

## Headmaster's Report for the Academic Year 2014-15

Mr Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen, girls and boys: I welcome you all to this year's Speech Day and would like to start by thanking the various musicians who have entertained us so beautifully today.

It gives me great pleasure to address you today and to report on the life of the School over the last academic year.

As I recall my own childhood and indeed my school days, there was something of a haste to grow up and to move on to the next stage in our lives. How many children and parents here can recall the journeys when from the back of the car come those impatient words, "Are we nearly there yet?", and whilst we are always a little impatient to get to where we want to be, I would like to take this time on our journey to pause, reflect and pat ourselves on the back before we set off on the next stage of our exciting adventure.

My congratulations to all who took examinations this Summer. At A Level the School achieved a 100% pass rate, which has now been achieved for seven of the last eight years. The number of top grades rose by 5% from last year, with 28% being at A\* or A. In addition, the A\* - C percentage rose by 10% to 83%. Students' results were also enhanced by exceptional Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results, half of which were at A or A\*. All students who applied to University were successfully placed on results day. Pleasingly all those who applied for medicine were successful in gaining their places. While the majority of our students will look towards university courses, we continue to develop our careers guidance and were especially delighted to host the Peterborough Skills Service Careers Festival, welcoming over 2000 students and employers into School in July.

The School's first co-educational cohort performed very well at GCSE with 100% of the students gaining the benchmark figure of at least five passes at A\* to C. Almost a third of the students (31%) gained at least eight A or A\* grades. There were notable individual performances but all students acquitted themselves well and should be congratulated.

Well done to our Prep pupils also. At Key Stage 2, 97% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above and two thirds of pupils attained the higher Levels 5 or 6 in English, Reading and Maths and three-quarters of pupils attained Level 5 or 6 in Spelling Punctuation & Grammar.

Key Stage 1 results were also very pleasing with all pupils achieving Level 2 or above in Reading and Mathematics. Results at both Key Stage 1 and 2 are significantly above national averages.

Reception Foundation Stage Profile Scores were simply exceptional and significantly above the City's average. It is so pleasing to know that the basics are so well established within our Reception Classes and the Nursery, which continues to go from strength to strength.

While I am not usually one to quote lines of poetry – I am a physicist after all – this could not be further from the truth of our students. Both within the Prep School and Senior School pupils have a love of reading and writing and it was a delight to see so many take part in various reading challenges; Year 7 always enjoy the Carnegie Reading Group and a large number of students wrote monologues for a national writing competition with many being published. Bethel Akinmade is a particularly successful creative writer and had two pieces published last year. Congratulations also to Hannah Abbondanza on reaching the final stages of the BBC Radio 2 500 Words competition.

The English Department made good use of the amphitheatre in the new courtyard to perform extracts from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Summer term. The outdoor setting, perfect weather and atmospheric amphitheatre provided a perfect environment for the scenes they presented.

With outstanding results at A Level, our success received formal recognition with a Good Schools Guide Award for achievement in A Level English Literature. My congratulations go to Mrs Grinyer and her staff for achieving such success.

History's popularity at this school continues to grow and congratulations to our Head of School, Abigail Jessop, for becoming one of only 20 students highly commended for the Vellacott Prize Sixth Form History essay competition run by Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Our students' command of language is not limited to English. Congratulations to Daisy O'Rawe and Georgina Erbe who qualified for the regional semi-final of the Junior Language Challenge, learning Portuguese and Mandarin along with other pupils from the Prep School.

Our long-established link with the Stetten Institut in Augsburg has now been added to by our involvement with the Peutingen Gymnasium, which allows us to involve boys in the German exchange programme and last year the first mixed group of Peterborough pupils embarked on a trip which encompassed the cities of Ulm, Nuremberg and Munich.

The French language immersion trip to Normandy was again successful. Pupils enjoyed activities as diverse as an assault course, orienteering, archery, rock climbing and visited the Bayeux Tapestry. Other overseas ventures included the Sixth Form Cultural visit to Krakow and Years 7 and 8's taster trip to Paris. Students also had the chance to try out their Italian on the very popular and successful ski trip to Bormio.

