

THOMAS JONES

an Ofsted outstanding and DfE designated teaching school

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Monday 16th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Not Losing Sight of that Which Matters

'Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast'

Lewis Carroll

In real terms, a hundred and one elements define quality. Be it a vibrant display of clay sculptures or a deft rendition of a song, there are many strands. Developing pupils' self-esteem is absolute. Teaching them how to respond to any given situation is important too. The notion of cultural capital may also come into play. In the current climate, much is being made of the curriculum. This is valid. However, it is crucial we do not lose sight of the fact that if a child cannot read, he will be in no position to study, for example, history. If handwriting is illegible it is unlikely the child will wish to write (there is a clear correlation between pupils who produce precise cursive script and their confidence and prowess as writers). These disciplines are pre-requisites to more or less everything.

Sustaining Quality Revisited

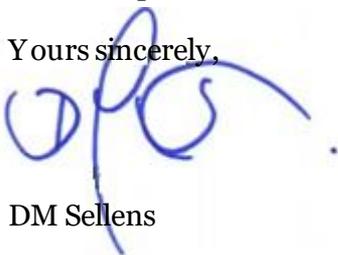
While important, the curriculum is just one of a number of key aspects that form the nucleus of continual improvement at Thomas Jones. Last half term, whilst visiting, Councillor David Lindsay commented effusively about our strong record of accomplishment for achieving remarkable outcomes. Be it attendance figures (98% over the last decade), academic results (top 3% nationally) or the fact that pupils' behaviour is frequently exacting, we could never be accused of complacency.

The last twelve months have been rewarding. We have, once again, appeared in a number of publications' lists of 'top schools'. Such success is not taken for granted. What the above does not capture is the sheer volume of ambition that is invested. The challenge year-on-year does not lessen. Sustaining quality is demanding. Labour intensive, it pertains to safeguarding what has been achieved and further enhancing what is on offer. Looking beyond the day-to-day challenges that arise is rarely straightforward. Over time, the Leadership Team have become skilled at balancing the immediate with more expansive objectives. The latter are the strands that ultimately make the difference. In its recent past, and in the present, the school is a genuine seat of learning and an institution that is, at its best, impressive. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently assiduous. The skilled should become more accomplished. If pupils do not achieve, we have failed them.

More Enrichment

It would be all too easy to simply rehash plays that have been well received in the past. In February, Reception's 'A Day in the Life' tableaux disarmed the audience with its stark and gimmick-free quality. In the narrative structure, the final lasting image was of a cohort of children immersed in the wonder of being five years of age and seizing the moment to make a statement of intent. Led with panache by violin tutor Andy Tsao and cellist Brikelda Syles, it is anticipated that our string musicians will perform together in the hall next term.

Yours sincerely,



DM Sellens