



March 2019

Dear Parents

As another busy term ends, I write with staff news, reports of progress, and success and achievement from many areas of school life. The enthusiasm and energy of the boys is fantastic and their willingness to 'have a go' at anything is definitely one of the hallmarks of a Birkdale boy.

Staff news

At the end of the Summer term, Mrs Reilly, my PA will be taking early retirement. She has given over 10 years of exceptional service to Birkdale. Many parents, staff and boys have been grateful for her calmness, kindness and amazing efficiency. We are very sorry that she is retiring, but pleased for her and Professor Reilly that they will now be able to take their holidays during term times. I am delighted to say that Mrs Rooper has agreed to increase her hours and take over the running of the office, which also involves the unenviable task of keeping me under control! I have every confidence that the Admin Team will continue to run like a well-oiled machine.

Academic Success

Congratulations to Ryan Faraj, James Herrick and Snow Wang, who each received an academic award as a result of the 11+ Scholarship exam.

I do hope you have found the recent Parents' Evenings useful; a number of parents have commented on how helpful it has been to have their son's latest assessment scores available. As I have frequently said, behind each of these scores are individual stories of great progress and perseverance.

If you were to look at the Trophy cabinet in Clarke House you would see a staggering 17 Quiz trophies that Birkdale Prep boys have won since 2013. We are thrilled that this success continues! Many congratulations to our Science team who came sixth in the country (and the top school in the North of England), an amazing achievement for a school of this size. For the seventh year in a row, our General Knowledge team have won the local area heat and qualified for the regional semi-final. Last Saturday our Maths team scored 19/20 in the Hallam University Pop Maths Quiz but were just pipped into second place.

Charities

This term, Julia Smith from Mercy Ships, this year's main Prep School charity, visited the school to lead a very informative assembly on the work the charity carries out in a number of countries in Africa. This provided the boys with further inspiration to raise funds during Charities Week that concluded with a total of £1,255.88 being raised for Mercy Ships. Earlier in the term, we learnt about the plight of Baby Erica from Madagascar, who needed some life changing surgery. A fantastic total of £771 was raised to support this important cause in a special one-day event. Thank you for your continued and incredibly generous giving; it really does make a difference to people's lives.

Over the Easter Holiday, Mr Cooper will be running the Sheffield Half-Marathon in aid of Young Minds - one of next year's school charities. If you would like to sponsor him, it would be greatly appreciated; the link to his Just Giving page is: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/joe-cooper14>

Music

Congratulations to Nayan Gupta, Lucas Jordan, Jack Benten and James Herrick, who were successful in the recent 11+ Music Scholarship process.

Twenty-five Prep School boys participated in 'Young Voices 2019' earlier this term. This nationwide initiative brings together thousands of primary school children from across the country to perform at various large concert venues across the UK. The Sheffield FlyDSA Arena was positively buzzing with excitement when the largest school choir in the world (a total of 4,424 children that evening) sang memorable medleys to a packed audience.

The Birkdale Prep Music Festival saw 120 boys perform in front of their peers and the festival concert takes place this week. Recently, Tom Corns from Sheffield Cathedral took our weekly hymn practice, explained to the boys the opportunities available to them as Choristers and invited them to audition.

On Friday 15 March, we were treated to an entertaining and engaging concert from the Collingwood String Quartet. Parents and boys from PP3-P4 enjoyed listening to music by Dvorak and Walton. It was a wonderful way to start a Friday morning!

Drama

A large number of parents, staff and boys enjoyed the second annual Birkdale Shakespeare Festival. It was inspiring to see the contributions from different parts of the school with actors aged between 6-18 performing with such skill, poise and presence.

Next term, we look forward to two more productions: *Johnny & the Bomb* on Thursday 20 & Friday 21 June and the Pre-Prep Summer Production on Monday 1 & Tuesday 2 July.

Art

In mid-February, the Prep 1 and 2 Art Exhibition was held at the Helix gallery. The boys' work was displayed in the public gallery and a special opening evening was attended by parents, boys and teachers. There will be a Prep 3 and 4 exhibition during the summer term, as well as a number of external exhibitions and events. Prep 2 will be exhibiting two large scale artworks at the *Lost Worlds Exhibition* at the Millennium Galleries in June, whilst Prep 4 will be exhibiting a collection of photographs at the Carriage House Restaurant at Chatsworth House.

Many boys once again entered the Chinese New Year Art competition run by the Confucius Institute and I should give a special mention to Siddharth Satyawadi in Prep 2, who won first prize out of all the Sheffield schools who entered. We have also entered work in the Sheffield Young Artist competition and the National Prep Schools' exhibition and await the results later in the year.

Sport

I am thrilled that every boy from Prep 2 - Prep 4 has represented the school this academic year at either Rugby or Football. Our fixture list is very strong, playing some very large schools such as GSAL, Hymers, St Olaves, Woodhouse Grove and QEGS, thus enabling our 'A' teams to be tested and ensuring that we can put out teams at a variety of levels. For those of you who love statistics, the boys played 143 matches during the last two terms (including tournaments) and managed to win, or draw, 68% of these contests!

A welcome addition to our sporting provision is our participation in the Sheffield Schools Cross Country league held each Saturday morning. Many thanks to Mrs Thake for giving up her time to organise the team and congratulations to all those who have participated in a successful first season in the league.

The house swimming gala was once again very keenly contested; we are very lucky to be able to host the event in such a good facility as Ponds Forge.

Over the past two terms notable successes have been:

U11a Rugby - HMC Rugby Joint-Champions

U10a Rugby - Hymers College Festival Joint-Winners

U10a Rugby - The Elms Sevens Runners-Up

U11b Football - HMC Bowl Winners

U11 Cross-Country - HMC Joint-Champions

Looking ahead to the Cricket season, we have a number of boys hoping to play county or regional cricket this summer. Good luck to all of them as they take part in various age group trials over the next few weeks. Please do take special note of the cricket equipment letter sent by BirkdalePost on 25 March to P1-P4 parents.

Housekeeping

Just a reminder that Ant Apartment car park is a private car park and should not be used by parents for parking or turning around, can I encourage you once again to refrain from driving your vehicles down Clarke Drive for the safety of the children and to allow access for emergency vehicles at all times.

Please can you check sports/PE bags and generally all uniform that you have your son's belongings and not someone else's. You can always return any uniform that does not belong to your son to the office and they will ensure it is passed on to the correct pupil.

And finally...

Thank you for reading this letter and for all the support you have given your sons and the school this term. I wish you all a lovely Easter holiday.

Yours sincerely



Chris Burch
Head of the Prep School