

Headmaster's Report for the Academic Year 2018-19

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

Once again, I am delighted that we are able to hold our prize giving in these wonderful surroundings and my thanks to Canon Black for welcoming us so warmly this afternoon.

As usual, it is for me today to summarise the achievements of the School during the last academic year and it is always a pleasure to put together this report as I am always impressed by the achievements of you all. I want to start by asking three questions for you to think about today:

- What has been your greatest achievement over the last year?
- What do you think was your most important learning experience last year?
- Where do you think you improved in the last year?

If you have got an answer to one or more of those questions, you have something to celebrate. Now, whilst I can't mention everyone today, I hope you all recognise the successes of the School as a whole and without each of your own personal achievements, we as a School community would not be celebrating half as much as we are today. But what is the secret to success?

Whilst some of you might find work easy, some of you might be lucky, for most us we need to work hard to achieve success. It is this character which determines how we approach our learning and life in general.

Character is about being caring, respectful, honest, driven, self-disciplined and responsible. As Martin Luther King once said, 'Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the true goal of education.' This same sentiment was echoed by Einstein too and of course we all know the famous quote attributed to Edison, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration" – that's character!

So, it is clear to me that, based on your achievements which we review today, you are of strong character indeed and I want to congratulate you all on your successes.

Academically, last year we reported our best results for six years and this year our Upper Sixth went even further, recording the best A Level results ever.

Despite A Levels being significantly more difficult, we are absolutely thrilled that they did so well with half of all grades (50%) being in the top bands of A* or A and over three quarters of grades at A*-B. Every single examination taken was passed, an overall pass rate of 100%, and many added to their results with excellent Extended Project Qualification results.

Whilst mentioning those gaining top grades, I was equally delighted that 80% of the year group gained entry in to their first choice university, and my thanks go to the team of Sixth Form tutors and Mr Stroud for guiding the students through the UCAS process so well.

Also pleasing was the high number who had been right through the school since Prep (and even a couple in Nursery) too! It is wonderful to see that the start made in our outstanding Nursery and Prep School has led to such great outcomes at A Level.

The trend of excellence continued at GCSE with our new Lower Sixth's results, again significantly better than national averages with over twice the percentage of the highest grade 9 when compared nationally. In addition, almost a fifth of students gained grades 9-7 or A*/A in 8 or more subjects, up from last year.

Results in the Prep School are always far in excess of the national averages, showing our children have an excellent grasp of the basics in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. This year was no exception, with excellent Key Stage 1 results - we are particularly proud of the percentage of pupils reaching Greater Depth - and Key Stage 2 results, the highest recorded since 2016, with reading a particular strength this year.

It is so pleasing to see our children all do so well in these important first years of their education and our Reception Class children made excellent progress in 2018-19 with 94% of children achieving the Good Level of Development, which is an increase for the third successive year.

These really are exceptional results and I am absolutely delighted for all the students as they have done so well right across the board. I am grateful as well to all the staff who have worked so hard to achieve this success.

But I am sure you will all agree that an outstanding education is about more than just those excellent examination results. It is the wider experiences that develop your character and your passion for learning, through a wider array of co-curricular experiences.

Our pupils' contribution was recognised by the Children's University with 17 children, aged from Year 2 – Year 7, gaining awards. Rhianna Waumsley should be highly congratulated for her excellent achievement of gaining the highest award, the Gold Doctorate Fellowship Award, for 1013 hours of out of School learning.

The children show their passion for learning in their participation in over 80 extra-curricular activities and children in both Nursery and Prep School have enjoyed learning outdoors during Forest School, either on site or at Milton Park Estate and Fineshade Wood. They spent memorable days making shelters, fire and playing team games. Year 6 returned from an exciting three days learning Bushcraft skills in private woodland on the Knebworth Estate, sleeping outdoors and, for the brave, trying the notorious fish eye for tea!

This year we had our biggest Coffee Morning Concert at St John's Church, the Infant and Preparatory School choirs entertained the public at various venues across the city, whilst our annual visit to Kestrel Court continues to be a favourite. We were privileged to be one of the first Schools invited to sing at the newly opened Thorpe Wood Care Home, making a noticeable difference to many of the residents there.

