

Headmaster's Report for the Academic Year 2017-18

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

I want to start my address today by telling you a story about a little boy, called Tim.

Tim is now the same age as me but as a little boy he probably dreamed of being a footballer, a doctor perhaps, a teacher or something else.

Tim attended a school, probably not too dissimilar to ours. He worked hard and when he left school, he wanted to serve his Country so joined the army, but he was also passionate about flying. He was awarded his Army Flying Wings when he was 22, flying helicopters and other aircraft. On retirement from the Army, he was selected as a European Space Agency astronaut and along with his five classmates, he graduated from astronaut basic training.

Major Tim Peake became the first British astronaut to visit the International Space Station, launching on a Soyuz rocket on 15th December 2015. Tim returned to Earth on 18th June 2016. His Principia mission was an eventful and busy six months in space.

The name, Principia, refers to Sir Isaac Newton's world-changing three-part text on physics, *Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, describing the principal laws of motion and gravity. As a Physics teacher, I was delighted at this choice which, of course, also links with one of our four houses within school.

Once again, I am delighted that we are able to hold our prize giving in these wonderful surroundings, made even more special because not only are we celebrating the 900th birthday of the current Cathedral building but also that Tim Peake's actual space capsule is on display here too, which can serve as an inspiration to all of us here today. Wherever you are now in your journey through life, remember Tim's example that dreams really can come true with hard work and determination.

As I complete twelve years as Headmaster, this speech is getting harder to write every year; not because I tire of delivering good news but mainly because it is getting harder to leave things out.

I'd like to start today with a quote:

"In line with the school's aims, self-confidence and self-esteem are outstanding across the entire age range", "The school fully meets its aim of developing, nurturing and achieving leadership" and "In line with the Woodard ethos, pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the non-material aspects of their lives, such as their active participation in Chapel and the constructive feedback that they are encouraged to provide after each service".

The Independent Schools Inspectorate was clearly impressed by what they observed when we welcomed the inspectors into School this week last October and were delighted that they recognised the School's many strengths.

Our Early Years provision was again rated Outstanding and my thanks go to Miss Clingo, who stepped down as Nursery Manager this summer when we welcomed Pauline Bellamy back following a year away. I

thank them both and all the Nursery staff for their hard work and care for the youngest members of our community.

You, our pupils, received so much high-quality praise within the final Inspection report, especially pertaining to your learning, personal development and behaviour. The inspectors said that "From the youngest age, pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a strength of the school and play a key part in their learning". They also said that "Pupils' achievement in extra-curricular activities are excellent, especially in light of the size of the school". These comments make me so very proud to stand here today as your Headmaster.

More success was bestowed upon the School following the visit from the National Association for Able Children in Education Assessors. The NACE Challenge Award is given to Schools who demonstrate their ability to stretch the most-able students whilst also providing for all pupils.

It is pleasing to see that even since our glowing inspection and re-accreditation to NACE, you have continued to excel, and I congratulate the Upper Sixth on their excellent A Level results this Summer. We are delighted that these results are our best for six years, with a third of grades at A or A* and 86% at A*-C. Of particular note in these were our excellent Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results, nearly half of which were at A* or A, on some amazing topics. Impressively, nearly three quarters gained entry in to their first-choice university. Top performers included Muhammad Anjum and Michael Tyler, who both achieved three A*s with an additional A* in their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), taking up places to study Medicine and Computer Science respectively.

The results at GCSE were also impressive with an impressive 9% of grades at the highest possible Level 9, around three times the expected national average, and in the broader picture, 92% gained five GCSEs at Level 4 or better, including English and Maths. Dyuti Chakraborty excelled by scoring a complete set of Level 9s in all of her twelve subjects.

The GCSE and A Levels were tougher this year with all examinations taking place at the end of the course. Nevertheless, the students superbly weathered the storm of an unprecedented year of reform.

The Reception Foundation Stage Profile Scores were excellent in 2018 with attainment well above the national average. Our Good Level of Development increased again and was 20% higher than the national level last year.

We achieved good results in the Key Stage 1 SATs with 83% of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading. Pupils once again outperformed national averages.

In Year 6, children were incredible successful in achieving the expected level of attainment in all three subjects (Reading, Spelling Punctuation and Grammar and Mathematics) with an amazing 93% of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading.

All this was achieved whilst also taking part in a myriad of other activities. The Prep Choirs had another busy year, braving the cold, to sing outside the Guildhall and then warming the hearts of the residents of Kestrel Court. The Infant Choir entertained commuters at the Railway Station whilst we also sang at John Lewis and the Katherine of Aragon service here at the Cathedral.

