Nursery continues to thrive and the children enjoy many wonderful experiences. We were delighted to be recognised by Peterborough City College with an award in recognition of our training of apprentices and also won a Food Trust Award for the quality of the menus on offer. Open afternoons both in the Nursery and in Reception enable parents to see first-hand the work of the children and this quality was recognised by inspectors too when they visited in December, rating the Nursery and Reception Class Outstanding in every single area. I am particularly delighted that the work of our children and staff received so much high quality praise within the report, especially pertaining to the children's learning, personal development and behaviour. It is unusual for schools to receive such a positive report with no recommendations for improvement to be made.

Once again our pupils got out and about in the region, with senior students undertaking fieldwork in Geography and trekking in the wilderness as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Whether through D of E or other schemes, students are often put in positions of service to others and this is no more evident than through our thriving St John Ambulance Division; my congratulations to Siân Youens and Maha Nazir on gaining the highest honour, the Grand Prior Award. Thank you to Miss Doyle, the link teacher, and parents, Mrs Shah and Mrs Gilbert for their time and commitment. We are delighted to have been able to start Peterborough's first Badger unit this term for Prep pupils.

In History and RS we celebrated outstanding A Level results with all pupils gaining an A*, A or B. Well done to Jordan Grinyer on achieving full UMS marks in a challenging Philosophy and Ethics paper, while at GCSE 86% achieved A or A* grades in the RS Long Course. Year 7 enjoyed the History field trip to Lincoln visiting the castle and experiencing life in the Middle Ages.

Pupils continue to experience considerable success in the UK Mathematics Challenges, with some gifted Prep pupils entering the senior age category, gaining, one gold, two silver and eight bronze medals. Older pupils achieved similar success in primary and follow-up rounds and the team challenges, and I should mention Rohan Khosla and Amelia Grota who finished in the top 1% nationally.

In February, History and Mathematics combined when a packed audience of parents, pupils and staff attended an evening lecture delivered by Dr James Grime who delivered a fascinating talk, showcasing a World War 2 Enigma Machine and explained Alan Turing's code-breaking genius. Our programme of Able, Gifted and Talented lectures on topics such as *Language Families* and the *The Easter Rising*, were also thoroughly enjoyed.

Languages continued to come to life with the German Exchange and French Residential trips, undoubtedly improving pupils' listening and speaking skills as well as enhanced self-confidence, self-reliance and the capacity to cope with the challenges that learning abroad brings. In October pupils ventured to the beautiful city of Augsburg and enjoying a packed week of trips, sporting activities and time spent with their exchange partners. In May, pupils from Years 7 and 8 journeyed to Berlin, with highlights including a visit to Prussian King Frederick the Great's Summer residence and seeing the animals in Berlin zoo.

Psychology continues to be one of our most popular A Level subjects and students have been engaged and challenged by a range of activities and debates which have included explanations of Schizophrenia, paranormal belief and workplace stress.

Our scientists celebrated outstanding results at GCSE, with 92% of all results in separate sciences at A* or A. Students completed Bronze and Silver CREST Awards thanks to our special relationship with Cummins Engineering, as well as attending the Big Bang Science Fair. Year 10 aspiring medics undertook a visit to the renal unit at Peterborough City Hospital while Elizabeth Jessop began an exciting project working with Dr Fox-Clipsham on a project related to her PhD into an equestrian disease.

Computer Science has very quickly become a strength of the School with an outstanding 88% of GCSEs at A*. Students learn to programme and have designed apps for mobile devices. They attended the Think Computer Science event at Duxford, winning the Microsoft programming competition and we were among the first schools to try out the new BBC Micro:bit computers

Children continue to develop a love of English encouraged by the Carnegie Medal Shadowing scheme and the Book Buzz Breakfast, and able writers enjoyed a special workshop by visiting author, Mark Robson. In School they put their journalistic talents to good use in the new student run newspaper, The Grapevine, which is excellent. Our quality in English was recognised with a Good Schools Guide Award for results at A Level.