World Book Day was a great success, full of activities and competitions that inspired and ignited the children's imagination and creativity.

Visiting authors included Pippa Goodhart and children engaged in an interactive poetry workshop with Michaela Morgan.

A surprise performance, from Mrs Elding and the teachers, of the book 'The Day the Crayons Quit' ended the Prep School Book Week with lots of laughter and acted as a reminder to all that reading can be so much fun.

As part of our Maths Day, pupils completed 'CSI' themed challenges, discovering who had poisoned Saul Pinewood in a Bake Off themed activity, using their understanding of maths and data handling to decide 'whodunnit'.

For those of you about my age you might have mixed memories of the 80s, but crimped hair, bright make-up, leg warmers and neon clothes served as a reminder of that decade as the Prep Dance Club performed brilliantly at the Dance Festival to a 600 strong audience, with them dancing to many 80s 'classics'.

In School, Create 2019 was another wonderful celebration of creativity in the Prep School, featuring outstanding artwork, and highly entertaining performances from both individuals and ensembles, including instrumental, vocal, dance and poetry recitals and a range of excellent acting skills.

A wonderful blend of tradition and colour filled the School grounds as TPS hosted the annual Peterborough Schools' Country Dancing Festival for the fifth time, now proving to be a highlight of the year.

Pupils of all ages show immense maturity when reflecting on events in history and in November we joined in the global commemoration of 100 years since the end of World War One. In the Prep School topic lessons throughout the Autumn Term were devoted to this important period of history, which included a trip to Stibbington to experience life at that time and a Commemoration Service reflecting on the lessons learnt and the impact of the War on the world today.

The Chapel has continued to be at the heart of our School and we welcomed a number of visiting Preachers to share and lead our worship this year, including our first ever student preacher, Saranya Das, who spoke about her vocation and the work of St Theresa of Calcutta. We welcomed family and friends of the students to the Annual Confirmation Service during which, our Provost, Bishop Robert preached about Christian Faith and its comparison with mathematics using Battenberg cake, which he enjoyed eating during the service!

My thanks go to Father Toby for his spiritual leadership as well as his work to define the School's values of Hope, Compassion, Community, Wisdom and Justice.

The Chapel Choir, under the directorship of Mr Brain, has seen exciting developments with membership increasing significantly. They have had a busy year with Evensongs in this Cathedral, and a weekend tour to Norfolk including singing at Norwich Cathedral and Walsingham Parish Church.

At our Music Festival, Dyuti Chakraborty was awarded Most Promising Musician, and Olivia Barnes won the Young Musician of the Year Competition, also gaining her Grade 8 on Viola. Head Girl, Sabrina Wellham not only gained a distinction in Grade 8 singing but also a Music Scholarship at the Birmingham Conservatoire. Pupils achieved considerable success in the Signature and Oundle Festivals, with individual and group successes; particular congratulations going to our Orchestra winning the 18 years and under category with Distinction and the Westwood Ensemble and Mezzo Strings winning their categories.

In Drama, the School gained a record number of trophies at the Peterborough Drama Festival; Year 2 won the fiercely contested Choral Speaking category and to come first, gaining a distinction is something we are very proud of! Individual successes included Anisha and Jaya Shah winning Duo Mime, Hollie Wenlock the Solo Shakespeare Class and Daisy Reeves-Turner winning three classes and the coveted Festival Victor Ludorum trophy. Additionally, from an amazing number of students taking LAMDA exams, 47 Distinctions is truly outstanding, including an Acting Grade 8 Gold Medal for Dyuti Chakraborty. Particular congratulations also go to Hannah O'Driscoll who gained her New Era Acting Diploma last year.

We enjoyed numerous productions throughout the year with performances within GCSE and A Level being both entertaining and challenging; such was the quality that some students even gained full marks in their examination. Certainly worth mentioning was the stunning performance of *Mermaid*, which saw a flawless performance of the magical story of a mermaid's journey from her innocent world under the sea to life amongst humans in her pursuit of true love.

Both Drama and English continue to be most successful and it is also pleasing to see such large numbers go on to study English at University too, such is their positive experience here in School. Visiting theatre companies performed dramatic interpretations of Pre-20th century literature by authors such as Charles Dickens and Edgar Allen Poe, whilst visiting author Ruth Eastham held a creative writing session with aspiring poets in Key Stage 3.

