

## Knowledge-Rich Curriculum

### A Message from the Headmaster

Jason Fletcher

If you've read through our website, you'll know that we describe the Heritage School curriculum as 'knowledge-rich.' We believe that children are naturally hungry for knowledge, and so we seek to deliver intellectually stimulating, substantial content across every subject area. This helps our pupils establish relationships with as many enriching activities and fields of knowledge as possible.

Will Orr-Ewing, an educator and friend of Heritage, recently wrote about the growing popularity of 'knowledge-based curriculums' in the UK and US. In an opinion article for *researchED Magazine* titled 'Knowledge is the Road to Joy', he summarizes the three main arguments that most educators use when advocating for a knowledge-based approach: Knowledge=Access; Knowledge=Success; and Knowledge=Power. With each of these mindsets, he points out, 'knowledge is almost exclusively presented as a means rather than an end.'

He contrasts this pragmatic perspective with that of Charlotte Mason, who described the goal of education in this way: 'We launch children upon too arid and confined a life. Personal delight and joy in living is a chief object of education... It is for their own sakes that children should get where the greatness of a given character lies, to have one's judgment of a present event illustrated and corrected by historic and literary parallels...these are admirable assets within the power of every one according to the measure of his mind'.



Charlotte Mason

This Charlotte Mason philosophy is demonstrated in our curriculum. During a recent parents' evening, Deputy Head Fiona Macaulay-Fletcher cited 'inspiration, lifelong enjoyment, and enrichment' as primary ends of the school's distinctive offerings of picture study, composer study, Bible, science biographies, nature study, literature, and narrative history.

Speaking in depth about picture study and composer study, for example, Mrs Fletcher noted that connecting to artists and composers through these means 'will provide the child with a relationship that will enlarge their cultural literacy, and develop... a love of beauty and creativity which will be enjoyed their whole lives.'

In the conclusion of his article, Mr Orr-Ewing writes, 'It is time to reclaim joy as the rightful aim of a knowledge-based approach (could it even be hoped that a knowledge approach implemented on Mason's grounds could go some way to pushing back at the awful incidence of childhood unhappiness we see about us?) and time to experiment with other methods that protect and uphold this worthy goal for a great and liberal education.' We could not agree more.

## Nature Walks: Learning to Appreciate the Beauty Around us

Jean Carter  
Head of Infants

At Heritage, there are many reasons that Nature Walks are such an important part of learning for our Infants and Juniors. These walks help children to become more observant. They teach children to compare; to carefully examine; to pay close attention and not exaggerate. These are skills that are foundational in many curriculum subjects.

In addition, nature walks are a sense of delight, renewing and restorative, good for mental health, allowing children time to freely explore the world around them, to be captured by what interests them, and to be creative and imaginative in their play.

But, just as importantly, Nature Walks can inspire our aesthetic sense, celebrating the colours, forms, shapes, sounds, and beauty in nature. Sometimes children will be asked to tell about what they can see, or to put a

picture in their mind – closing their eyes and describing the landscape – thus linking to the skills of narration and picture study, and building a mental picture gallery of images.

Charlotte Mason writes, ‘Have you ever been in the fields on a spring day, and heard nothing at all but your own voice and the voices of your companions, and then, perhaps, suddenly you have become silent, and you find a concert going on of which you had not heard a note?’ This is, she notes, the ‘joy which many people miss because Hearing is, in their case, an idle servant who does not attend to his business.’

The experience of going on Nature Walks in these early years teaches our children many things, but perhaps most essentially to have the ‘seeing eyes’ and ‘hearing ears’ that will bring them delight for a lifetime.



## Junior School History Sketches

In our Junior School, pupils keep a Book of Centuries that is filled up in chronological order with written narrations, maps, and pictures of historical figures and events – including authors, composers, scientists and artists. This past half-term, Junior School pupils created some fantastic sketches from their History lessons to include in their Book of Centuries. Topics included the Treaty of Versailles, Fascism in Italy, the Rus (Vikings who crossed the Baltic Sea) coming to Constantinople, and the Mongol Conquest of China.

See if you can recognize any of these images from history for yourself!



