

Principal's Newsletter

5 October 2023

Dear Parents,

The week of Founders' Day has been exceptionally busy. Parents have visited our campus on multiple occasions. The phonics and maths Reception parent information evening on Monday certainly impressed. Mrs Ridley and Ms Robinson each gave every parent real insight into the curricular intent and implementation. There was specific advice on how parents can help advance their children in this key knowledge and skill. Ms Finnegan spoke about books, reading, love of reading. It is always exciting to be there at the beginning of the journey.

As we left the meeting, Scouts were just finishing. The growth of Scouts in our schools is a real tribute to Mrs MacFarlane (née Rogers) who several years ago agreed to take it on. With the help of parent volunteers and other members of staff this has now grown into a substantial organisation which contributes enormously in every part of the College. There are Beavers in Pre Prep, Cubs in Prep, and Scouts in Middle School. They engage in all sorts of activities and camping. It is interesting to note in the week when we celebrate our history that the current strength of scouting exceeds even the enthusiasm for it in the College of the 1980s when camping trips were organised for Sefton Park!

We have also celebrated Harvest Assemblies this week. The theme is the same, the content is, what educators call, developmentally appropriate. Attendance at these events was excellent. We sang, listened to poems, heard about food waste, allotment gardening. In the process we collected substantial food donations for the food bank. This generosity comes on top of the fantastic Great Cake Bake organised by the Chaplaincy and Charity Action Group last week. Somehow, in a break time, they managed to raise just short of £500 to support the Macmillan Coffee Morning. Thank you to all the pupils, parents and staff for baking and bringing in delicious treats to support this effort. The boarders had been especially productive with their double ovens.

Last night our boarders celebrated Founders' Day.

This season of gratitude continues with the visit of our friends from Colegio Newman in Madrid. We are keen to develop a relationship with this excellent all-through school which shares our vision of the education of the whole person within a community that puts the human person at the front of all we do. Our head girl Celine S spoke Spanish to our guests

who were also treated to a number of Spanish poems written and performed by our Prep School pupils in Harvest Festival. We always learn from others, and especially from schools and people who are not immersed in Ofsted, the Department of Education, and all the other organs of standardization and reduction which constitute officialdom in English education.

Last night we hosted a Reception open evening for the future leavers of the year 2038, a date when I will be, God willing, well into my seventies. A sobering realisation about our school is that for our pupils it constitutes a lengthy journey of remarkable development. Human persons really are all very good at learning. From learning the letter P to writing a personal statement for UCAS mentioning about the impact of Rawls on the development of political theory in the UK takes a mere 13 years. Most of us would be hard pressed to say that we were still learning at this rate.

Mr Bishop has nominated his musicians of the week:



This week's musicians of the week are our wonderful pupils in Reception who have delivered their first musical public performance - their harvest extravaganza - full of singing, actions, speaking and 'dingly-dangly scarecrows'. The performance was a pleasure to see and hear - it's great to have music alive and well in our Pre-Prep! Thank you to our new KS1 music teacher, Ms Paiano, who has made great progress with our pupils so far. The future is certainly bright!

Congratulations to Beau R (Chapter 7) who represented Liverpool in the Great Scottish Run on Saturday in Glasgow and won! Beau has now achieved something no other junior has managed - winning both the Great Manchester Run and the Great Scottish Run in the same year.

I have written previously about the success of Maleek A (Ch11) in the Young Writers' Annual Showcase. You can enjoy an advance preview of his poem which is a shimmering example of a young person expressing their voice and their hopes before its publication in this year's anthology:

LOOK AT ME

Look at me from the snow-hooded mountains.

Look at my skin, my hair, my face I am beautiful I am handsome, your daggered words will not penetrate my skin, your gnarled fingers will not intrude my mane, and nothing can make me ugly apart from your thoughts and they will not bother my aura.

Look at me from the starry sky.

Look at my achievements, my friends, my family, my achievements shine brighter than the sun itself, my friends push my boundaries and help me move forward, my family are the safety net under me catching me when I fall.

Look at me from the radiant sun that nearly shines as bright as my heart and tell me that I don't deserve life as much as you.

Maleek A (Ch11)

The week of Founders' Day is a good time to revisit and revive an initiative which we started in Covid times and which has lagged in the restart post virus. [LC Press](#) is a website we set up during those isolating days. Its mission is still important and I hope some readers of this newsletter will submit ideas and blogposts stressing their experience of the importance of imagination in education. We will be breathing some new life into this page, and I would welcome people who are prepared to help with this.



Through our efforts to widen our curricular opportunities, some of our pupils are currently enrolled in a construction skills course at the City of Liverpool College. This week they got to work as bricklayers. They are accompanied on these educational courses by our own Ms Armstrong who reports that our pupils are focussed, engaged, and responsible on this course.

I reported a couple of weeks ago on the appointment of Mrs Scott as our school Mental Health Coordinator. Mrs Scott has asked me to share with you some important information about how we will recognise the upcoming World Mental Health Day on the 10 October in the secondary phase:

This day serves as an important reminder to prioritize and promote mental health and well-being. To mark this occasion and create awareness among our secondary pupils, we would like to encourage them to wear something yellow along with their uniforms on World Mental Health Day. This could include items such as yellow socks, hair accessories, or another yellow accessory. By doing so, pupils will not only show support for those facing mental health challenges but also start a conversation around mental well-being.

In addition, we kindly request each pupil to bring a small contribution towards raising money for mental health initiatives. These funds will be donated to organizations that work tirelessly to support individuals and families affected by mental health issues.

Furthermore, yellow ribbons will be available for sale at the school reception and at break time. Pupils, teachers, and parents alike are encouraged to wear these ribbons as a symbol of solidarity and support for mental health.

To make this day more meaningful, we have arranged various sessions and activities at unstructured times during the day in the secondary phase. These will focus on promoting positive mental health and will provide pupils and students with the opportunity to relax and mindfully reflect through meditation or take part in singing for wellbeing sessions.

Let's come together as a community to raise awareness about mental health and create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for all. Your support and participation in these initiatives will make a significant difference in our collective efforts. Thank you for your continued support in building a mentally healthy school community.

Mr Barnicoat has provided me with the case studies for his debate team's participation in the Ethics Cup. The first debate or question concerns whether schools should hire bots or robots who could teach well, mark quickly, and all for less money than hiring a teacher. One question that flows from the case study is the question of what a teacher can do which a robot cannot do and vice versa. This is a good thing to reflect on in Founders' Day and today on World Teachers' Day. Robots, however well programmed and "intelligent" can by definition not offer a human example, they therefore cannot inspire. Pupils are inspired by teachers and it is for this reason we thank God and all the people who have worked hard to make the College move forward over the last 183 years. They provide an example. Robots can help us, but will never be an example.

Mr Heeley reports total victory in Rugby in every match with Bishop Heber school. There is a lot of potential out there, and we will be testing ourselves this Saturday against Bolton School at rugby and QEGS in netball.

The **term dates for the 2024-25 academic year** have now been published – you can access them on the school website [here](#).

May I wish you a dry and sunny Founders' Day weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal