

HEAD TEACHER'S SPEECH

PRIZE GIVING 2019

Thank you Mr Douglas Brown.

Welcome everyone to our Prize Giving. We come together to celebrate all that has been achieved by our children and review the excellent year that the St David's family has had.

Today is all about recognising the special achievements throughout the year, both academic and non-academic. The school ethos is 'to educate the whole child academically, socially and morally through a broad and balanced curriculum'. I, as Head, feel that the pupils here not only achieve outstanding academic results, but also have strong character traits: being motivated, confident, friendly and emotionally well-balanced children.

This afternoon is primarily a celebration of our Year 6 leavers and the preponderance of prizes falls to them as it is their last year. We will be celebrating their achievements and wishing them luck at their new schools.

The competition for places at both grammar schools and the more prestigious independent secondary schools is extremely rigorous. It is with great pleasure that I can tell you that our Year 6 children gained 6 grammars and 22 independent school places. We may be a small school, but our Year 6 children continue to excel. We now regularly receive offers from Trinity, Whitgift, Croydon High, Old Palace, Caterham, Reigate Grammar and Royal Russell. The children likewise receive grammar places at Wallington Boys, Wallington Girls, Wilsons, Nonsuch, Sutton

Grammar and more recently a selection of Kent Grammars too. These are all fantastic schools which will continue to provide an outstanding education for your children.

The Form 6 children have had a spectacularly busy year, not just with exams, but with a variety of other activities. These included their activity week on the Isle of Wight, the Enterprise project, a theatre trip to see 'Matilda', a day trip to France and a day spent learning how to navigate London using tubes and public transport. They have had a curriculum designed to stimulate their thinking, encourage them to become more independent and help them with the transition to Year 7 so that they are able to meet the challenges ahead with confidence.

I will now turn our attention briefly to the other areas of school life this year which have been dominated by two important themes.

The first was our highly successful inspection where the Inspectors saw a strong school, full of happy children who were excelling academically. The areas we were left to work on involved providing children with opportunities to show more leadership in their own learning and more resilience. We have already started this process by encouraging the children to lead some of our assemblies. Our school Eco Reps planned, prepared and delivered a thought provoking assembly on 'Preventing plastic pollution in our seas'. Well done to Mrs Whybrow and the Eco Reps! The Senior Leadership Team will be planning more opportunities in the coming year, but as I pointed out to the Inspection Team, I am still mindful of the fact that before resilience comes confidence, as I firmly believe you have to have the latter before you can tackle the former.

The second important issue this year has been the building project. An awful lot of our time this year has been spent planning, preparing and coping with the building works. We have pretty much managed to maintain the varied curriculum and have tried not to let it impact on the children's daily lives.

We are all looking forward to the end of the build, but I am sure the benefits will be more than worthwhile. These include:

- An enlarged space for Nursery.
- A new enlarged and improved covered outdoor area for Early Years.
- An enlarged classroom for Form 6.
- A new dedicated Art Room on the ground floor.
- A new larger Music Room on the first floor.
- A new ICT and Learning Resources centre on the first floor.
- A large space for the After School Club to use away from the Hall, including a dedicated kitchen.
- Improved and reconfigured administrative space including a dedicated medical room to comply with ISI Regulations.
- Improved security features at the front door.
- Reconfiguration of the entire toilet provision for pupils and staff, including a toilet with disabled access on the ground floor.
- A replacement external staircase leading from the first floor to the playground at the rear of the building.
- The creation of a second floor storage and resource area with a fixed staircase.

We have had another busy year which I am sure you will all have followed in our half-termly Newsletters. They are always packed full of write ups about the trips the children have been on, special events that have

occurred in the school and, of course, celebrate the successes in sports, music, art, drama and chess of our pupils.

This year again we have had no staff leaving and I am sure that you would all agree that this continues to be a major strength of the school.

Continuity in a staff structure hugely benefits the pupils as all the children are known so very well by them year on year and also there is a basic understanding by the staff of what needs to be achieved year on year to maximise our children's potential. We would like to welcome Mrs Charmaine Payne to the Early Years Team where she will be assisting in Nursery from September as numbers are so strong.

We have appointed new caterers to start with us in September called Thomas Franks. We are all excited about the new menus and look forward to sampling their dishes.

The PTA continues to play a major role at St David's. The recent summer picnic was a tremendous success, with over 200 attendees and a harmonious social buzz throughout the afternoon. Through these events the PTA continues to fund those little extras which make the children's lives richer and more enjoyable.

So a big final thank you to the staff who are the main strength of the school and who continue to give unconditionally. Also to you, the parents, for supporting us in all that we do to make your children's school days educational, but also fun, exciting and happy. It is the strong partnership between home and school that makes St David's the strong school that it is.