## Year 7 and 8 Research Projects

During the first half of the Spring term, Year 7 and 8 pupils were asked to conduct a research project on any topic of interest. They worked on this project as part of their Learning at Home timetable, and then delivered their Powerpoint presentations over Zoom to their classmates and teachers during the final two weeks of the half-term. The aim of the task was threefold: to work on creating a good Powerpoint presentation, to promote independent study in an area of personal interest and to work on public speaking skills. Two of our pupils talk about how they approached the project.

### Sandy McDonald, Year 7

Year 7 pupil Sandy McDonald chose the topic of Ancient Weaponry for his research project. Here, he describes how he researched, gathered feedback and edited the content for his topic; expanded his subject matter beyond the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Norse weapons he originally planned to cover; and created clear, streamlined and visually appealing slides for his presentation.

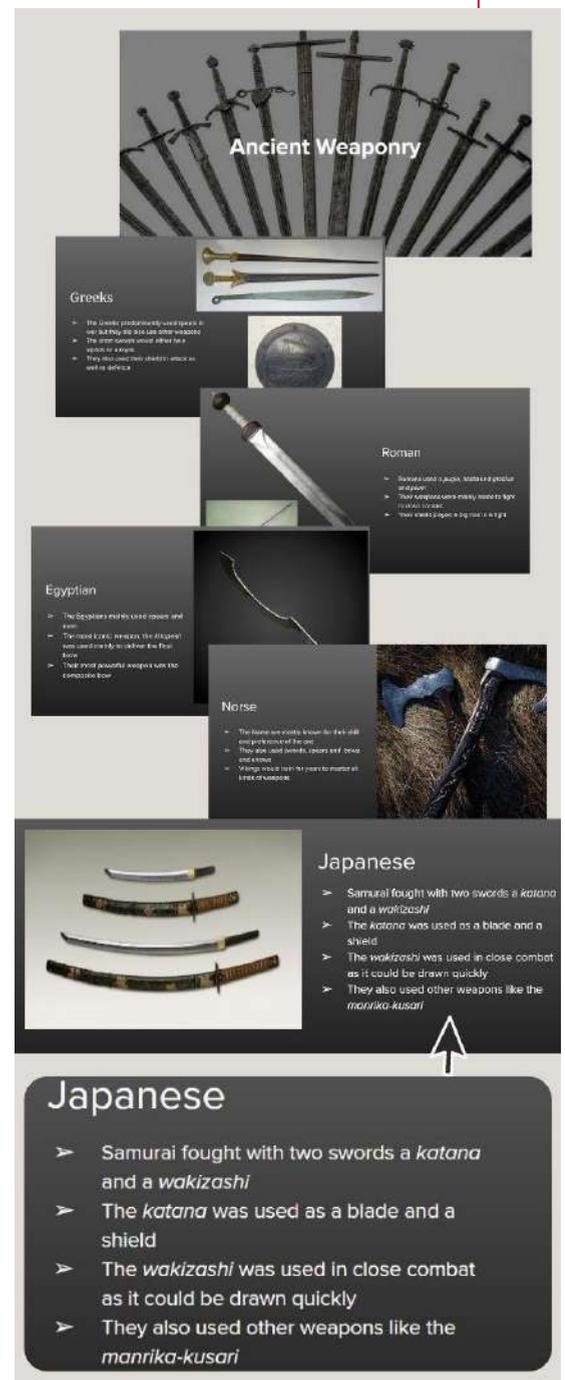
When I had finished my slides I checked with my friends to work out how I could improve it. The main thing they said was it was a bit short, and that I could've done another slide. So I found another topic and got started.

I gathered together some resources. I found some websites and some books on the subject of Japanese weapons. I read through all the resources so I had a good idea of what I would say. I stripped it down to the major points and put them into my slide.

I then prepared to present it. I chose a black background colour and white writing. I put out my findings into bullet points so I could summarise it and added an image. I played about with placement until I found something that worked.

Then when the slide looked good enough it was time to prepare what I would say about it. I found more sources that would expand on my bullet points and give some extra details.

I had pretty much finished my research project. It was very interesting learning about Japanese weaponry as I'd never thought that much about it before. All I needed to do now was present it.



