



The Bulletin: No 14 July 2010

Sitting in my office, at 6.30 am, a deafening silence on the site and the Summer Holiday Clubs about to start in the next couple of hours... and after weeks of glorious weather it's raining! Perfect timing and the British weather at its best!

Another successful academic year over, another group of Year 6 pupils having left in different states of excitement/anticipation about their move to various senior schools in September. Overall results were very good indeed and 18 Scholarships and 1 Exhibition is testament to the high standards that have been reached by this present cohort – very well done to all of them and I wish every one of them every success and happiness in the future.

Speech Day on Friday 9th July was a lovely and most successful occasion – helped by glorious weather – and my thanks go to so many of you who attended, the Chairman Mr. Keith Uff for guiding us succinctly through the proceedings, and Mr. Richard Atkins, my guest, who many of you agreed gave an entertaining and relevant talk. I am very much indebted to him for finding time in his busy schedule to come to Hallfield and present the prizes.

The marquee, something of an innovation, proved to be a great success and I now give my Speech Day Report below.

Speech Day Report

Mr. Chairman, Mr Atkins, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls

I had a dream!

It had the potential to be a nightmare.

It was Monday, January 18th, a crisp winter morning....all was well with the world....and I had the phone call every Headmaster, since the launch of the new inspection routine, dreaded.

It's your turn!

Next week!

Not me!

Not Hallfield!

Not now!

Not so soon!

Just a few more months and we'll be ready.....

Please?.....

Someone, as my wife pointed out when I told her the bad news, has to be first! But why me I wondered?

I broke the news to the newly elected Chairman of Governors, Mr Uff (just 4 days into mission!) and my SMT – to silence....and then made plans to tell all the staff the next morning.

That night I had **the** dream.

I dreamt it was the first morning of the inspection and by some oversight, probably mine, the lead inspector was being shown round the School by a black Labrador dog that looked remarkably like our black Labrador....Tigger.

‘Why are **you** here?’ said the inspector.

‘I’ve come to fill my magic box with treasure’ replied the black Labrador.
‘You won’t find any magic and treasure here’, said the inspector ‘at least I hope not. No room for things like that in schools. Schools should be like Travelodges, neat and smart and all the same’.

‘You don’t know what I mean,’ said the black Labrador, ‘I live with teachers. Come with me!’

On the playing field the black Labrador explained ‘when dogs run round and round in circles people call it being silly, when planets do it they call it orbiting, but when children do it they call it sport. Let’s have a go!’

And so their sporting adventure began; they launched attacks, went sailing over boundaries, netted many goals, stood resolutely on squares, circumnavigated muddy terrain, put together solid defences and shot balls into baskets, they sold dummies, paid penalties and saved shots...and danced until they dropped. They spent a day in fierce competition on the field, but stayed friends on the way home.

When they had seen all that there was to be seen, the inspector asked the black Labrador what it was going to put in the box. The Labrador put in the smell of new mown grass, the joy of being in the open air – even in the rain – and the exuberance of children running free and playing together. ‘Your turn’, said the black Labrador.

So the inspector put in all the evenings and weekends given up by the teachers to give the children new opportunities, the encouragement of the parents who come to cheer their children on, and the tears of the child who didn’t make it onto a team.

‘You’ve put sad things into the box,’ said the black Labrador.
‘You can’t have rainbows without the rain’, replied the inspector. ‘Let’s go and see what happens inside’.

In and out of the weeks, through the months and the terms they travelled, mulling over maths problems and the Polyhedron challenge, frolicking with French vocabulary, engaging with the English language, setting seeds of discovery in science, inhabiting historical houses for the day, juggling over capital cities and major rivers in Geography, and deliberating over DT problems.

They planted seeds in their garden, hatched chickens and butterflies in nets, surfed the other sort of Net.... marvelling at this chance the children have to travel on their own path through a world of information.

They entered competitions for designing towers with marshmallows and spaghetti; competitions for music and art and speech and drama; they played chess to such a high National standard that some of their friends were picked for England; they studied coastal geography and river formations at Cranedale in the beautiful Yorkshire countryside....as well as learning to care for one another, work as a team and make their own beds – away from home on their own for the first time; they climbed rocks and made rafts and paddled canoes and walked in gorges full of icy

water in Barmouth; they travelled back in time to see what it was like to be a Tudor child - and a child in the newly emerging Industrial Revolution in Birmingham....living in the back to back houses.

They flew through entrance examinations and landed successfully on the other side....gaining many places at prestigious secondary schools, with a clutch of scholarships – greater than at any time since the school was founded in 1879....that made the black Labrador wag its tail and brought a smile to the inspector's face.

They had done so much it was difficult to know what to choose to put into the box. The black Labrador put in the sudden dawning of a child's understanding, the confidence gained through independent learning, the smile that greets success and the companionship of being away from home together. The inspector put in all the hours the teachers spent in preparation and marking and writing reports, the excellence of the teaching, and the satisfaction of seeing a child achieve its very best potential both in and out of the classroom.

For good measure the black Labrador thought they should include a few mistakes in the box like the puzzled little boy who was sitting with a member of staff in his classroom at break, during an inspection....writing,

Today, today, today

Grief, grief, grief

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow

Relief, relief, relief.

The inspector rushed up to the teacher, bowled over by the profound thoughts, showering praises on him and the pupil.

The boy's friend leaned over and said 'Who was he? What did he want?'

