

Looking Ahead

New Horizons?

Jason Fletcher

We are living in extraordinary times. Who would have guessed a month or two ago how dramatically daily life would alter. Who could have imagined how narrow our horizons would suddenly become?

The unexpected disruption of life's pattern is hard. Figuring out new ways to manage everything, including Learning at Home, is unquestionably demanding. And yet...

One of our goals at Heritage is to cultivate 'the life of the mind' or 'an inner life'. It is a big idea. Seeing the goal of education in terms of obtaining qualifications, important as they are, is a shadow by comparison. Someone with a rich inner life possesses an imaginative capacity to go places, to discover delightful oases, to find inward re-creation and nourishment, to relish truth. Such a person also knows where to find the resources to live generously, even in a season of unusual pressure.

We can learn lessons from grandparents. Our wisest elders find satisfaction in quieter, more local pursuits, in part out of necessity, but also due to regular investment in wholesome interests. Many of our elders have understood the point I'm trying to make: the inner life really does matter.

In order to flourish, the mind, like the body, needs a healthy diet of good food. When we partake of a good meal of mind food, we are satisfied by it. If we take this seriously, we ought, for starters, to be attentive to our own needs, especially now. Hopefully this truth helps us to frame Learning at Home in the right way. Children too are hungry for knowledge and the curriculum is intended to be enjoyed, even to bring delight.

Teachers are working hard over the break to prepare hearty meals of stimulating activities and readings for the weeks ahead. The good news is that satisfying mind food is available to us in greater abundance than ever, although in this age of information saturation we also need to be discerning.

The mind needs real food, not 'twaddle' as Charlotte Mason used to say. She described the best books as 'living' because they possess vitality, originality, and interesting ideas that grip you. Real things also feed the mind, so in addition to enjoying books, let's try and be outdoors as much as possible and make time for activities such as baking, music and art or learning a new skill.

Of course, our primary concern in these anxious days is to support all those adversely affected by the coronavirus. At the same time, children happily remind us that life is irrepressible. Although it feels like our horizons have narrowed, it is not too much to hope that we and our children can yet glimpse expansive new vistas in the weeks ahead.



Times of Transition

The current uncertainty is challenging for us all, and especially so for pupils moving onto Sixth form. We now know that with public exams cancelled, schools will be required to issue calculated grades which will then be reviewed and moderated by exam boards.

So, our Year 11 pupils are continuing to work hard, to demonstrate the maturity of their understanding at the end of their course of study. We wish them every possible encouragement, knowing that the Heritage staff team will be supporting them all the way.

Mr Burden, Head of Seniors said *'I am tremendously proud of our pupils. They have had an enormously challenging year following the tragic loss of Iona in the Summer. Now their GCSE preparation has been subsumed in a national crisis. Through all of this they have shown sympathy and good humour and have grown so very much, in ways that mere exams could hardly measure. I know they are fully capable of maintaining a mature and balanced approach as we navigate together the term ahead.'*

Year 6 is also a time of transition for pupils. Mrs Parkinson, Year 6 Class Teacher said *'I too feel immensely proud of Year 6. So much has been uncertain in the past couple of weeks, and yet the children have quickly adapted to this and have taken to living life fully in the moment. I have received some wonderful emails and photos of the children working in their new classroom surroundings! I look forward to when we can be together again, even if it is online for now.'*



Farewell and Thank You

Jason Fletcher

We would like to thank Susan Schaeffer Macaulay for all she has done as a founding Trustee of Heritage School. Author of *For the Children's Sake* (Crossway, 1984) a book about Charlotte Mason's approach to education, Susan was inspired in the 1970's by a small school in Sussex which was based on the philosophy of Charlotte Mason. Shortly afterwards, together with Ranald her husband, she established *Child Light*, (the charity which operates Heritage School), to encourage Christian education along Charlotte Mason lines. It is in large part her prayers and her vision that are responsible for Heritage opening back in 2007.

Susan and Ranald (who remains a Trustee) contributed significantly to the early development of the school, with their wisdom, advice, practical support and presence. For those who might not know, Susan is Mrs Fletcher's Mother and Grandmother to Maisie and Seth Fletcher - both alumni of the school. We cannot thank her enough for her great legacy and her inspiration as we seek to build Heritage for the next generation.