As Italian astronomer, physicist, and mathematician, Galileo is quoted as saying, "If I were again beginning my studies, I would follow the advice of Plato and start with mathematics". How fitting it is then that our boys and girls perform so well in this subject. We heard of the excellent performances of our Prep pupils in their National Tests and in the Senior School, not only did all pupils achieve at least grade C or higher at GCSE but they achieved notable success in other competitions too.

A very special well done to Rohan Khosla who gained highly impressive gold medals in both the Intermediate and Senior Challenges with a merit in the exceptionally demanding European Challenge. Excellent performances were also seen by Zhenxiang Lu, Michael Tyler, Diya Banerjee, Xiaotong Cui, Saranya Das and Dyuti Chakraborty, who all gained gold awards in their respective Challenges. Special mention must go to Year 5 pupil, Oscar Viner, who sat the Junior Challenge, two years ahead of target and gained an impressive silver medal.

This was an especially busy year in the Science Department. Year 9 attended the Big Bang Science Fair learning computer coding and experiencing an explosive live show. Computer coding is very much a part of our new Computing curriculum, leading to GCSE Computer Science, certified this year for the first time. Michael Tyler added a Gold Award in the National Biology Challenge to his Maths Gold.

Congratulations to those students who achieved their scientific CREST awards at Bronze level and this year we were delighted to establish a link with international engineering firm, Cummins, who supported our Silver CREST students in developing a Mobile Phone Charger powered by a jogger's arm movement.

Our ever popular Junior Science Day once again saw over 100 children from local primary Schools joining our pupils to experience exciting shows and practical activities.

Prep Pupils of all ages enjoyed creating some striking pieces of artwork in our CREATE exhibition while our Senior Art Exhibition was outstanding, enabling the work of our GCSE and A Level Art, Textiles and Graphics students to be professionally displayed. We are particularly pleased with the excellent results achieved by the first cohort of GCSE Graphic Products students and are delighted that this subject can now be pursued at A Level.

Dance continues to be a popular activity within the School, with success achieved in various award schemes for ballet, tap and other disciplines. It was a pleasure to welcome former pupil Emily Yong back in to the School to tell us about her experiences as a student at the Rambert School of Dance. This year for the first time we hosted the Peterborough Schools Country Dancing Festival, welcoming over 350 dancers on what was a perfect summer evening.

Year 2 experienced considerable success in the Peterborough Children's Film Festival. With their animated film describing pollination, called *Busy, Busy, Bee*, which won their category. Mrs Quy should also be congratulated on her runner-up award for the teacher's entry.

In Music, Rebekah Baugh and Kathryn Smyth departed with no fewer than six Grade 8 distinctions between them. Special congratulations must go to Rebekah on being awarded the Laura Marco Prize for achieving the highest mark in Grade 8 Flute in the UK and Ireland.

This year's Music Festival saw over 200 individual performances with Abigail Jessop being crowned the Young Musician of the Year. Sanjana Bhatnagar fought off stiff competition to be awarded Most Promising Musician of the Year.

Our choirs have gone from strength to strength, not only being invited to sing Evensong in our Cathedral but also to an invited audience at Milton Hall for Sir Philip and Lady Isabella Naylor-Leyland.

Throughout the year the Preparatory School musicians continued to entertain people attending Coffee Mornings at St John's Church and the Preparatory School Choir enjoyed entertaining the residents of Kestrel Court in Bretton at Christmas. The Infant Choir braced the freezing cold to sing carols in The Guildhall and Cathedral Square.

The Preparatory School Choir once again sang at the Katharine of Aragon Commemorative Service here in the Cathedral and sang *Faure's Requiem* with Peterborough Take Note Community Choir.

Dramatically, pupils continued to perform on various stages. Congratulations to pupils who performed so well in the Peterborough Drama Festival, with the majority gaining first class or honours certificates, in addition to various cups and shields. Year 2 performed superbly to gain a distinction in the Choral Speaking category, performing with confidence and great expression, truly capturing the atmosphere of their poem.

Students took hundreds of examinations too and particular congratulations go to Xiaotong Cui and Daisy Reeves-Turner, who received the highest marks internationally in their New Era examinations and to Elizabeth Jessop who passed her Grade 8 LAMDA examination with merit.