## Year 7 and 8 projects, continued

### Betsy Clebsch, Year 8

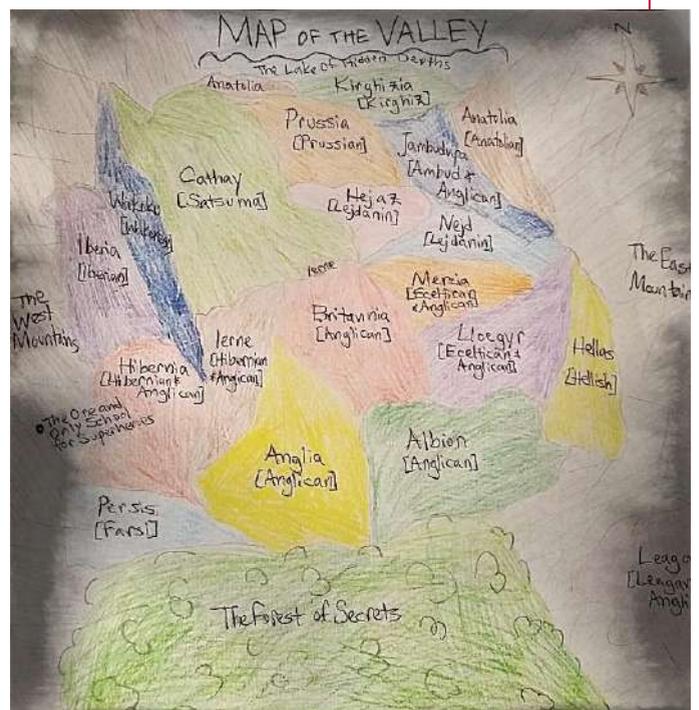
For my independent research project, I created a fictional world called The Valley. Usually, I get my inspiration from books, improvised acting, or random comments, but this time the world evolved as I was drawing. I wrote a title on impulse: 'The One and Only School for Superheroes', and started drawing some superheroes. It skyrocketed from there, as my sister and I became involved in a new alternate reality.

I call the world 'The Valley', because it's composed of kingdoms located in a valley. Nobody knows where it's situated exactly, because explorers who venture beyond the Valley never return - so the citizens figure it must be either something fabulous or something awful. There are currently eighteen kingdoms in the Valley; there used to be nineteen, but one of them broke away under the rule of the most recent queen. Each kingdom is ruled by a monarch, but not from a royal family; they are chosen not by birth, but by ability. The special thing about these monarchs is that they are all superheroes.

Each kingdom has a different superpower unique to their kingdom (one has invisibility, one communicating with the dead, etc), and in each generation there is one child or adolescent who displays signs of this superpower. These eighteen children are chosen to be the Prince or Princess and are trained at a school in the West Mountains: the One and Only School for Superheroes, headed by the immortal and invulnerable Lord One and Lady Only. The youngest of the children is always eight years old in the first year, and the others can range to as old as twenty, occasionally older. The training lasts five years, during which the young superheroes might not return to their kingdoms or see their biological family at all.

The subjects they study include: History, Diplomacy, Politics & Economics, Department & Etiquette, Fitness, Dance, Mathematics, Anglican (equivalent of English), Superpowers (mentored by the monarch of their kingdom), Combat, Superheroics (how to do the 'superhero' thing), and languages (Latin and a choice of regional languages).

Each superhero also has a cape with a unique pattern depending on their kingdom. These look good and are also practical, as the fasteners make their powers stronger and the patterns make it easy to tell which kingdom each of them belongs to. All the capes also have silver silk linings, hence the cliché saying, 'Every cape has a silver lining'.