While children enjoy reading poetry and plays in English, in Drama they take to the stage and we saw some exceptional performances at GCSE and A Level. Many students achieved LAMDA or New Era medals but special congratulations go to Abigail Jessop who gained her New Era Diploma. With more distinctions than any other year, my congratulations also go to those who took part in the Peterborough Drama Festival with 11 pupils emerging as overall class winners, and Georgina Parker and Leah Dennis receiving Honours. Over 100 pupils wowed audiences in *Oliver!* which was another triumph. Students make good use of the new outside auditorium to perform during lessons and they have gained a taste of live theatre with trips to see *Blood Brothers*, *Gothic Tales*, *Rebecca* and *Our Country's Good*. Pupils also took part in the Shakespeare Schools Festival and performed a brilliant adaptation of *Twelfth Night*.

We have experienced just a taste of our School's musical talent today and it was a pleasure to see so many pupils enjoy their music over the last year. The contemporary bands are becoming even more impressive and congratulations to the Folk Band on winning Battle of the Bands for the second year. While a large group of pupils travelled to Birmingham to take part in the National Music for Youth competition, our own Music Festival was again a huge success with nearly 200 pupils taking part and my congratulations go to Abigail Jessop on being awarded Young Musician of the Year and to Olivia Barnes as Most Promising Musician.

The growth of the choirs continues and our senior boys' choir now sing weekly in Chapel with the girls. They now regularly sing here at Peterborough Cathedral and other churches around the region, but I know it will be the music tour to Malta that will remain as a key memory for many for years to come.

It has been another pleasing year in the Art Department with outstanding work completed at A Level and GCSE, meaning the Summer Exhibition was particularly successful. Guests enjoyed work of our talented artists and designers; the variety of the work using both traditional methods and the more modern techniques using the 3D printer and the laser cutter, was simply amazing!

On the back of the School magazine is a lovely photograph of our weather vane, which epitomises the choice of direction that our students have when leaving the School. To help prepare them to make this decision, Year 11 undertook a Careers Day in September, with each student learning how to create an effective CV, while Year 9 were encouraged to go to work with their parents and gain valuable experience of the world of work. In June, five Year 10 girls attended the Cummins Women in Engineering day and had an opportunity to network with successful women in the engineering profession. Other students gained work experience with this global engineering firm and we thank Cummins for their continued support.

2015-16 was another impressive year on the sports field with pupils of all ages experiencing notable success, which we celebrated at our Sports Presentation Evening in June. During the year, we competed in 18 different sports; played in excess of 400 matches and produced league Champion teams, tournament Champions, County Triallists, County Academy Netballers, Regional Triallists, Regional Competitors, County Medallists, County Champions, National School Games Qualifiers, National Qualifiers, National team medallists, National Champion teams and International Performers. I told you it was impressive!

While we were successful in a wide range of sports, it is our dominance in indoor rowing which continues to impress. This year the Under 14 and Under 15 mixed fours were both very successful in the Cambridgeshire County Championships with both teams winning this event. In the Concept 2 National Indoor League, teams from Years 6 to 13 entered this gruelling competition over six months, and every age group finished in the top three for a specific event with the Year 8 Boys and Year 9 Girls being recognised as National Champions. Out on the water, students continued to impress with Archie Sootheran, Benjamin Mackenzie, Hannah Bassett, Georgina Parker, Leah Dennis, Rohan Khosla, Hannah and Aimee Parker all winning district, county and regional awards on rowing lakes across the country.

While students of all ages take on responsibilities in School, this year we introduced two new schemes: Sixth Form Study Buddies supported younger students, whilst our Peer Mentoring scheme involves Sixth Formers performing a more pastoral role. In April we appointed Jordan Grinyer as our very first Head Boy as the School became fully coeducational throughout.

