Tuesday 11 June 2019

Award ceremony

Good evening everyone, and welcome to Drummond. It seems incredible that another year has passed so quickly and we are all here again to celebrate our successes. Schools are always busy and this time of year is no exception. There are loose ends from the closing of one school year to try and tie up as well as looking forward to and planning for the opening of another in August.

It can be all too easy to get lost in this busyness of doing doing doing and Dr Seuss, that high powered educational thinker, was absolutely right when he said, and I paraphrase, ‘when you stop and look around, this [school] is pretty amazing’. We need to stop, to pause as often as we can, to breathe and look around, and smile. To recognise all the amazing things that our school has achieved this year, from the highest of high profile competitions, to the everyday lower key, but no less important, accomplishments of our young people.

I have always loved teaching and working with young people. What drives me, and I know my colleagues at Drummond share this, is to make a difference for them, to ensure that everything we do is to make sure that they have the best possible experience, to enjoy school, to get the most out of it, and to leave school with their heads held high, looking forward to the next stage of their lives.

Being a Headteacher isn’t one big job, it’s a million small ones, and sometimes some of these small jobs can be challenging. At these times, walking this school is good for my soul, to get out from behind the desk, and take even 5 minutes to walk around looking at all that is good, having conversations, however brief, with students and colleagues. Teaching is an intensely human profession built on positive relationships. I can’t tell you how important, and nourishing, all these little encounters with the adults and young people in this building- I won’t say brief encounters!- are to reconnect with why I chose to come into this profession and be a Headteacher.

Taking the time to sit down, reflect and write this speech has been walking the school in my mind, thinking over the past year before we move ahead, and welcome a team of Edinburgh Deputes and Education Officers tomorrow for our two day mini inspection…but we’ll think about that later!

One of the most rewarding and important million little jobs, is to recognise your children’s achievements. It’s not possible to include or summarise everything in this speech but I’ll try to give you the best flavour possible of our vibrant school community and all the opportunities we offer. Speaking of taking opportunities, I must mention how much of a pleasure it has been working with our Heads of School, Maha and Angel who have been exemplary role models and they will be saying a few words later on.

So, a few things to highlight, but by no means all, from Aaron’s winning poetry entry in the national Sky Arts competition to last weekend’s inaugural Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expedition, to the DEC team of Faye, Viktor, Ryan and Alizah winning the Bentley Hyperloop competition and first prize of a trip of a lifetime to Singapore; to the S2 art collaboration with Edinburgh College and business culminating in an exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery; for Nisha following her musical dream and possibly being the first female Sikh DJ in Scotland along the way; to retaining the gold medal for volleyball at the Portobello beach games; to whole school events raising over £2,000 for various local charities across the year; to the fantastic first Drummond’s Got Talent show where the most confident to the shyest pupil got the opportunity to show us their singing, dancing, drumming and magical talent; to senior pupils running art, dance and football clubs for their peers; to participating in the Lothian Disability Sport football competition; various and numerous projects with the National Galleries, Botanic Gardens and the Pilmeny Intergenerational group; Scottish Maths Challenge winners; teams of pupils running Christmas and Easter cafes…… I could take up another hour and I’m sorry to everyone I haven’t mentioned, so please, follow us all on twitter for live news as it happens.

As well as saying a huge well done to all pupils for making the most of all that Drummond can offer I would like to publicly pay tribute to all my teaching and non teaching colleagues in Drummond. Many of you will know that the staffing picture locally and nationally has been very challenging at times so sincere thanks to all colleagues who have gone over and above to ensure the smooth running of faculties and classes so that pupils have had the most positive experience possible.

Drummond staff are always willing to get involved, to seek out opportunities and with a little bit of pulling, a little bit of pushing, a huge amount of encouragement and bucketloads of enthusiasm they make all of this possible. We are also very fortunate to work with a large number of partners in education and business who share our vision of nurturing big ambitions and we look forward to continuing our work with you.

Our staff team has changed over the year and we say thankyou and farewell to the following staff who have left Drummond: Emma Easton, Teacher of English for 19 years but who remains a valued partner at Spartans; to Brian Christopher, Denise Syme and Elaine Brackenridge in our school support team who have either retired or moved onto new opportunities; to Peter Luke, Business Manager, David Phillips, Teacher of Computing, Gregor Hood, Teacher of Geography who have all moved to other schools.

Thank you also to colleagues who have been part of our team on a more temporary basis, keeping the good ship Drummond afloat: Karly Zagorac in History, Sue Ferguson in Computing Science, Jean Archer and Rachel Ludbrook in English.

Over the course of the year we welcomed Lyndsy Adam as Business Manager; Will Tuft, Teacher of Geography; Jo Stark, Teacher of FCT; and Kevin Barrie, Teacher of Flexible Curriculum which is in addition to his three day post of Teacher of PE. We also welcomed more recently Shona Agnew, our Youth Worker seconded from The Citadel, and Rachel Ludbrook who was appointed last week to the post of Teacher of ESOL, Media and English.

Helen Hubbard in FCT and Clare Martin, CL of Social Subjects, returned from maternity leave at Christmas and Diane Morton in English will do so next week. Natasha Scott, Teacher of CDT, joins us in August.

The Parent Council has gone from strength to strength under David Sterratt’s Chairmanship but he now passes this role to Deirdre Henderson. David has seen quite a few changes and navigated some tricky times so he’s looking forward to life after school. Thankyou David, for your staunch support of our school and you leave Parent Council energised for the year- them, not you!

So, before I hand back over to Mrs McLean for the prizegiving. Thank you for lending us your children, and final words of wisdom on this evening when we celebrate their successes, again from Dr Seuss, because sometimes the simplest words say it best, ‘you have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.’