Students' literary knowledge was put to the test in the fiercely contested senior inter-house Book Quiz, with Spencer House the worthy winners.

The House Drama competition entered its third year and proved to be even funnier and more entertaining than ever; it is amazing to see some students perform for the first time with such humour and confidence.

Congratulations to all the Houses on their energetic contribution to events throughout the Year and especially to Spencer House who won the events trophy and to Mandela who won the House Point Shield.

Computing is a major strength of the School, with students also getting out of the classroom and see what is happening with technology in industry.

This year saw our Prep and Senior Students excel at The UK BEBRAS Computational Thinking Challenge run by Oxford University.

Congratulations to Louie Bosworth and Jatin Mansani in Year 6 who were both placed in the top 10% nationally, with many other students achieving Distinctions and Merits.

Students visited Bletchley Park, once the top-secret home of the World War Two Codebreakers, seeing first-hand the Enigma machine designed by Alan Turing.

We were the first school to take advantage of the Amazon fulfilment centre opening its doors to the public, students seeing first-hand the innovative technology involved in delivering goods for Amazon's customers and we were invited to join Stone Group at the Bett 2019 Education show in London, showcasing a Microsoft 'Classroom of the future'.

Despite a national decline, we are delighted at the continued popularity of languages and we invested in this area, redeveloping the curriculum to introduce Spanish in Year 7, alongside German and French in Key Stage 3, which has been well-received. Learning languages is best when immersed in the language and our trip to the Opal Coast this year was a great success.

The Sixth Form gained a taste for Spanish too during their annual cultural trip to Barcelona, including a visit to the Picasso Museum, whilst the more football obsessed students also enjoyed a visit to the home of Barcelona Football Club.

Back home our Sixth Form continue to volunteer as part of their enrichment programme, including helping at Animal Sanctuaries, foodbanks and historical research posts. Particular congratulations go to Upper Sixth Form student Tyla Lerner who gained her 100 hours and Citizens Service Awards, and Maisie Bateman who has already reached that milestone.

Our Sixth Form Young Enterprise Company, Emblem, performed remarkably, producing personalised products and eventually gaining the runner up position in the Company of the Year category.

Whilst exam results in Science continue to significantly outstrip national expectations, students are motivated by an array of extracurricular opportunities including a trip to New Science Live in London for the Sixth Form and the Big Bang Science Fayre for Year 9.

Our outreach continued with Science Days for Year 5 pupils from local primaries as well our own Prep School. Students enjoyed various STEM opportunities, Prep with the Deep Space Planetarium and Year 11 with dissection of a whole organism, something not usually done until A Level, thanks to the link we have developed with Imperial College London.

Students continue to achieve highly in the Silver CREST award and this year we entered two teams in to the BMFA Payload Challenge with another successful construction and flight.

In Mathematics, pupils gained a 100% pass rate at both A Level Mathematics and the highly challenging Further Mathematics and a large number of pupils participated in the UK Mathematics Challenges, both individually and as teams, with particular congratulations to Dyuti Chakraborty, Saranya Das and Marcus Akester, who gained national silver medals in the Senior Challenge. In the Intermediate Challenge Matthew Carr gained a Silver award and finished in the top 1000 students nationally, which is a superb achievement.

Pi day was an enormous success again this year - Oscar Viner from the Senior School recited Pi to 303 decimal places and Stefano Sadek in Prep achieved an impressive 140. We look forward to next year's competition!

Students have enjoyed their learning outside of the classroom in Geography this past academic year and also through the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze and Gold Awards in the Peak District, with great success. Our students coped tremendously well with some difficult conditions, including hailstones and mud on the first day!

It has now been eight years since the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts of the 14th Nene joined the School and they and our Badger and Cadet St John Ambulance Division continue to be most successful in developing key skills. Congratulations to all the students who gained awards this year. We also gave our thanks and appreciation to Brian Hackman who stepped down as St John Unit President after 16 years' affiliation with the School.

In Art, students have once again produced an amazing array of work, as showcased in our annual art exhibition, which was very well attended.

2018-19 was another stupendous 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.

