

HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL
PROSPECTUS | 2019-2020



HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL



HOLLAND PARK 1958-present

The school was sixty last September and we marked our anniversary with a nod to the very early life of the school which began so illustriously in 1958 under its founding headmaster, Allen Clarke (1910-2006) who led the school from 1958 until 1971. Discovering some editions of *Alpha*, the school's magazine dating from 1960 to 1963, uncovered a world far removed from today, but yet unchanged and what remains exactly the same is the spirit of aspiration. We were delighted to offer the school community some small commemorative pottery, designed by Rye Pottery, numbered and editioned mugs in their famous stripes. A keepsake, a little bit of history. To last for the next sixty or more years, a lectern made by Robert Thompson of Kilburn, North Yorkshire. Often referred to as 'Mousey Thompson' each piece of his furniture features a carved mouse. The panel carving on ours is reminiscent of the dahlia, a part of the history of Holland Park and we have a trademark mouse. Twenty nineteen/twenty should see the completion of the restoration of Thorpe Lodge which is where the school began.



Thorpe Lodge drainpipe with its dahlia insignia

*Ink stained oak of another place in time
Parquet floors, Latin primers
Iron-haired maidens in pinafores and tweed
All erudition, hope and selflessness
Cosetting treasured books
Lives of duty and genteel poverty: the end of an era
But surviving in someone's mind's eye
Somewhere, perhaps.
The world of colour comes suddenly
Formica red, cartoon history, multiple choice
School caps and yellow blazered braid - gone
Now, an Autumn morning
As ordinary and timeless as those of other Autumns
Creeps silently upon a new dawn
Minds alert to possibility
In steel, on glass, fully lighted
Into a new future.
Rooted, secured in a timeless homage to
Wisdom and knowledge.*

A poem written to commemorate the opening of the 2012 school.

A FOREWORD | COLIN HALL

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.*

So writes T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*. In school life, in the combination of adult and child, the thought is apt. We dwell on, and are made by, the past and we imagine the future. In doing so we can forget the joy of the moment we are in. Schools are about bringing to life. They are about repair, restoration: innovation and adventure. Endings and new beginnings in equal measure, places to grow, to leave one's mark.

*Dawn points and another day
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea
the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides. I am here
Or there or elsewhere. In my beginning.*

The captivating, enticing, exciting thing about Holland Park is its energy, its thirst, its determination, its drive to excel and to be exceptional. In that journey, no stone is left unturned, no task is too great and self-congratulation not any

part of its make up and that seems to me to be the excitement of school - a place of otherness, a venue for different experiences, an opportunity to discover. My Durham grammar school of the 1970s put the daughters of coal miners next to the sons of university professors and said that an excellent education was for all. It was a meritocracy: those of privileged backgrounds sometimes won glittering prizes, but not infrequently they were outshone by the humble who rose to the top. An Ofsted inspector once said of Holland Park that it was 'a grammar school, but one for all children, not just a few'. We took the comment as a compliment because it captured our ambition that all students should be afforded possibilities. With prizes already gained, the thrill of the chase has not lost any allure, for each September is indeed a beginning and every new student is ready for movement and development. We endorse values that are timeless, values that we believe build futures. We foster diligence, respect, courtesy, tolerance and a deep sense of scholarship.



A CHRONICLE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Just like oranges, results come annually. Sometimes, however, there are exceptional harvests and our exemplary examination results have brought repeated annual praise and wide acclaim from central government. We win numerous awards and far exceed that which is expected of us, consistently placed in the top 5% of schools nationally over the last ten years. In *The Real Iron Lady*, Gillian Shephard quotes Margaret Thatcher as

saying in 1985 to her junior ministers, "You have been appointed to get results, not just to hold office." Leaders and teachers understand that premise. They comprehend that the essence of their job is to deliver results for children and do so by demanding that students graft diligently. Young people are growing up in very demanding times, both socially and academically. We respond to this context by testing regularly and intervening to support where success is