It has also been another enjoyable year of Forest School. The children have built shelters; learnt about fire and played many team games and as part of our community outreach, pupils from West Town Primary Academy have used our Forest School to learn outdoors. Year 6 had their exhilarating Bushcraft Residential in September; the eating of the fish eyes is now infamous throughout the Prep School!

World Book Day was an enormous success, full of activities and author visits that inspired and ignited the children's imagination and creativity. Key Stage 1 pupils participated in an interactive workshop with Duncan Beedie, a freelance illustrator and children's author, while Ben Davis, a former stand-up comedian, inspired Key Stage 2 pupils. The week finished with the fiercely contested Inter-house Book Quiz – well done Spencer House on a deserved victory!

We were delighted to be one of only ten schools in the county to be asked to work with Nrich, a Mathematical research organisation based at Cambridge University.

The inaugural Prep Careers Fair enabled children to experience, through presentations, questions and practical activities, a diverse range of careers from doctor to hypnotherapist, fundraiser to blacksmith, and dentist to Environmental Engineer.

"Energetic" and "one of the best performances of the evening" was how the performance by the Prep Dance Club was described by members of the public, when they performed in the Primary Schools Dance Festival and Create 2018 also saw spectacular performances from both individuals and ensembles, ensuring that the packed audience was treated to a great evening's entertainment. Once again, the Prep

School's art brightened up the entrance to the School; everyone certainly noticed the striking insect sculptures hanging from the staircase.

Throughout the Summer Term children wrote and directed films for the Peterborough Children's Film Festival, based on the 900-year celebration of this Cathedral. We experienced remarkable success with Year 5 gaining two trophies and the Year 2 video, named 'Peteropoly' based on the Monopoly board game, won two categories including The Warwick Davis Award for the overall best film of the night. All the children involved in the making of these films should be extremely proud of their achievements.

The Children's University is an organisation which encourages young people between the ages of 7-14 years old to participate in a range of out of School activities. The children were delighted to be awarded their certificates by MP Fiona Onasanya within the Cathedral. Maddalena Chiarizia and Rhianna Waumsley should be particularly congratulated for completing 465 hours of outside learning and gaining their Silver postgraduate awards.

As the year in the Prep School came to a close, a wonderful blend of tradition and colour on a perfect summer's evening filled the School grounds as we hosted the annual Peterborough Schools' Country Dancing Festival. To commemorate the 900th anniversary of the Cathedral and as part of the 'Peterborough Celebrates' campaign, 900 do-si-do'es were performed!

And finally, I was delighted to again see the Preparatory School's highly ranked position of 37th, within the Sunday Times' Parent Power Survey of Prep Schools, a rise from 88th the previous year.

Within the Senior School, pupils not only achieve excellent academic results but excel within extra-curricular activities too.

In true Tim Peake style, the Science Department combined Science and Flight with their entry in to the British Model Flying Association Payload Distance Challenge, achieving a silver medal. Even greater things were to come though as the team of Izzy Pope, Archie Stewart, James Kirkwood and Jake and Leon Brookes scooped the top Jetex Challenge Cup, presented to the competition overall winners for their sportsmanship, overall plane design and commitment to the competition – Tim would have been proud! Year 8s enjoyed their day of flight school too and we wish Alisha Jassar, in last year's Upper Sixth, well as she begins her training to be a pilot in Spain – a future astronaut in the making perhaps?

Year 11 completed their CREST Silver Award and our Year 7 and 8s enjoyed a STEM Day linked with Imperial College and this year we also undertook an exciting DNA project in collaboration with a global leader in animal genetic research, the Animal Health Trust, investigating genetic mutation in Labradors.

The School once again celebrated Science week with an array of activities with our own Prep School being joined by local primary Schools. The week finished with pupils making and launching their own rockets and whilst it was not quite as powerful as Tim Peake's, the

rocket soared 500ft in the air, followed a by a controlled landing in the grounds of the school.

In Computer Science, students worked in partnership with BT and Tablet Academy, as we hosted a successful Computer Science and ESafety Festival with other local schools and entered the Alan Turing Cryptography Competition; students gained Bronze awards in the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award.

In Mathematics, special mention must go to Michael Tyler, who gained 100% on five of his 12 A Level examination papers averaging 98% overall and a Gold Medal in the Senior Maths Challenge! Pupils in both the Prep and Senior School achieved considerable success in the various Challenge competitions. Oscar Viner successfully defended his Pi recital this year naming Pi to 202 decimal places.

Congratulations to our senior authors who had their work published in an anthology called "Stranger Sagas". Years 7 to 9 also entered a poetry competition on the subject of libraries with Holly Wenlock being the overall winner. Our pupils enjoy writing in various forms and our budding journalists continue to produce the popular school newspaper, "The Grapevine", written **by** pupils **for** pupils.