Our students enjoyed working together to stage productions and these were again a delight to watch whether it was the Nursery Shows, Christmas Performances, Sensational Sixties Night or indeed Year 6's wonderful performance of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Our GCSE and A Level students travelled the country watching pieces of new and exciting theatre and excelled in their own performances, taking on challenging pieces most ably.

Beyond their lessons pupils take part in a number of extra-curricular activities with over 80 on offer each week across the School.

Our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts continue to thrive through the 14th Nene Scout Group with almost 100 members meeting each week. This year we were delighted to be able to support the addition of an Explorer Scouts group for 14 - 18 year olds, which has proved popular. As well as camping locally, 14 Scouts attended an International camp joining Scouts from all over the world.

In the Senior School pupils worked towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Award at both Bronze and Gold Levels and it was pleasing to see the St John Ambulance Division start up again; my thanks go to Ms Doyle, Mrs Gilbert and Mrs Shah for volunteering to run the School's Division, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year. It is through activities such as these that our pupils develop the all-important skills of teamwork and leadership, essential qualities for future success. I am grateful to our St John Ambulance cadets who are duty this afternoon.

As the poet William Yeates once said, Education is "not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire" and this is exactly what happens in our dynamic and exciting Forest Schools programme as children learn how to light their own fires and experience cooking outdoors. Year 2 learned about the dangers of fire too as they took a walk down Pudding Lane on their visit to London before taking lunch at The Tower of London.

In the Prep School, Chess proved especially popular and we enjoyed individual as well as team success this year. Congratulations to Anirudh Kandikattu who won the School tournament and was selected to represent Northamptonshire.

At the end of a fun packed year, Year 6 pupils graduated with a fitting ceremony that celebrated their time in the Preparatory School, while many in Years 5 and 6 also graduated from Peterborough's Children's University at a special ceremony at The University Centre Peterborough, receiving certificates from the Mayor for their learning outside of school hours.

We enjoyed another successful year of sport celebrated at a memorable Sports Presentation Evening in June. Our pupils continue to demonstrate exceptional teamwork and triumph against much larger schools.

Fencing continues to be a sport in which we excel and enjoy great success. Particular congratulations to Bronwyn Hayes who fenced wonderfully in her first ever competition to become the Cambridgeshire Under 10 Girls' Champion.

The School enjoyed another fine football and rugby season both within the Prep and Senior Schools. A number of boys continue to make excellent progress with local and county squads as well as trialling at club level.

In girls' rugby, Moonie Waller was selected for the Regional Midlands side meanwhile on the golf course, the School secured victories over Oakham and Uppingham to reach the semi-final of the Independent Schools' Golf Association championship. Benjamin Mackenzie continues to represent Cambridgeshire Golf and remained unbeaten all of last year. Congratulations to Sanjay Nithiyalingam who came second in the Peterborough Telegraph Young Sportsman of the Year Award for representing England at Under 16 level.

In Cricket our teams experienced success with Sreehari Subramonian, Maxwell Mullins, Grace Dowdeswell and Charlotte Akester all selected to play at County level.

We competed in several swimming galas and it has been another successful year in the pool for Holly Leggott, who continues to impress with her County representation and Rachel Wellings, who claimed 12 medals at County level, eight at Regional and reached five national finals.

Our Equestrian Team was again undefeated; Philippa King showed her equestrian ability once more, gaining a strong fourth place finish in the National championships and winning the Equifest class. Our trampolinists, Mikki Cleaver, Georgina Parker, Miles Norris and Indya Twigg performed well at Regional level too, Miles and Indya coming first in their categories. Congratulations to Aarav Roy who gained a place in the UK team at the Karate World Championships.

In athletics, Georgia Price continues to impress and was selected for the County Athletics Team, going on to become runner up in the English Southern Championships in the High Jump and in the Eastern Region Combination Events Championships.

We continue to excel at rowing and were delighted to retain the District Rowing Championship for the fifth consecutive year. Particular congratulations to Year 9 who were crowned Cambridgeshire County Indoor Rowing Champions, with notable individual indoor rowing performances. Leah Dennis claimed a third place finish at the Regional Rowing Championships while, Sports Captain Aimee Parker continues to excel, trialing at Henley Women's Rowing Club and competing in national competitions. Archie Sootheran, proved that he is as capable with a Badminton racquet as a rowing blade by winning the individual district Badminton Championships and followed up a third place finish in the National Indoor Rowing Championships with first place in the National Junior Outdoor rowing competition.