not readily evident. Saturday teaching is frequently featured in the school calendar, alongside additional teaching in February half term, the Spring Break and during May half-term. We are at the forefront of current changes, working carefully to ensure also that our teaching adapts to the new syllabi being developed by examination boards. We make no excuse for being ambitious and determinedly academic. For some students such success and prowess will

come readily. For those less gifted we will need even more of their energy and effort. We are clear that success is built on reading, on research and a capacity to write eruditely. We expect, encourage and develop scholarship. Whilst we understand the electronic age and use it appropriately, examinations are set in a tradition going back decades - with a fountain pen, paper, silence and an outpouring of that which has been learnt assiduously in a scholarly way over time.





Our leadership is defined by an unwavering belief in the possible and a tireless determination to achieve the exceptional. The school's leadership has been judged as outstanding by Ofsted in every one of its Ofsted inspections (2003, 2007, 2011 & 2014). Visited by leaders from around the country because of our widely-read and much envied Ofsted report, we enjoy offering guidance to other schools. Our passion is our uniqueness, the small world of Holland Park. In a climate of multi-academy trusts, we remain determinedly single. For in our singularity and uniqueness we hold dear to our guiding principle: attention to detail. In the small detail, in the close inspection and careful cultivation of every aspect of school, lies leaders' success. If small details are in place, there will be overall success. It is not merely tenacity and industry that creates success, it is a strong sense of moral purpose, creativity, vision and a belief that a driven institution also needs to be a warm institution. A number of the school's leaders stretch back more than a decade, deeply bonded to a sense of mission and a long term investment in the school. They embrace and harness new talent. They exude a reflective confidence, an unimpeachable loyalty and make no secret of the effort, time, energy, Saturdays and holidays which contribute to the school's extraordinary success. That leaders have to be exceptional teachers is a *sine qua non*: teaching remains at the forefront of leaders' priorities and action plans. The school's exceptional results and over-subscription are evidence of the success of leadership but all these records are historical and leaders at Holland Park are not merely contented to sustain our performance into the next generation, but are tirelessly determined to extend and develop it beyond all the watermarks of previous academic achievement.

THE ART OF LEADERSHIP

THE CRAFT OF THE CLASSROOM

Outstanding teachers transform lives: they capture and fire imagination; they inspire; they take facts and ideas and turn them into adventures. Talented teachers awaken excitement, challenge thinking and are demanding of their charges; they do not settle for the mediocre but develop students from producing that which is secure and accurate, to that which is exceptional and polished. Teachers such as these build relationships and make young people want to please, want to extend their boundaries and develop their success. We are privileged to appoint graduates who have a passion for their subject and a commitment to imbue students with the richness of academia. We create exciting career opportunities for the very best of teachers and secure their talent and longevity. Teachers are committed to delivering outstanding lessons. They begin with one significant, overriding aim, one pivotal principle, one key piece of knowledge and/or understanding that students must have. That salient thing needs a dynamic and memorable moment, some inspirational launch. Key information needs to be solidified, rooted and tested. Interrogating students' acquisition of knowledge/skill needs to occur during and at the end of a lesson so that there are constant tests as to whether progress is being made. Every opportunity is taken to integrate and provide social, moral, spiritual and cultural interest or relevance. Literacy is an integral part of the lesson whether this be oral - the formality and correction of the spoken word - or written. The outcomes of learning are neatly recorded in a manner which demonstrates what students have learnt. Workbooks reveal progress and benefit from teachers' marking and assessment which in turn leads to improved and enhanced work from students.