Psychology continues to grow in popularity and a highlight this year was a debate which focused on workplace stress in the form of a legal tribunal, whilst in Business Studies and Economics pupils continue to thrive; our Young Enterprise Company, Millennium, produced a GCSE Maths Revision Game, which they subsequently marketed and sold successfully, winning several awards throughout the year including Best Presentation and Runner-Up Best Company at the Area finals. Joyce

Ye also won the Journey Award for her progress as a young entrepreneur.

Students have enjoyed their learning outside of the classroom in Geography this past academic year with a number of Urban Walks to discover the local area and create a 'sense of place' in our students. Pupils 'enjoyed' expeditions of a different kind for their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze and Gold Awards in the Peak District, with great success and blisters!

It has been another busy year for our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts of the 14th Nene, and our Badger and Cadet St John Ambulance Division continues to grow as St John Ambulance celebrates its 140th year. Congratulations to all the students who gained awards this year but especially to Chloe Hayes who gained the highest St John honour, the Grand Prior Award.

In Languages, students enjoyed a successful exchange with the Stetten Institut and October saw us celebrate European Languages Day whilst Language Ambassadors ran voluntary sessions each week to support other pupils in their language learning. We are delighted to introduce Spanish for the first time in Year 7 this September, enhancing our excellent provision.

The Sixth Form gained a taste for Spanish too during their annual cultural trip to Madrid. Undeterred by Ryanair's decision to cancel flights, the group visited the Royal residence and the former royal hunting grounds of the Casa de Campo, and for the more football-obsessed souls, the home of Real Madrid.

Results this year in A Level Philosophy were outstanding with all students gaining an A or A*. We once again were lucky enough to secure two student places on the Lessons from Auschwitz project and Sabrina Wellham and Aashna Sampat were chosen to represent the School visiting Poland to explore the universal lessons of the Holocaust and its relevance for today - a moving and inspiring visit for all.

In Art, students enjoyed visiting the Tate and completed a very successful year by hosting a range of exciting work in Art, Textiles and Design Technology during their Summer Art Exhibition.

In addition to this year's prep productions, this year's musical, Annie, was an amazing success with special praise going to Daisy Reeves-Turner in the title role and Thomas Purtill as Daddy Warbucks. Sarah Lynn was wonderful as Grace and Mollie Moore-Howe and Ollie Cobb combined perfectly as Lily and Rooster, but it would be hard not to forget Hannah O'Driscoll's performance as the drunken Miss Hannigan, showing every reason why she gained her Grade 8 Acting Gold Medal. My thanks go to all the staff who made the musical possible and to Miss Doyle who stepped down as Director of Creative Arts at the end of the year, having directed more musicals than I can remember, but we are delighted that she remains as a teacher of Speech & Drama this year.

It has been an entertaining year in the Drama Department with a highlight being the residential trip to London in April. In the Autumn we were lucky enough to take part in the Shakespeare Schools Festival. A highlight for me this year must be Brainstorm, a play which explored the brains of teenagers and what it is like to grow up in today's society. One of the best pieces of drama I have seen in School concluded with moving messages from the cast to their parents.

The House Drama competition entered its second year and proved to be even funnier and more entertaining than ever with some outstanding cameos from many members of staff, including Mrs Buxcey as the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk and I am not sure that Mr Marsden and Mr Law will ever be the same again after their pantomime roles!

Congratulations to all the Houses on their energetic contribution to events throughout the Year and especially to Mandela House who not only won the events trophy but the House Point Shield too. We enjoyed all the House events, but the inter-house rowing is always a highlight. No wonder with such depth in our student talent, that we took our rowing success to district, County and National levels again. All year groups achieved at least Silver Medals in the Concept 2 National Indoor Rowing League, with seven teams winning Gold. We also won two National Gold medals at the Sainsbury's School Games. Year 9 and 10 secured wins at the County Championships and Georgina Parker and Hannah Bassett enjoyed particular success on the water, finishing 10th overall in the J18 Doubles at the Home International Regatta in Ireland. Congratulations to Hannah Parker in the Upper Sixth who successfully coxed her Ladies Eight to a win at the 2017 World Rowing Masters Regatta in Slovenia at the start of the year gaining first place and a Gold Medal!

2017-18 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, so I won't list all of our success today, but they do include county, regional, national and international players and athletes across a myriad of sports. Our Preparatory School also enjoyed a memorable Sports Tour to Denstone Prep School competing against schools from the Society of Heads.

Netball continues to be a key strength and the girls again dominated the District Leagues and Tournaments, winning three league titles and two District Tournaments, reaching the County Finals.