Our Sixth Form have been involved in a wide array of activities including Sport, Music, Debating, Drama and Young Enterprise, where they won awards for Best Company Report and our new Head Girl, Natasha Greenfield, being the Best Entrepreneur. Lower Sixth Business and Economics students entered the BASE competition reaching the final three after giving a confident and professional presentation to the judges. Sixth Formers enjoyed an excellent cultural trip to Prague and they joined skiers from the rest of the School on the trip to Passo Tonale in Italy.

House spirit continues to be strong and is growing. We enjoyed the various events throughout the year including the hard fought inter-house rowing, Christmas tree decorating and bake sales. Well done to Newton House on winning both the Events Cup and the House Point Shield last year.

The year saw student voice develop with the newly formed Student Parliament which has a remit to represent the students' views on a whole host of matters, including uniform, meals, School rules and house activities. And the Debating Society continues to thrive as a student-led activity, giving us a particularly entertaining Brexit debate between Callum Robertson and a local councillor. Congratulations also to Callum on being elected Deputy Youth MP this year.

As the Headmaster, I give out many awards, for a variety of different achievements. The ones that are very special to me are when students show a particular act of kindness towards others, showing their true moral values. As a Woodard School we value the whole person and believe in holistic education based on Christian values and principles. I was therefore delighted to welcome our new Chaplain to the School during the last academic year and I am grateful to Father Toby for leading worship and supporting the pastoral welfare of pupils in his role, offering comfort to pupils in need. I also thank the many visitors who supported the School by preaching in our own Chapel prior to Father Toby's arrival. Pupils are now more involved in services than ever before, taking key roles in the leadership of Chapel liturgies. Last year saw the introduction of the new 'nqyr' discussion group and the Confirmation of a number of candidates by Bishop Holbrook.

I am always impressed by the extent that our pupils go to support others who are less fortunate, whether this be volunteering at a local charity or care home or undertaking a challenge to raise money. This year we supported a number of worthy causes, raising nearly £9,000 in total. These causes included SHINE, a national charity based in Peterborough, supporting families of children with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. Congratulations to those students who baked and ate cakes, who completed the sponsored Santa's SMile and the 15 Mile Challenge. Appeals Day in March was a great success with nearly £3,000 raised in just one day. I again pay tribute to the pupils, parents and staff for their hard work and immense generosity.

I am delighted that Shelley Green from SHINE is able to join us today and would now like to ask her to come forward so that Tukiya Mukutuma, our Charities Prefect, can present her with a cheque for £5,521.46 including Gift Aid towards their ongoing work.

I would like to echo the Chair of Governor's thanks to the Parent-Teacher Guild, and its Chairman, David Bennett for their most generous donation towards the construction of the Prep Playground which is now almost complete. Thank you to all who contributed and for your support of the School over the last year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank on your behalf our many hardworking staff who teach and care for our children throughout the year. I would also like to thank my Leadership Team in Mr Cameron, Mrs Elding and Mrs Rivers for their support and to welcome Mr Johnson, our new Bursar to the team. I would like to endorse the thanks of Ms Ayres for the dedication and hard work of our former bursar, Mr Charlton and to wish him a long and happy retirement.

My final thanks go to the boys and girls of The Peterborough School; it is you all who make this school such a wonderful place to be. I would like to congratulate you all on your many achievements over the last year and I am sure your families would like to show their appreciation too with a well-deserved round of applause.

While I have not been able to include all of the highlights of the last 12 months, I hope this summary gives you a sense of the experiences of our children and to show how they develop the academic strength coupled with those essential soft skills that will enable them to be in the driving seat of their own future, whether they be aiming to be a nurse, doctor, lawyer, accountant, teacher, computer programmer or in a job yet to be invented, I feel confident that they are ready and waiting to achieve momentous success in the future!

Finally, I would like to just wish you all a very happy half term holiday – you have deserved it - and I look forward to seeing you all back in a couple of weeks. Well done!



Mr A D Meadows, BSc Hons, NPQH
14th October 2016