The school looks to Ofsted, to the *Good Schools Guide* and to a number of external awarding bodies for its validation and endorsement. It does this not least because it is helpful for parents and students to have a balanced and dispassionate view of the school's success which is benchmarked nationally against all schools. As an outstanding school in all categories, future inspection is unlikely or at least infrequent, but we undertake to be subject to voluntary inspection régimes to ensure that our practice remains up to date and is ever responsive. Welcoming others' perspectives is part of our commitment to embracing change and accepting that historical successes go only so far. We are only as good as the present moment is our mantra. We draw regularly on parents' and students' views and seek to encourage a culture of candour and self-evaluation that enables us constantly to refine and develop our offering for young people. School changes frequently, not least because it is seeking to respond to an ever-changing curriculum and a refreshed framework for school inspection, but also because views from parents are frequently illuminating. Our 2014 Ofsted inspection report has brought us schools from across the country to visit and seek guidance on how such a glowing report can be achieved. We, in turn, scour the country to seek out the exceptional and learn from them. It is always compromising to quote out of context and so we exhort an interrogation of our Ofsted report.

AN ENVIABLE BENCHMARK



A BROAD CURRICULUM

The school takes pride in its achievement across the curriculum and is a proud member of the Prince's Teaching Institute in eight subjects. Our GCSE language results are amongst the best in the country and have been consistently so for several years. Students enjoy regular visits to Spain and France. A significant number of students study GCSE and A level latin each year and there is an established pattern of students going on to study classics at eminent universities. Geography teachers enthuse their students with exciting fieldwork across many areas of the country. History teachers lead yearly excursions to Europe to trace the marks left from significant events in the twentieth century and host a number of historical reconstructions. Key Stage Three schemes of work seek to broaden cultural capital and embrace a canon of significant material. We tackle some Chaucer; we watch age appropriate documentaries from BBC4; we read broad sheet newspapers; we track age appropriate films and sometimes write letters to the great and the good. We seek to promote formality, for example by the images and text that we display around the school. These materials alert students to the substantial achievements of writers, thinkers, artists and scientists. Wherever we can we surround students with objects of beauty and design which is aesthetically pleasing: most recently our collaboration with Rye Pottery and Robert Thompson. We take the view that everything is the curriculum and include in that vision conversation at breaks between staff and students. We seek to attract speakers: most recently Simon Russell Beale. Assemblies form part of the curriculum and are vehicles for extending young minds into areas that they are unlikely to delve: most recently John Bridcut's film, *Dame Janet Baker: In her own words*; unlikely material for youngsters but used to encourage sensitivity as well as culture.





AN ENGLISH EDUCATION

"It was badly done, indeed! You, whom she had known from an infant, whom she had seen grow up from a period when her notice was an honour, to have you now, in thoughtless spirits, and the pride of the moment, laugh at her, humble her—and before her niece, too—and before others, many of whom (certainly some,) would be entirely guided by your treatment of her.—This is not pleasant to you, Emma—and it is very far from pleasant to me; but I must, I will—I will tell you truths while I can."

Mr Knightley chastising Emma in Jane Austen's *Emma*, volume 3, chapter 7, picnic on Box Hill.

At the very heart of school lies the study of English; a passion for reading is at the core of all academic success. Understanding language, its precision and its nuances is vital. Particularly in these electronic times it would be very easy for students to lose the art of writing, even though that very art is still the cornerstone of all examinations. Quite apart from technical fluency, we also want students to be able to

manipulate language for different purposes and that means reading widely both fiction and non-fiction. In the canon of English Literature lies identity and an understanding of the world in which we live. Literature is often the lens through which students can find their alter ego and better understand those around them. We are founding members of *First Story*, where students' work is published in an annual anthology. The school's calendar is redolent with literary activity and events to stimulate students' interest. The corridors are adorned with literature. All students sit GCSE English Language at the end of year ten because the quality of teaching is such that this is entirely feasible and desirable and it prepares students for the unseen reading required in so many other GCSE courses. All students go on to study Literature in year eleven which serves as a foundation for the very popular and academically esteemed 'A' Level English Literature, taught by erudite teachers. The school library houses over 5,000 texts, available and at students' disposal, ranging from classical fiction, contemporary prize winners, historical scholarship, investigative journalism and monthly periodicals.

