



LEIGHTON PARK
FOUNDED 1890

1st July 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

At this time I would usually write in an end of term letter about the delights of the Summer Term and sometimes worry a little that you might think the letter formulaic or a version of an every year letter. No such luck in 2020; a Summer Term like no other! But there have been many delights of this strange term.

Our community has reacted to the national crisis in a flexible and positive way. I have been genuinely heartened by the willingness and tenacity of staff, students and parents to adapt and do so in a spirit of acceptance and positivity. Your support to us and positive feedback has meant everything to us. Whilst we are never self-important, our School has been singled out nationally for the excellence in our provision and reaction. That is remarkable and can only be done because of our cohesion as a community, embedded with values and strength of character. Our Quaker inspired values of Simplicity, Truth, Respect, Integrity, Peace, Equality and Sustainability have never been far from my mind this term, but I have added 'Acceptance' to my own reflections on those values this term for that attribute has been needed more than ever. Acceptance of where we are and what we can and cannot do with little ability to control this situation. Staff, families and students have all had to deal with strange times. When this has passed, as it will, I want us to remember how this Summer Term was memorable for good things; families; time for reflection; new ways of working; an appreciation of 'normality', gardens; a slower pace of life; (in my case, alas) home baking.

The School has also begun to celebrate the remarkable achievement this term of Mark Simmons, currently Head of Year 9, who, at the beginning of the Summer Term, became the longest ever serving member of teaching staff in the School's history, having completed 42 years of service. We are hugely proud of Mark and his service the School.

Reading too has had to be strong as a community, standing up to and responding to the appalling attacks in Forbury Gardens. We have sent messages to The Holt School and the families concerned expressing our condolences and our solidarity as a community for good, not evil.

The "Safer Vision" partnership has now finished manufacturing and supplying face shields to the local and wider community, with nearly 39,000 distributed by the 22 partners in production. Initially supplying hospitals, GPs, local councils, care homes, hospices and those working in the medical front line, recently the demand has been from primary and infant schools, nurseries and public-facing businesses that are re-opening. The project generated a great deal of media interest, from BBC

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Radio Berkshire, BBC local news, the Daily Mirror and Ross Kemp and Britain's Volunteer Army on BBC One. Local MP Matt Rodda praised the initiative via his Instagram.

There have been so many positive benefits from the project, apart from the obvious aim to keep people safe: positive connections in the community have been forged, from the Rotary Club and "Scrub Hubs", to local councils, Healthcare Trusts, care homes and groups working with the homeless, elderly, disabled and disadvantaged. Over 55 members of teaching and support staff, and their families have been involved in a great team effort. So many of you also kindly offered to help too, for which we are so grateful. A great many lovely messages have been received which in time we can share, but here is just one, from Choice Care Homes "We all make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give. The school should be very proud of that."

Congratulations to everyone who participated in this wonderful project and special thanks to Mark Smith, Head of DT, who worked tirelessly with Cathy Harman, Receptionist, and Adrian Stewart, Head of Lower School, to keep it going.

As we close in on another fantastic year of sport at Leighton Park, it's a good time to reflect on some of the more memorable moments across the three terms.

Since the School has been in lockdown the Sport, PE and Wellness department have delivered live online workouts, skills sessions, seminars and created YouTube videos. They even managed to take part in a fitness fixture against Forest School as well as two 3km virtual running fixtures against the same school and Shiplake College.

Looking back across the year there have been a number of highlights. In October there was the successful Football and Hockey tour to Arnhem, Holland. Our Fryers won two separate six-a-side tournaments during that term and the U14s went unbeaten in the GoPerform Rugby League to win the trophy. The Spring Term brought some amazing performances from our U15 Netball team, playing against girls a year older in the local league, and finished fifth at the ISA National Netball Tournament held in Nottingham. Our senior squad performed well in the Super 8 League finishing third this year and had a fantastic netball tour to Rugby School just before lockdown. Our U14 Hockey squad won the ISA shield in the regional tournament in the Spring Term, and our girls' Hockey team came third in the U18 Super 8 League not quite making it three years in a row as champions.

We have also introduced new sports such as climbing and judo to our wide range of extra-curricular sessions and we continue to support our elite athletes via the Advanced Performer Programme.

The Music department has equally enjoyed an exciting, busy and creative year. It has been a real joy to see so many students from all year groups involved, from first time performers to our more experienced musicians. Soloists', Jazz Infusion, Ensembles, Christmas and Scholars' Concerts have all been an opportunity to witness the talents of our musicians.

In February, we were hosted the ISA A Cappella competition welcoming nine other schools from around the UK. We were delighted that two of our groups entered and that 'Les Tres Belle Clefs' were the winners of the Barbershop category. Judged by the BBC2's 'The Naked Choir' winners, 'Sons of Pitches'.

Megan White (Upper Sixth) was runner up in the ISA Musical Theatre (solo) competition, Emily Dunbar (Lower) has been working with OL Gary Shacklady to compose all of the music for Bearwood Primary School play and Freida Cartwright (Year 7) was shortlisted into the top 40 of a national songwriting competition, from hundreds of entries.