Three Cheers for Toad!

After reading *The Wind in the Willows* in Year 4, Year 5 had the opportunity to turn this wonderful book into a marvellous production! From the twitching and scuffling feet of the field mice to the flamboyant interactions between Toad and Ratty, the children were living and breathing their characters from day one.

In just four weeks the class brought the book to life and performed an entertaining piece of drama. The beauty of the script meant that there were lots of fun songs to be rehearsed, shared and inevitably heard throughout the corridors of the school.

The positive effect that drama brings to individuals is well known. For many children it allows their confidence to grow and enables them to become more aware of their own abilities. It was a pleasure to be part of this production and to work with such an enthusiastic and hard working group of children! Thank you again to all who encouraged and helped Year 5 along the way!

Emma Owens



Love Against the Odds

Sarah Dingley

Panton Hall recently became a graffiti-adorned urban landscape as Year 7, inspired by Baz Luhrmann's contemporary film version, performed their own reinterpretation of Shakespeare's story of love against the odds. Verona and Mantua became London and Cambridge, the plague became the unfortunately topical Coronavirus, and swords became daggers. However, the timeless themes of love and hate easily transferred to their new backdrop, startling us, again, with their relevance down the centuries.

There were many opportunities to contribute creatively. The class made their own dramatic masks, and some contributed to the choreography of the masked ball's dance. Tristan Bruce was also invaluable in his work as lighting assistant.

There were some excellent performances -the fiery, pugnacious Tybalt (Emilie L), the garrulous Lord Capulet (Francesco B) and of course, the young couple Romeo (Jacob P) and Juliet (Connie M) amongst others. As every performer knows, though, every production is a team event, and each and every member of the cast played a part in the show's success. Congratulations to all.



World Book Day

Jeni Watkins and Caroline Wren

So many wonderful characters joined us for World Book Day this year from James Herriot to Sir Edmund Hillary. Infants and Juniors started the day with a special assembly and a visit from *The Tiger Who Came to School* - a Heritage version of the much loved classic, adapted and beautifully illustrated by our own Miss Carter. (All the children loved following along to the Tigerobics!)

The day continued with many book related activities including writing stories, making picture books, creating bookmarks and lovely tiger finger puppets. In the Junior school there were book quizzes a plenty as well as our traditional Book Treasure Hunt. There were some special moments when children from different classes joined together to share their favourite books and to help each other with their reading books. We would like to thank parents who came into school to read some of their favourite books and especially Adam Larkham who came to speak to UP and Y2 about being a book illustrator and gave each child an original illustration from *The Story of Chocolate* (a very popular book amongst Infants!)

The Senior School were also embracing the day with costumes including St Trinian's Naughtiest Girls to a variety of Mr Men. Pupils enjoyed a staff Heroes and Villains Matching Pairs competition which caused great hilarity. Who could imagine Mrs Rowland as the ruthless Miss Trunchbull, Mr Burden as the dark Lord Voldemort, or Mr Fletcher as the scheming Moriarty?



What Makes Heritage Special?

We asked recent arrivals at Heritage for their first impressions of their new school. Parents talked of their amazement at the sheer amount, depth and quality of the work that is covered each day. One Mother commented how her children come home from school full of what the day has involved. The specialist teachers are really valued and parents have been thrilled by the very real skills their children are learning, even from a young age.

In the Senior School, it was Siana and Owain, our Head Girl and Head Boy who made such an impact during their speeches at the Open Day. Parents want their children to grow up to be like them – a compliment indeed!

They spoke of the rounded education their children are receiving. They love the poetry recitations, the emphasis on books and the observation of things in Nature – noting how these skills are now being valued and championed by many other educators across the field. They observed how from the outside, Heritage can appear old fashioned, whereas the research and reasoning behind so much of the curriculum is in fact ahead of the curve. The Drama productions are especially loved as children so enjoy learning the songs and singing them endlessly at home and in the playground!



Another distinctive feature was the warm welcome they received from the Heritage community. One Mother arrived in the playground to be greeted by another Mum saying, "New people, we love new people!"

So let us continue to be welcoming and outward looking as new families join us. Let us also not lose sight of what the staff team are working so hard to deliver - that which makes Heritage unique and so special.