A SHAKESPEAREAN ADVENTURE

School should be fun. It may seem obvious, but in such (rightly) demanding times fun is at risk of being lost. When we have fun we also try to generate money for charity, not lose an opportunity to extend students' exposure to works of art and, in the process, produce something of artistic value and merit. In February each year, the Leadership Team and some members of the English Team perform a Shakespeare play. This has become an annual tradition, year on year we have become more and more ambitious, and the performances from staff become more and more adept. We invest some significant time and creativity in making the performance accessible and exciting. The repertoire to date includes: *King Lear* (interpreted as a modern family business squabble); *Macbeth* (interpreted in the style of a well-heeled Soho House party of bankers); *Julius Caesar* (set in 1950s Rome - very much *La Dolce Vita*); *Hamlet* (set as a detective story in a Kenneth

Branagh / Wallanderesque landscape); *As You Like It* (imagined as the Made in Chelsea set go glamping); *The Winter's Tale* (imagined as film noir), *The Merchant of Venice* (set in period costume of delightful velvet cloaks and dresses) and *Richard II* (in 1950s costume - our take on Netflix's *The Crown*); *The Tempest* set in a contemporary tweed and tartan clad Shetland with dead fish and a real boat. The annual enterprise is also intended to be a model for the school community in teamwork and how to create *esprit de corps*. Quite deliberately performed in the low ebb of the winter months, it also serves to lift spirits, prepare students for the strains of the examination season and even impress the Shakespeare Schools Foundation with whom we collaborate. Extending young people's cultural horizons is part of making them able to compete with all young people nationally and is part of celebrating our national heritage and the important British values inherent therein.



AN APTITUDE FOR ART

One of our defining characteristics is our specialism in art. David Chappell, Academy Head, is himself an art specialist and he has been a potent influence in the nurturing of art. His vision and expertise has enabled exceptional achievement. The school's enthusiasm for art places is at the forefront of school life. Students benefit from creative and expertly trained teachers and we devote a large proportion of teaching time to building skills in the subject. We select 10% of our intake into year seven on the basis of aptitude in art. Art Aptitude students visit galleries and exhibitions throughout the year and they have weekly masterclasses designed to stimulate and refine skill. Regular exhibitions of students' work in our dedicated Art Gallery profile the developing talent amongst these students, all of whom are expected to take the subject to GCSE. Art is housed

in splendid studios. A dedicated Art library, a photographic darkroom and Apple technology are but some of the resources from which students benefit. All of these resources mean that students can work at any time in the day and/or on a Saturday. In lessons and in dedicated masterclasses, we are committed to a balance between training students in the fundamental skills of observational drawing and engaging students in work of conceptual depth. A number of students proceed to The Slade, The Royal College of Art and to Cambridge to read The History of Art. Our students' work has been exhibited across London. Students benefit from our links with the artist Antony Gormley and friend of the school Celia Birtwell, both of whom have contributed to students' work and provided an insight into the very best of contemporary British art.



A CHORAL TRADITION

Musical activity permeates school. In addition to an ever expanding and talented school orchestra there is a diverse programme of ensembles and solo performance that takes place after school (lessons are too vital to miss). There are frequent informal concerts given by students and opportunities abound for recording and experimenting in musical performance in our specialist recording studio. A centrepiece of our musical output is our school choir. A collaboration of staff and students, it has established a dynamic and yet subtle choral tradition. The choir sings frequently in significant venues in London (it has an annual evensong scheduled in St Paul's Cathedral) and it has established an annual tour, singing in cathedrals across the country and further afield. Last year, it has travelled to Carnegie Hall, New York, to perform with *The King's Singers*, Simon Carrington and Bob Chilcott. This year it spent a week in Florence singing in

beautiful Renaissance buildings. In collaboration with parents, governors and members of the local community is a major public choral performance supported by professional soloists and instrumentalists, and encompassing members of the community, parents and friends of the school. In recent years they have sung Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Fauré's *Requiem* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. We enjoy a repertoire that features works by the great composers of the Renaissance, as well as music from the baroque and classical periods. Singing is prodigiously popular and in our largest performances, we have in excess of fifty singers. The choir also enjoys regular performances in the local community, singing at a local annual festival concert with musicians from the Royal College of Music, as well as performing for charitable causes. It has also been most generously supported by many friends of the school and its patron, Katharine Kent.





