



VIEW FROM THE CHALK FACE

TRINITY 2020

WEEK 8 (W/C 15TH JUNE)

It has been a delight to see more children back on the school sites over the past fortnight and, with government guidelines giving more flexibility, we hope that we can welcome more in the coming weeks. This flexibility gives us great cause for hope and optimism for September – our campus and class sizes aid this - and I will write more practically on this in my end of term letter. Thank you for the input at last week's Q&A events and I look forward to more open discourse next week. Also, thank you for your support of the Virtual Open Week which was a great success.

We are approaching the denouement of an extraordinary term; one that we will look back on in future years with a mixture of pride, incredulity and sadness. We are preparing for the virtual speech days and I hope that, despite the difference in setting and delivery, they will be a time to come together and celebrate the year as a whole and the successes of the wonderful young people that energise and inspire us all.

There is a lot going on in the world at the moment. As a global community, we are battling with a pandemic that affects us all and never before have we been so intertwined and reliant on each other. Yet, we still seem so divided. The isolationist rhetoric from parts of the world, and the UK separation from Europe seems to pit us against each other, rather than towards each other.

I have spoken in assembly this year about Rosa Parks, and referenced an excellent article by Barak Obama in my 'View from the Chalk Face' publication last week. The theme of courage and action runs through these people and it is this attribute that we must demonstrate at the moment. Last week, Mrs Butt spoke superbly in chapel at the Senior School and Mrs Skipper and Mr Crossley both gave talks in their respective settings about celebrating difference, embracing diversity and issues around racism and the Black Lives Matter movement. I know that there have been discussions through the Heads of Year and tutors to ensure we are engaged as a community.

We need to reflect on whether reality and our aspiration match. There will be numerous perspectives, viewpoints and nuances, often aligned to both context and experience. Standing by and not getting it wrong, cannot be confused with getting it right.

Are we complicit if we do nothing? Our response must be reflective and erudite, as well as compassionate and committed. It is an issue we cannot stand by, watch, ignore and leave it to others; I have encouraged all in our community to have their say. There is more that we can do to educate us all, and although there are a plethora of academic mechanisms that we currently use, we will be reviewing our teaching schemes across the sites to ensure that there is the right level of engagement with this issue. It is our duty put it into context and encourage debate and proactivity. It is the duty of the whole Langley community to engage with this process and I hope that this will stimulate a questioning and value driven intellectual culture.



As an employer, we need to be more active and not sit back and wait for applications from teachers and support staff and be self satisfied that we have done our bit; we need to make ourselves an employer of choice for those from all backgrounds, colours and creeds.

Extinction rebellion calls for proactivity around climate change and the importance of action, not just words. That doesn't mean protesting per se, but a change in lifestyle and mindset to make a fundamental change. A time for our generation to stand up to change the narrative. Black Lives Matter is similar; it is an issue that we all need to own, change and get right.

Gandhi said that, "you must be the change you wish to see in the world." It's not up to someone else, it's up to us.

The leaders of the Enlightenment used large paintings and literary works to espouse their views and show to the world what needed to change. Our young people are the artists of the new frescos, and it is only through open dialogue and an acceptance of the need for change, will there be any hope of global harmony. We all wish that institutional change will follow the current outpourings, and as an educational establishment, it is beholden on us to be at the forefront of this.

Thank you for all you are doing to support your children and the school, and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Best wishes,

Jon Perriss
Headmaster