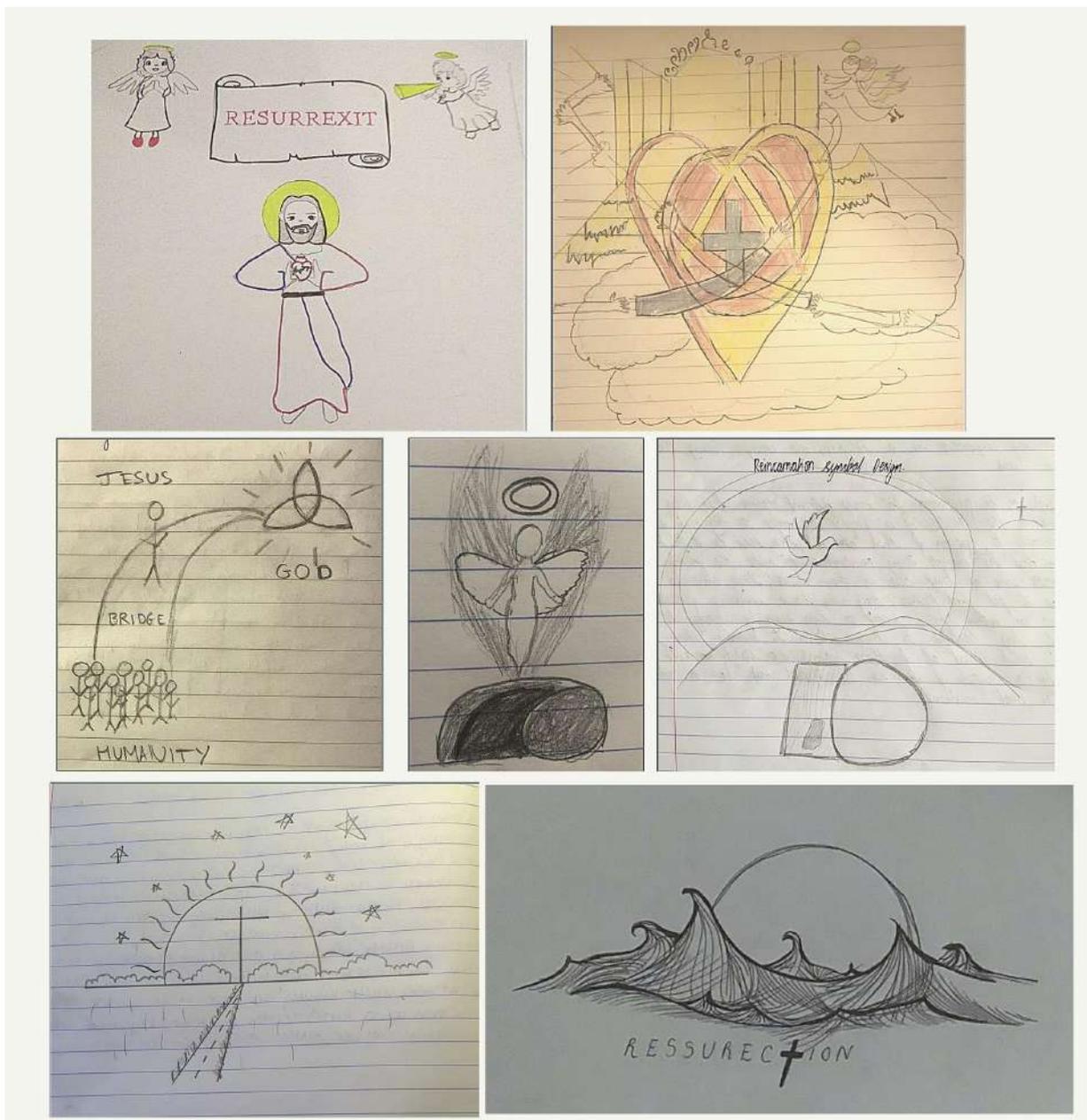
## Resurrection Sketches

Dr Paul Martin

Senior School Religious Studies Teacher

In the middle of the latest lockdown, hope and positivity were in short supply, but my Year 10 Religious Studies group brightened my evening marking with a series of creative symbols for the resurrection. I had pointed out to them that while there is an universally accepted symbol for the death of Jesus, there isn't one for his resurrection. Their homework was to create one!

I'm sure you'll agree, they took to the task with some flair and imagination. They are rough sketches only (homework tasks take just 45 minutes) but a lot of thought has gone into them. Some came with an explanation from the artist, but I think the symbols speak for themselves.