A SECULAR SPIRITUALITY

*I am lost to the world
with which I used to waste so much time,
It has heard nothing from me for so long
that it may very well believe that I am dead!*

*It is of no consequence to me
Whether it thinks me dead;
I cannot deny it,
for I really am dead to the world.*

*I am dead to the world's tumult,
And I rest in a quiet realm!
I live alone in my heaven,
In my love and in my song!*

Gustav Mahler - Rückert-Lieder:
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen

The school is profoundly committed to secularity. All faiths are recognised as personal life choices but none are marked or celebrated in school. Rather like Elizabeth I (1558-1603) this school does not 'make windows into men's souls'. Faith and religious practice belong beyond the school gates. In school, all are equal, all are secular. There are no prayers or places to say them. There are no religious symbols. This ensures our understanding of equality, tolerance, diversity and openness. It does not mean, however, that we lack spirituality and aspects of Christianity appear as part of our duty to feature British Values.

Our assemblies, which use literature, music, film and image, seek to assist students to discover and embrace their deeper selves; to listen to the still small voice. Assemblies deal with the great themes of life: love, loss, pain, joy, friendship as well as those things which rightly occupy the twenty first century. Assemblies open young minds to great writers, philosophers, thinkers and politicians; they are enriched by classical music, arthouse film, poetry and live performance. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is also a layer of all lesson planning much praised by Ofsted. It is deeply ingrained for example in English and History but it is equally promoted in Science, Art, RE and Languages. Each morning students meet for PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) where issues are discussed and views explored. We seek to develop open-minded and articulate young people, who are alive to the challenges that face human beings and sensitive to the existence of difference in others' lives. The images around the building and the words which accompany them build a rich and multi-layered tapestry depicting what it is to be human and how to comprehend the diversity and fragility of being alive.



A HOUSE AND A HOME

The school is defined by its Houses and 'family' tutor groups, the older and bigger nurturing the younger and smaller. The people from whom the Houses take their name embody the spirit of the school. Our Houses represent the power and potential of education and the fact that life is not always a bowl of cherries and that to grow and develop, one needs to be cherished and have a sense of being part of a 'family'. The people after whom they are named represent that which we expect of young people: honesty; tolerance; compassion; drive; a thirst for knowledge; an understanding of the complexity of the world; a willingness to sacrifice; a belief in scholarship; attention to detail; a passion for the written word; a belief in the endless possibility and variety of being human. Our Houses are intended to be home.

The school is broken down into families (tutor groups) who have a parent (the tutor) and who meet once a day for half an hour to share their activities and solve their problems. Like most families everyone has their own particular needs and good and less good days. Like most families, there are occasional issues to work through, the odd falling out. In these complex times amidst social media and its capacity to invent new problems, the tutor is there to guide, to shape (occasionally to chastise), to assist the passage to maturity. Just as we care for our homes, so we seek to replicate that warmth and sense of belonging: a place to beg a favour, a place to be forgiven and watched over. A place to be a human being which is often taken for granted but which is so very difficult to achieve with equanimity.

A WORLD BEYOND 3PM

Young people's development lies not only in classrooms, but in autumnal afternoons and early spring holiday mornings. Homework clubs and intervention activity, to catch up or extend knowledge, feature daily. In periods prior to examinations, in the Spring Break and in May half term, school opens for teaching and we are delighted to provide, gratis, revision activity and additional teaching. All the way through the academic year, there

is Saturday morning teaching and such provision both extends those who are seeking the very highest grades and assists those who find academic pursuit challenging. It is not, however, all about work. Enriched by residential visits, enhanced by physical endeavour and extended by musical, dramatic or literary creativity, our post 3PM offering serves to meet the appetite for adventure and excitement. For budding actors, there is drama society; for aspirant authors,

