

Head's Report 2021

This has been a year like no other. It has taught us that however well-equipped we aim to be for life, no-one quite knows what we will need for the journey. The assembly on 'Adaptation' which featured the Angler Fish, and my blog entitled 'The symbolism of the Willow Tree', both highlighted that the ability to adapt is essential for life. Education is evolving at a faster pace now than at any other period in recent history with today's curriculum needing to adapt to meet tomorrow's reality.

Whilst I do not want to dwell too much upon the unprecedented challenges in 2020-2021, I do want to share my admiration for the courage and resilience that all members of The Hampshire School Chelsea community, and particularly the pupils, demonstrated this year. As we begin to emerge from this period in our history, we do so in the sure knowledge that the bonds which have been forged in adversity are serving to enrich us.

Our priority targets for 2021-2022 were ambitious enough in their own right with a focus on pupil voice and maximising achievement for all; for which we gained national recognition with nominations for Prep School of the Year and Innovation in Pupil Voice. However, the context this year catapulted our aim of making learning visible to new heights with parents joining their child to access online lessons which provided a lens into our pedagogy and, for the children, an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of how to learn, collaborate and express their thoughts. When we implemented Google Classroom, little did we know that within six months we would have delivered over 5,000 online lessons, mostly to pupils in London, but also to those residing in different time zones in over ten different countries. Educationally, and in terms of our response to COVID-19, we chose to lead rather than to follow and, as a result, our pupils did not lose momentum in their learning.

We started the year with a focus on one school, one community, with the opening of the Pre-School at Manresa Road by TRH Prince and Princess Michael of Kent and the re-branding of the House system led by the Houses Development Group. With over 180 blue plaques in London reflecting the rich and diverse contribution to the history of the borough of Kensington and Chelsea, it involved decision-making at every level from choosing the four Houses, to the straplines and the values that underpin them. The children can be justly proud of making history at The Hampshire School Chelsea with membership of Pankhurst, Scott, Marley or Franklyn being celebrated by their peers and future generations at the school.

It is with pride and admiration that I am able to report that all our leavers achieved excellent senior school entrance examination results. In addition to these measurable outcomes there are the many intangible qualities that make the pupils at The Hampshire School Chelsea very special. These qualities are witnessed through pupils' strong sense of purpose, drive and ambition and the shared enjoyment at the end of an event when everyone knows that they

have done their best. Working together they are stronger for as Dickens wrote in *The Pickwick Papers*; “There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast”.

Throughout the year there has been much to celebrate. In the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Maths Junior Challenge designed for talented mathematicians working at least three years ahead of age-related expectations, we received one gold, four silver and four bronze awards. Success was also achieved in the online Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, a worldwide problem-solving contest open to pupils in 50 countries and the KPS Nature Challenge. The in-house Poetry Writing and Recitation Competition honed the pupils’ poetry writing skills and their ability to perform with projection and confidence. Poet Tomos Roberts (‘TomFoolery’), famous for his poem ‘The Great Realisation’, was most impressed with the range of poems chosen and quality of delivery, noting future poets. We have entered an array of competitions most notably the ISA Shakespeare Monologue, Musical Theatre and Art Competition..We have seen the pupils shine in class assemblies, on Sports Day, through their artwork for the Summer Arts Exhibition and The Big Draw, in the Spelling Bee, English Speaking Board exams and through participation in the memorable Carol Service, Remembrance Service, Harvest Festival and the many music concerts. The pupils can be justly proud of what they have achieved.

At PGL our pupils came into their own, relishing the challenges they faced and supporting each other with their own individual targets whether it was overcoming a fear of the dark or heights or achieving personal goals. Friendships, both new and old, were rekindled after the lockdowns. Charity work remained a high priority with the Poppy Appeal for the Royal British Legion, School Home Support initiative and purchase of reading books for Westbridge Academy.

There is a strong triangle of collaboration between the school, parents and pupils. For those pupils leaving for senior school at the end of the academic year, what they make of their new phase will be determined, to some extent, by what they have learned during their time at The Hampshire School Chelsea. They will remember the School’s Core Values of Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Community and Excellence and they leave as confident, well-rounded, self-assured young people well prepared for their next steps in life.

Dr Edmonds