Golf has seen this year's Elite Sports Performer, Sanjay Nithiyalingam's talent recognised internationally as he begins his golf scholarship at Colorado State University. Shivani Karthikeyan gained the 2018 golfing Order of Merit for girls in Northamptonshire, following wins at regional and national junior opens this summer.

In swimming, Henry Peace is now British Age Group Champion at 5km Open Water. He had personal bests in indoor 800m which was recognised as 5th best across Great Britain. Olivia Lee, competed in the Wales Open Summer Meet gaining five medals, including two golds and we will continue to follow the success of GB swimmer Rachel Wellings in the future.

Holly Leggott continues to excel in the pool and was also selected by British Rowing to compete in the National School Games.

Our Preparatory cricket teams saw great success in beating Laxton, Grantham and Ayscoughfee Hall. Senior Cricket saw Tom Smith selected for the Huntingdonshire U17 County Cricket team and we were delighted too when County Cricketer, Grace Dowdeswell, received the call everyone dreams of to represent England in the World Indoor Cricket Federation 2018 World Series this October in New Zealand.

Fencing continues to develop, and the School hosted the Cambridgeshire County Tournament, with students winning Gold, Silver and Bronze in different age categories. Congratulations to Aarav Roy on his success in representing Great Britain in Karate.

The School's tennis teams completed their season with a fantastic set of league results. Congratulations to our U15 Boys who retained their U13 title to become Regional Division 2 Champions.

Moving from the many energetic sporting activities to the spiritual calm of the Chapel, we welcomed a number of visiting Preachers in to School who gave thought provoking sermons on a variety of themes. The Passion Play before Easter in the style of Brecht was a highlight and involved a large cast and our thanks go to Bishop Robert who presided at our annual Confirmation Eucharist this year.

As you heard in the Inspection quote, Father Toby continues to seek the views of students as they explore matters of faith, regardless of religion, and pupils continue to have more responsibility within Chapel services.

The Chapel last year saw significant enhancements including new flooring, improved sanctuary, the installation of statues of our Patrons, Our Lady and St Hugh of Lincoln both inside and outside.

We have continued to physically develop the School this year and were delighted to be able to provide a new Library and Sixth Form Centre over the summer, which we formally opened this morning. My thanks go to all our parents as members of the Parent-Teacher Guild, and its Chairman, David Bennett, for supporting this project with a most generous donation of £20,000 in addition to organising and supporting numerous events throughout the year.

Music is an essential part of worship and the Chapel Choir enjoyed visits to Norwich Cathedral and Walsingham Parish Church, as well as singing at the Barbican in London and Evensong here with Peterborough Cathedral Choristers.

In music we were recognised with a National ISM Bronze Award for excellent work within the Music Department. Congratulations to Jodie Baldwin, one of our music scholars, who won the coveted Peterborough School Young Musician of the Year for the second year with Megan Wilkinson, winning the Most Promising Performer. At the Peterborough Music Festival, Jodie also won the U18 Strings Solo category. Battle of the Bands is always a highlight and congratulations to Folk Band on winning again.

I remain impressed by the extent that our pupils go to support others who are less fortunate, and once again Appeals Day was a serious but fun day when pupils worked to raise funds for charity. My thanks go to all involved and especially those members of staff who braved the stocks for a worthy cause! Throughout the School and the year pupils have raised money for some most worthwhile causes, in particular our nominated charity, Circles Network, working with people of any age who are isolated or at risk of isolation.

I am delighted that Caroline Hunte and Mandy Neville from Circles Network are able to join us today and I would now like to ask them to come forward so that Chloe Hayes, our Charities Prefect, can present them with a cheque for £5,203.24 towards their ongoing work.

CAROLINE HUNTE AND MANDY NEVILLE TO COME FORWARD TO RECEIVE THE CHEQUE

In a full, fun-packed and incredibly successful year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our hardworking staff who teach and care for our children throughout the year. I would also like to thank my

Leadership Team of Mr Cameron, Mrs Elding, Mr Johnson, Mrs Rivers and Mr Stroud for their dedication and support over the last 12 months.

My final thanks go to the boys and girls of our wonderful School; it is you all who make this School a wonderful grow up and work in. 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.

As we heard at the start of my report, I don't think Tim would perhaps have said he was going to be an astronaut at the age of 11 when he started his secondary school years but he worked hard, took every chance to be successful and I am sure had a little luck along the way, eventually realising his goal to literally reach for the stars. I think we can all take inspiration from Tim Peake and his Soyuz spacecraft, on display here in these historic, surroundings.

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



Mr A D Meadows, BSc Hons, NPQH

19th October 2018