there is the prestigious *First Story*; amateur medics can enjoy Dissection and First Aid society; film makers - film society; publishers can create our very own student magazine; there is cooking, yoga, philosophy, politics, dancing and debating. There is a redoubtable choir and a confident orchestra. The Shakespeare Schools' Foundation will again see our students perform on a west end stage and with record numbers applying, we will again be hard

pushed to fulfil all the interest that the enduringly popular Duke Edinburgh Scheme brings; hundreds of students every year complete this prestigious course. Visits extend students further, be they climbing in Snowdonia, canoeing in Devon, looking at Roman remains in St Albans, honing their French in Bordeaux, skiing in France, or geocaching on the North Norfolk Coast. All are about enriching experience and creating memories.



We aim to imbue children's sporting endeavours with passion, devotion, resilience, faith and - most importantly - a desire to win and lose with dignity and magnanimity. Sport and physical activity feature centrally in our ethos of a rounded education. This is, perhaps, not surprising given our strikingly good facilities which accelerate the development of sporting activity. A competition swimming pool, a 4G astro-turf outdoor pitch, tennis courts, a state of the art fitness suite, a vast sports hall, with for example, wonderful indoor cricket nets for all year-round practice. A very popular and rich part of sport is students' participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. In addition to the fun and challenge that they provide and the opportunities they facilitate to see a number of parts of the English countryside, the awards are regarded very favourably by universities and future employers, who value the skills it promotes. In addition to enjoying London's greatest parks for our annual school run for charity, our students travel abroad to compete in competitions. We field a variety of teams who compete with local schools. Weekly fitness sessions provide students with the opportunity to concentrate on power, agility, stamina and healthy living. We run frequent competitions to encourage a healthy spirit of contest and facilitate a forum in which the endeavours of training can be brought to fruition. Matched with these opportunities to compete, we seek to be creative and sensitive about how we involve everyone and create life-long engagement in physical activity. We expect participation in sporting activity of some kind and actively promote enduring commitment. Whatever a child's ability, we seek to make physical activity successful for all.



AND ON TO UNIVERSITY

One of the best things about our students is their frequent return to the family that is school. Featured here is one of our alumni at our summer event who is thoughtfully eloquent, witty, but also sensitively reflective. He has just completed his second year studying Economics at Manchester. It was his tenacity and intellectual engagement with his teachers that made his transition to university study a lovely inevitability. Our Sixth Form is about preparation for university. Rigour, expectation, scholarship and academic excellence are the central themes of our Sixth Form. The performance and success of our Sixth Form students is at the heart of the school's mission. We balance the curriculum to suit students' interests and needs. We have developed a culture in which intellectual endeavour is 'cool' and students rise to the challenge. Teachers set, and our students enthusiastically absorb, twenty hours each week of independent study. There is an understanding that the course text-book itself is probably a short-cut, and that one only begins to appreciate the material by being immersed in scholarly literature. The Sixth Form library presents students with access to specialist resources and online journals.

With few (if any) exceptions, our students decide to continue their education at university and there is personalised guidance on offer. Our students are aspirational, aiming for top-performing universities and setting their sights on a glittering academic career. Each year, students win places to Russell Group universities, approximately a sixth of the year group gain places at Oxford or Cambridge. In addition to the emphasis we place on academic endeavour, the Sixth Form is concerned with building rounded adults. Sixth Form students share our own formal staff dress code. Our stunning premises facilitate the enjoyment of Sixth Form sport. We organise the nationally prestigious *World Challenge* and whilst students are enthusiastic about setting up their own societies, we frequently organise visits from eminent professors, journalists and politicians who enrich students' cultural experience. We also collaborate with other centres of excellence, for example Durham Sixth Form Centre, whose work is highly acclaimed. We utilise practising doctors to guide our potential medical students; we employ the skills of university professors to give our students first-hand insights into life and study at university.