A real highlight of the year was the production of Chicago in February. The wonderful melodies so masterfully performed by the students on stage were superbly supported by the students involved in the band to help create an outstanding show.

In April, we were delighted to become a Steinberg Certified Training Centre. Steinberg is a global software company and working alongside our flagship education partnership with Yamaha, we are really excited by the opportunities for the students this industry partnership will create. Some of our students have already benefitted from some online training from Steinberg specialists during the Summer Term and there will be more opportunities for all in the future.

Although our live Summer Term events were cancelled, it proved to be an opportunity for so many students to develop new musical ideas. The tremendous contributions of student compositions for 'LP Unlocked' and the wonderful range of recordings submitted for our online 'Music for a Summer's Evening' were inspirational and a real credit to the creativity and motivation of our students and a fitting celebration of music throughout this year.

Our Upper Sixth musicians have been auditioning for Universities and Conservatoires and we are very proud that our students have a range of exciting offers, including four Conservatoire offers, for music degree courses starting in September. The transition programme for this group included online meets with guest composer Arran Coe and a number of Old Leightonians; Mike MacLennan (composer), Ed Williams (music management) and Hugh Macdonald (musician), discussing his grandparents extremely close links to Nelson Mandela, protest songs and apartheid.

With Centre Assessment Grades and Rankings now submitted to awarding bodies we look forward to students receiving their results:

IB results on 6th July 2020

GCE (A Level), BTEC, CTEC results on 13th August 2020

GCSE results on 20th August 2020

Details on the collection of results as well as the Appeals Process have already been sent out to students, parents and guardians. You will find a copy of this letter elsewhere in this LP@Home communication. Information specific to IB students has been sent separately.

A number of staff leave Leighton Park at the end of this term.

Adam Ball	Head of Chemistry
Ann Munday	Duke of Edinburgh Co-ordinator
Ann Pearce	School Nurse
Chris Lockwood	Biology Technician
Christopher Tyer	History and Politics Teacher
Grace Gregory	Temporary Resident Matron
Heather Sweetman	Resident Graduate in Fryer
Heidi Kenny	Resident Graduate PE and Games
Helen Porter-Hughes	Learning Support Teacher
Joanne Green	Learning Support Teacher
Karen Gracie-Langrick	Deputy Head, Academic Studies
Kate Donegan	Biology Teacher
Lynne Parry	Learning Support Teacher
Mair Mayers	Maths Teacher
Nicky Charter	Resident Graduate PE and Games
Paulo Arruda	Beliefs and Values Teacher
Premnath Samyrao	Maths Teacher
Robin Longworth	Reckitt Housemaster and Geography Teacher
Sally Pearce	Temporary Resident Matron
Shazia Taj	Head of Beliefs and Values
Sheila Metcalfe	Maths Teacher
Stephanie McGill	Temporary Music Teacher
Tim Green	Head of Boys' Games and Food Technology Teacher

I thank them for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the School and we hope they have successful and fulfilling times beyond Leighton Park. Of particular note is Karen Gracie-Langrick who leaves us after 23 years, during which time she has made an enormous contribution to the School.

Karen joined the School as a History Teacher in 1997 and has been the Head of History, Assistant Head of the Sixth Form, IBDP Co-ordinator, Assistant Head, Curriculum and, since 2014, our Deputy Head, Academic Studies.

Over her time at Leighton Park she has worked with four Heads and will leave the very many friends she has made whilst working on the Park. Former Head, John Dunston, writes "Karen was one of my first appointments to LP, and a highly successful one. She brought passion and depth of knowledge to her History and Ancient History teaching, and a similar commitment to every post she took up at the School. Karen is an exceptional member of the profession. I was delighted to learn of her well-deserved promotion to headship, after her outstanding contribution to Leighton Park". Former Head, Nigel Williams, also writes "I worked very closely with a Karen for over 20 years; her dedication to each and every one of her students, her energy, drive and vision to improve and her commitment to the School never ceased to amaze me. She is a valuable diamond who will sparkle and inspire everywhere she goes".

Karen leaves us to take up the post of Headteacher of Colchester High School in Essex. I know that she will want to keep in touch with many colleagues and she is assured of a warm welcome if she finds time in her new post to come back to visit us.

One of the disappointments of our term has been our inability to gather our student leavers and families who are departing Leighton Park. I hope that opportunity will present itself for that at some near future point but, in the meantime, I wish you farewell and hope that you carry the spirit of Leighton Park with you and know that you are always welcome here as a visitor.

As the plans for the opening of the School in September will continue to evolve during the holidays, we will be sending eBulletins out starting from Wednesday 19th August via email. The eBulletin is usually a term time only communication but in these unusual circumstances we are keen to ensure this communication channel is open for the three weeks prior to the start of term.

I wish every member of the community a good summer, one for recreation and reflection. Enjoy the fruits of labour past in a glorious summer rest.

With my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matthew L S Judd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Matthew L S Judd
Head