Our Netball teams have continued to perform brilliantly both in the Prep and Senior Schools and I would like to congratulate them on their extraordinary ability and determination. Particular congratulations to Years 7, 8, 9 Year 10 and 11 on winning their respective Peterborough Netball Leagues - an impressive achievement. Hetti Vanterpool and Sabrina Wellham were also selected for the County netball squad, while Samantha Wellham has joined the coaching team of Cambridgeshire County Netball.

A truly memorable year of sport.

While our debating team had another successful year, in May election fever hit the School as we welcomed representatives of five political parties in to School for our pre-Election hustings. After the hustings, Sixth Form students made good use of the opportunity to pose further, direct questions to the candidates before a mock election took place. In the Prep School students formed their own parties, with students presenting to their peers. The election results were eagerly anticipated and congratulations to James Dawson of the 'Tomorrow' party, who was duly elected.

As a School we enjoy celebrating so many successes and the sense of community spirit is extremely strong. It is in the sadder times that we draw on friends, family and the School community and, as you will be aware, Revd Watts will sadly not be able to return to work at the School after falling ill last Christmas. He will be greatly missed as Chaplain by both staff and pupils. I am immensely grateful to him for leading worship within the School and supporting the pastoral welfare of pupils in his role as Chaplain, offering immense comfort to pupils in need. I would like to thank him for his service to the School and wish him a speedy recovery.

It was also with deep sadness that we learned that Mrs Clatworthy passed away during the summer holiday. Mrs Clatworthy worked as a Teaching Assistant in the Preparatory School and was ill for all of last year. We will pay our respects to her by creating a memorial to her work here.

Community spirit is no more evident than in our charitable work and this year we supported a number of worthy causes, including the Peterborough Area Down's Syndrome Group, raising over £13,000 in total. The Houses took up the challenge by baking, selling and eating lots of cake to begin the fundraising effort once again. The sense of House Spirit has been further enhanced by the House Flag Competition and we unveiled new designs, which I was delighted to see on display today as part of our procession.

Congratulations to those students who completed the sponsored Santa's SMile and the 15 Mile Challenge. Particular congratulations must go to Eleanor Greenfield on her incredible work in raising £628 in sponsorship money.

Our Appeals Day in March broke all records with over £3,800 being raised in just one day. Well done to all those pupils and staff who joined me on the cycling challenge with special mention to Georgia Bullard, who cycled 85 miles in just under four and a half hours for charity. I suspect she could be the next Laura Trott as she trains as part of the East Midlands Cycling Talent Team and qualified for the National Championships as the Lincolnshire Time Trial champion.

I pay tribute to the pupils, parents and staff for their hard work and immense generosity.

I am delighted that Laura Tilley from the Peterborough Area Down's Syndrome Group is able to join us today and I would now like to ask her to come forward so that Ropa Mungwari, our Charities Prefect, can present her with a cheque for £8,344 towards speech and language projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank our parents who give up their time to help out and support so many of the School's activities and organise numerous events as well as supporting you all at home each day. I am grateful to all members of the Parent-Teacher Guild and especially to the Chairman, David Bennett, who works tirelessly.

A key strength of our School is the quality of our pastoral care and it was therefore a pleasure to welcome Mrs Rivers as our new Head of Pastoral Care in the Senior School. I am grateful to her and the rest of the Senior Leadership Team for their commitment and dedication to the School; my thanks to Mr Cameron, Mrs Elding, Mrs Rivers and Mr Charlton. I would also like to take this opportunity to formally thank on your behalf the hard work of our many staff who teach and care for our children throughout the year.

Ladies and gentlemen, while I cannot mention all of our children's achievements today, I think you will agree that our boys and girls work so very hard and deserve our heartfelt congratulations today.

Well done to you all.

Having taken this time to reflect, we can now look forward to the next stage of our journey with great excitement and anticipation of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Let us aim high and achieve more.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A D Meadows". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mr A D Meadows, BSc Hons, NPQH  
16th October 2015