A JULY EVENING

Perfect Tense is a school tradition that began in 2001. The event celebrates the exceptional in young people. It marks everything that is the very finest, be that academic prowess or sometimes triumph in challenging circumstances. In black tie and elegant dresses, students are joined by staff, friends of the school, governors, parents and those who are associated with supporting the school. The students who are celebrated are exceptional and the evening explores their values and character as well as their all too obvious achievement across the full spectrum of school life. Awards are given in the name of, and by, alumni and supporters of the school. Each award given by a person whose own life demonstrates qualities that might be emulated by children in the early evening July sun, there is an opportunity for adults to bask in the reflected glory of young triumph. Whilst *Perfect Tense* marks the apogée of the achievement year, it is accompanied by a diverse achievement calendar. The school is passionate about celebrating achievement and doing so in a variety of ways, from the day-to-day to the rather more significant. Life is sometimes a matter of chance and circumstance, so we are ever vigilant about ensuring that every child has an opportunity to shine very brightly in their own context. Students are taught to understand how they can, and should, earn such recognition. We expect students to care about success, to chase it, to value it when it comes. We expect all students to realise that success is created by endeavour, optimism, energy and personal warmth.

THE FAMILY THAT IS SCHOOL

Twice a year the family that is school has a formal opportunity to gather for, as it were, the 'family snap' for the album. Each December, under the talented directorship of the school's associate head and choirmaster, Nicholas Robson, at our annual choral event. And, on the first Thursday of every July at *Perfect Tense*, our annual celebration of students. The family gathers. Those who once taught in and/or led schools, governors, alumni students, ex parents, not least those we call the faithful. People who have over the years afforded us friendship, encouragement and support. They are a diverse group of very special people. Some are the great and the good; some are of humble provenance but all of the above share a passion

for celebrating excellence balanced with warmth and an understanding of human complexity. The family that is school comprehends diversity and the co-existence of the superlative and the fragile moments of life. Like the best of families there is understanding and compassion as well as a strongly developed moral compass. The family remembers history, celebrates the present, plans for the future. It protects itself against the rigours and stresses of the wider world. Between the bookends of these gatherings lie the deepest of family bonds: protectiveness, pride and a sense that though not every day, even at a distance, the pulse of the school is felt by those who adore it, who were once part of it and who help it thrive.



ALUMNI INTO THE WORLD

Looking back and looking forward. What and who do students become? One of the great joys of a long life in teaching and longevity in a school is to see the passage of time and to see students years and years on. That is the excitement of teaching. Now twenty eight, the doctor pictured here joined Holland Park in 2003 and departed in 2010 to go to Queen's College, Cambridge, to read Medicine. He did so having achieved the very finest of examination results and he went on to be an equal success at Cambridge. Now an eminent doctor, currently on surgical rotation, he has kept in touch with the school down the years and returns each summer to present the award in his name at *Perfect Tense*. It is not at all difficult to remember the delight of his younger self. Deeply committed, industrious and tenacious, his academic prowess was the result of an innate talent honed by unending dedication. What is unchanging in him is his kindness, sensitivity and compassion. All the things about him now were present as a child, and then as a young person, and the privilege of seeing those translate into mature adulthood is humbling and exhilarating. Cambridge, the finest of universities, honed and polished him as we knew it would and it is a delight to witness now a deeply mature, gentle and wholly committed human being devote their life to public service. School's pride knows no bounds. The privilege was all ours. A good school is for life and the relationships forged therein can endure and inspire.





'She was not yet thirty, but was approaching the zenith of her loveliness, all her rich promise abundantly fulfilled.'

Evelyn Waugh describing Julia Flyte in *Brideshead Revisited*.

The modern world thrusts and declares ambition, confidence and strength of opinion. It is a noisy place where the young are frequently exhorted to compete and to fill their lives with activity and opinion. Every now and again there comes along a young person who is few of those things, who is reserved, shy, quiet, slow to hold opinion, reluctant to judge, humble, sensitive, kind, warm and whose piercing intelligence is thoughtfully expressed with regard to others. The alumna pictured opposite was just that person. Wise and already profoundly mature at thirteen and by the time she was reading *Brideshead Revisited* at seventeen, as part of her A level English, she was grown up. Her capacity to comprehend the subtlety of Waugh's novel and understand the layers of human experience was profound. School delighted in her presence and achievement for seven years. Leaving us in 2015 to study philosophy at University College, London, she graduated last year. She returns each year to present the award in her name at *Perfect Tense*. A gifted artist, a number of her drawings and paintings hang in the school she once graced. That she is currently, post graduation, running an art gallery is no surprise. It is a fulfilment of one strand of her manifold talents.