In rowing, we saw some great performances for example, in the School Games championship, both the Year 9 and 10 team rowed exceptionally, with Dylan Egbe, Reuben Wild, Amelia Lawson and Olivia Lee finishing in 1st place. Within the District Rowing season our Under 14 and 16 teams regained their titles. A special mention should go to Bethany Cave who gained 1st place and the season's 'Top Rower' award; rowing at Olympic gold medal standard for a Year 7 student during this season's indoor district rowing league. Impressive indeed!

Netball continues to be a key strength of the School, with the Under 14 team reaching the County Finals. Congratulations to Leah Dennis, who trialled for Loughborough Lightning and was accepted into their U17 squad, with even more representation already achieved this year. This is a fantastic achievement as Lightning are one of the top netball Super League Clubs in the Country.

Football continues to grow, with an increasing number of competitive independent school fixtures, and teams enjoying victories against Stephen Perse, Uppingham School and Pitsford School.

Congratulations to Brandon Jessop in Year 7 on his selection in both the Under 14 Independent School representative squad and Under 13 Peterborough United Academy, and football talent in the Preparatory School continues to emerge with Usim Ijere signing for Cambridge United Football Academy.

In swimming, Charlie Whitty collected four medals in the City of Peterborough Swimming Club Championships. Holly Leggott had a busy swim season representing Lincolnshire, Olivia Lee performed at the Summer National Championship in Sheffield and Henry Pearce continued his stage 3 Great Britain training whilst completing GCSEs.

Our Prep cricket teams saw success in tournaments against Laxton, Grantham and Ayscoughfee Hall, whilst in the Senior School, progress was made in performances at both County and Regional Level. Most notable success of the season came from the Under 13 Girls' team who became County Champions representing Huntingdonshire at the Regional finals. In addition, Tom Smith, Sophie Lawrence, Benjamin Garfield, Annabella Woodward and Yash Siviganeshan all gained selection at County Level.

Fencing continues to develop, with the school hosting the Cambridgeshire County Fencing competition, and students winning Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in different age categories.

We have seen emerging stars in other sports too including Shivani Karthikayan, who continued to impress on the golf course at the U16 English Open Championship, and Aarav Roy who enjoyed his success in representing Great Britain in Karate.

However, of particular note is the achievement of Upper Sixth Formers, Hannah Bassett and Georgina Parker, who completed their sponsored row in aid of MAGPAS, setting a new British record for the 100km Rowing Tandem, Under-19s Women's Lightweight. They completed the distance by rowing non-stop for 7 hours, 39 minutes, well under their target of 8 hours, and raised an astonishing £1850 for the charity. This is a staggering achievement and my congratulations and thanks go to them on this success as well as to everyone who donated!

I remain impressed by the extent that our pupils go to support others who are less fortunate, and a highlight of the year was the Young Minds charity event that took place in November. The evening of entertainment was designed and organised entirely by the Sixth Form, raising over £2000 for the Young Minds charity that provides support for young people with mental health issues. A huge thank you to all who participated in and supported the event. As always, Appeals Day was a serious but fun day when pupils worked to raise funds for charity raising over £2,300. Throughout the year pupils have raised money for our nominated charity, MAGPAS, the emergency ambulance service and I am delighted that Daryl Brown, the Chief Executive Officer from MAGPAS, is able to join us today. I would now like to ask him to come forward so that Bethel Akinmade, our Charities Prefect, can present him with a cheque for £8,120.41 towards their ongoing work.

DARYL BROWN TO COME FORWARD TO RECEIVE THE CHEQUE

As I look back over the last year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our hardworking staff who teach and care for our children throughout the year.

My thanks go also to all our parents for their support and the PTG Committee led by its Chair, David Bennett, for supporting and organising numerous events throughout the year.

In a full, fun-packed and incredibly successful year, my only regret was that I was not able to experience the full range of activities due to recovering from my broken leg in the Autumn and Spring terms. I am immensely grateful to the pupils who sent me their best wishes and all who covered in my absence, Mrs Elding, Mrs Rivers, Mr Stroud and especially Mr Cameron who, as Acting Head, did a superb job. I missed the buzz of the School but was delighted to be able to return to attend the Carol Service in December.

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

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

18th October 2019