

Friday 23rd March 2018

Dear Parents

I cannot believe the Easter break is upon us already. The appearance of daffodils in gardens across the City promises such hope - and despite the best efforts of the "Beast from the East" to interrupt School proceedings, change is in the air.

The theme of change feels particularly poignant this year. It is exactly 100 years since the first women got the right to vote and here at School we used this anniversary to reflect on what it means to be a woman in 2018 by means of a debate in Senior School Assembly. The question asked was: Has feminism failed women? It was a tremendous event, with Lexie Turner from Year 11 and Mrs Clancy both demonstrating superb oratory skills. I was surprised to learn that 42% of British men also had no democratic voice at the time of the beginning of women's suffrage! As a result of the 1918 Act, the voting population in Britain increased from 8 to 21 million. It behoves us now, a century later, as a moral duty as educators, to ensure that our young people understand how far we have come in terms of equality – and that they do not take their democratic rights lightly or for granted.

Another of our moral duties is to ignite a passion for learning in as many ways as possible. That's something schools and educationalists across the world, no matter from what culture, share, and something which has become very apparent in our discussions with St Paul School in Macau, China. Former student, Keith Morrison (OW 1967) contacted us last year about this school, one that he had been working with closely in his professional career. He recognised in that school, and in its Head, Dr Alejandro Salcedo Garcia, very similar values to those which drive WGS. This serendipitous link has now begun to evolve into what I feel will be a fruitful working relationship between our two communities. Students and staff at WGS are getting very excited about the prospect of visits, exchanges and shared intellectual endeavour. Likewise, St Paul School staff and students are fascinated by our learning techniques and pastoral support.

One area where we can learn much from St Paul School is in how they have embraced digital technology. For instance, they have been completely paperless for some years and their curriculum is fully digitalised. Our Maths department have been pioneers in trialling filming lessons this term; thank you to Dr Bradley and his Year 10 maths set. No students are seen, as the focus has been on capturing the taught content. This is an important trial, which may herald a new opportunity for learning in the future.

The only way we progress is by being open to new ideas and learning from others. Thus, I thank you if you were one of the 311 parents who responded to our online survey about school life: I have read every single comment that you made. The abiding tenor of your comments remains one of significant satisfaction with the quality of education we deliver. We will share the results with you and tell you how we propose to work to develop the areas in which you nonetheless would like to see change. One of those opportunities will be at the next Parents' Forum on Tuesday 5th June, 5-6.30pm. More details will follow next term, but do note the date in your diary.

Your children get the opportunity to provide their feedback every day - something that they do with relish! Recently, Student Parliament asked for school reports to be issued on the Student Portal, just as it is for you parents. I find this a sensible request, given that students have to take responsibility for their own learning. In that regard, therefore, when the March Short Reports are issued later today, please tell your children to look at their Profile Page when they log in to the Student Portal where they will also be able to see their Report.

Of course, change sometimes brings challenges and I should bring you up-to-date with our proposed infant school development. As you know, Wolverhampton City Council rejected our initial application. After considering an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and further discussions with the Council's Planning Officers, we have now withdrawn from the appeal process in order to allow us to make some adjustments to our original plans for the school, which we will submit in due course. This delay, though unwished for, changes nothing about our mission to bring the strengths of the WGS approach to education to as many children as we can.

I will end with a parental quote from the aforementioned survey: "Both our children have had an amazing educational journey at WGS. They have developed into confident, self-assured people, well prepared to make their way in the world... We have no regrets but wish that every child had the opportunity to attend a school like WGS. What a great country we would have if that were possible! Thank you to all the staff at WGS from two very grateful parents."

I thank you, your children and my colleagues once again for all you have done and continue to do in support of WGS. I am very proud to be Head.

Enjoy your Easter break.

With all good wishes.

Kathy Crewe-Read
Head