ALUMNI INTO THE WORLD

We live: we learn. We speak: we listen. We search: we find. Whilst we can turn life into such simple aphorisms, it is rarely as neat in reality. I have the enormous privilege of seeing the complexity of young lives turn into the future. Life can be as bleak as Prospero's words in the *Tempest*:

*'... and my trust
Like a good parent did beget of him
A falsehood in its contrary as great
As my trust was, which had indeed no limit
A confidence sans bound'*

Or realistic:

*'Our revels now are ended, these our actors,
/ As I foretold you, were all spirits and / Are
melted into air, into thin air: / And, like the
baseless fabric of this vision, / The cloud-
capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces / The
solemn temples, the great globe itself / Ye
all which it inherit shall dissolve / And, like
this insubstantial pageant faded / Leave not
a rack behind. We such stuff / As dreams
are made on, and our little life / Is rounded
with a sleep.'*

It is a glorious life to witness and contribute to the development of young people. I have beautiful words ringing in my ears from this year's Year 13 dinner. I find myself inundated with thoughtful end of year cards as we put together the 2019/20 Prospectus and I bask in the reflected glory of current and ex students stretching as far back as the 1980s. Shakespeare, as ever, says it all in his depiction of the human condition. And if schools are about anything they are exactly about that - the human condition.





'Still, education was movement; it was departure. Towering above the mean streets from which many of their pupils came, the schools of Leeds were like liners with rows of windows lit up on winter afternoons as if great ships of learning.'

Hymn and Cocktail Sticks
Alan Bennett

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Photographs:

Front and back covers - The Holland Park lectern | Pages 4-5, Thorpe Lodge: a drawing by *Atomik Architecture* | Pages 6-7, Colin Hall, Head | Pages 8-9, Orange Trees in Thorpe Lodge gardens | Pages 10-11, Ms Amanda Duggal, Deputy Head and Ms Faye Mulholland, Deputy Head | Pages 12-13 *from left to right*, Mr Karim Belkacemi, Ms Wen Shi and Mr Ben Arnold | Pages 14-15, *from left to right* Alexandre Pautet, Sophie Belonogova, Gelilla Kassaye, Ioannis Katsos, Freddie Bercow, Greta Zordan, Rafael Varona Blakstad, Ivor Elias | Pages 16-17, statues in Thorpe Lodge Garden | Pages 18-19, picnic hamper, Thorpe Lodge gardens | Pages 20-21, Mr Joe Holloway with Ms Charlotte Neary in *The Tempest* | Pages 22-23, Oliver Pereira-Adams, *Dungeness*, biro on paper | Pages 24-25, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Ariana Alexander | Pages 28-29, David Chappell, Academy Head | Pages 30-31, GCSE History group | Pages 32-33, the swimming pool | Pages 34-35, Mr Otis Valentine | Pages 36-37, Nadia Mahmoud with the Head's Bowl at Perfect Tense | Pages 38-39, Mr Nicholas Robson, Associate Head, conducting Vivaldi's *Gloria* | Pages 40-41, Dr Valmir Selimi | Pages 42-43, Ms Rosie Lloyd-Reed | Pages 44-45, Mr Simon Dobson and Mr Robert Orr in *The Tempest* | Pages 46-47, the school's atrium | Pages 50-51, *from top to bottom*, Ms Brigid Jennings, Betsy Griffiths, Laura Wharton, Syed Mehdi, Mr Norman Ferguson, Joshua Greenslade, Omar Ait El Caid, Freddie Bercow.

AWARDS