## Benefits of a Heritage Education

William Buchanan  
Heritage School Alumni

*William is a Heritage alumnus from the Class of 2019. Here he talks about the benefits of narration, which we make particular use of in our Infant and Junior Schools but whose benefits have continued beyond his years at Heritage.*

As I look back at my time at Heritage, the lesson of narration stands out. I remember narrating back the story of King Alfred burning the cakes in class and having no idea of the influence it would have on my academic progression. Narration at Heritage is a key part of the curriculum.

From a young age we all have been challenged to recall to the best of our ability a story that the teacher has just read to us. This is often tied into History lessons; however, it is also part of Composer Study and Picture Study. Having been read the extract, the students then aim to tell back as much as they can as a class, politely waiting for their turn. Though at the time it may seem arduous and the students may even think it a waste of time, looking back at it now I am reminded of how important it has been for me. Not only does this improve an individual's memory but also confidence in speaking about what they have remembered and understood, and then listening to hear what others have remembered.

These skills have served me incredibly well during my time at Heritage and during the past two years at the Perse Upper. My teachers have commented on my ability to recall information quickly. They have also said that I have the confidence to try ideas out in front of the class, and am ready to listen to what others have to offer. As I hope to go on to study History and Philosophy at Durham University I know that these skills will serve me well. Evidently therefore this integral part of the Heritage education is something that goes far beyond merely learning a story. It is something to be cherished and be proud of.



## Introducing Hannah Grief

*Hannah Grief will be joining the Heritage Staff team as Office Manager on 15th April. Welcome Miss Grief!*

I am so pleased to be joining the Heritage community! Working in the Office of another Cambridge school, one of the best parts of my role has been getting to know all the families and staff well, so I very much look forward to the opportunity to meet you all soon. Previously, I spent a couple of years working for my church and I am still involved in the youth ministry there – being able to continue meeting, over Zoom, has been a real highlight of the past year.

## 'It's never too late...'

Meg Lowe

Senior School Music Teacher

'It's never too late to learn the piano!' I casually enthused, to a group of Heritage staff on a zoom call. In fact, I'd say it's never too late to learn any musical instrument.

I so often hear the phrase 'I wish I'd learnt a musical instrument!' or 'I wish I'd kept up playing!'. Yet, I've known a number of people who've picked up, or rediscovered, an instrument later in life. There's much to be said for it: no parent ordering you to practise; not feeling that sense of pressure that a child can feel from their teacher; maybe a sense of time to actually do some practice and therefore justify the expense of the lessons!

Playing an instrument is so good for us. Time when we can switch off from other things, work at something, see the results, and even, over time, discover the joy of playing music with others. We might think we have no time to practise, but practising is all about habit forming, very much in keeping with what the pupils learn at Heritage. It doesn't need much time. Imagine what you could achieve with just 15 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

I suspect there are some people reading this who would say they used to play an instrument. But, muscle memory exists. Why not, this month, dust down your instrument, pick up an old easy piece, and start again? 28 years ago, I studied the cello as my 'first study' at university. I played a lot! These days I don't, but I'd love to pick it up properly again. Why not let's encourage one another to do that? How much more satisfying to spend 15 minutes a day playing, rather than another 15 minutes on my mobile checking the latest news headlines!



## New Ways to Connect with Heritage

### Heritage on Instagram

You probably already know that the latest news, photos, and videos from around the school are on the Heritage Facebook page ([facebook.com/heritagecambridge](https://facebook.com/heritagecambridge)). But did you know we're also on Instagram? To become an Instagram follower, just go to [instagram.com/heritagecambridge](https://instagram.com/heritagecambridge).

We're always looking for new ways to connect with our community, so we hope to see you there!



### Heritage Community Selling Page

The HCA is pleased to introduce the new Heritage Community Selling Page, a closed Facebook group for members of the Heritage community to buy and sell used uniform and other items. To join, go to the group page ([bit.ly/heritageselling](https://bit.ly/heritageselling)) and request membership. Once your membership has been approved, you will be able to view the items that are currently for sale, and post items of your own. The HCA will also post donated uniform items on this page, which will be sold to raise funds for both the HCA, and Amazing Grace school in Uganda.