'Dunno,' replied the boy, 'but he seemed very interested in my spelling corrections!'

The inspector was a bit miffed about this and thought he'd end on a cultural note. In a history test one girl had written, 'The Greeks were a highly cultured people, without them we wouldn't have history, or Greek myths. A myth is a female moth'.

And then the black Labrador said rather earnestly, 'Schools aren't just about lessons and learning. Schools have hearts too, so maybe we should look for the heart.' The inspector agreed, so they laughed with the children as they came into school in the morning, they heard secrets shared, and kept, and broken; they saw friendships grow and flourish...and sometimes crumble and die. They saw children in circles sharing their feelings, and learning to listen to others. They saw the support they gave each other, especially the younger children, when things got tough and they needed a friend.

The inspector chose to put in the box the relaxed yet respectful relationship between pupils and staff and the common goals they shared of a joy of learning.....and the willingness to add to class learning in a most constructive manner when invited to offer their ideas and views.

'Isn't this school like a big family? I told you there was treasure here', said the black Labrador.

'I'm beginning to think so,' replied the inspector laughing 'I heard a child in assembly today say 'Let us pray for our parents.... Especially our Mother and Father!'

Cheered by their laughter they carried on searching for the heart of the school. They visited St George's Church and bottled up all the lumps in the parents' throats at the school carol service; they collected the enjoyment at all of the concerts, and the pride everyone felt at the children's music making.

They listened and laughed with the children and at their combined wisdom and humour in the form assemblies. In school assemblies they shared the concern of the children for those made homeless and destitute by earthquakes; for families torn apart by caring for very sick children

and for disabled people who rely on dogs to help in their everyday life. The black Labrador was especially anxious that this was put into the box, along with all the money the children raise, and the level of understanding, tolerance and harmony that exists throughout the school.

The black Labrador put into the box all the heartbeats missed in front of an audience of Mums, Dads and Families during the various school plays and performances and the laughter and warmth of applause not measured in the cold statistics of league tables. The inspector put in the excitement of children as they lose themselves dramatically for an hour or so into another world on the stage...and all the headaches the staff have had to endure in order to help them do it! In the Art and DT rooms they marvelled at the children's creativity and the way feelings had taken shape, how colourful the children's vision was and how keen their powers of observation were.

One child was drawing a portrait of her friend,
'You've got a small mouth,' she said, adding 'but it smiles a lot!'

'There's one more place to visit', said the black Labrador, 'the Head's study, we'll find the plans for the future there. However good a school is, it can't stand still, it must change and develop'. So they looked into the future and saw a beautiful new all weather play area for the Pre-Prep and an adventure playground for the Upper School. They saw the plans for the curriculum review in the Upper School that would mean greater pastoral care and more teaching in smaller groups...and they saw how hard the school was working in creating and sustaining links with all the senior schools in the area. They put in the box a measure of gratitude to members of the Parents' Association who all work so hard to make the school a good place to be with friends. At last the magic box was full. 'And now', said the inspector, 'I must go'.

The black Labrador gave him the magic box.
'Keep it safe, you'll need it to write your report. It holds the secret of this school....Remember! It's not just about lessons; it's all the other things that count too.'
And with that the inspector left – and I woke up.

Just a dream.

But dreams do come true, well this one did...as I realised when I read the final report from the inspectors.....they had in those brief few days understood and described all the things that the black Labrador and the inspector had put into the magic box in my dream, they had summed up the essence of Hallfield, not just in terms of its superb academic success and excellent pastoral care but in terms of what makes its heart beat and what makes it the special place that it is. It may have been my imagination or a trick of the light – but I could swear that Tigger, our little black Labrador, winked at me as I sat reading the draft inspection report for the first time just before Easter!

The magic box is very full but I think I can squeeze in a little more.

There's just enough room to put in some memories.
I'm going to put in pictures of all the Year 6 leavers and the other children leaving school today. I'm going to put in memories of Mrs Still and Miss Wilson, their loyalty to the school and the help they have given everyone and the fun they have shared with everyone here. And I am going to include a wish that they will be very happy at Hydesville (FS) and in Switzerland (MW)....and that they will know how much everyone will miss them.

And finally I'm going to squeeze in my thanks to: (i) the Governors for your wonderful support, (ii) all the parents for entrusting your children's education to me, and finally (iii) everybody who works here....over 120 of you for all your support and loyalty....hard work and super human effort in making Hallfield one of the best preparatory schools in the country. All this goes in the magic box...and I know the black Labrador is in full agreement with me!
Thank you!

Staff Changes

Inevitably there are staff changes at the end of the school year. We are always sad to see staff leave Hallfield and wish them every happiness in the future. We look forward to welcoming new staff into the school community.

1. Pre-Prep Department

Hallfield*first*

Miss Teala Horton and Mrs. Rahana Begum have joined as Trainee Nursery Nurses. Mrs. Rupinder Bansal, Mrs. Denise Brooks and Miss Erin Bonner have been appointed to cover maternity leave for Mrs Heil Pope, Miss Alden and Miss Harris.

Transition

We say goodbye to Miss Jade Talbot, Miss Rebecca Ably and Mrs. Trudi Hullah, who have been with us on a temporary basis as Transition Assistants and wish them well for the future.

Deputy Head

We look forward to welcoming in January 2011 as Deputy Head of Pre-Prep & Nursery and Year 2 Co-ordinator Miss Rebecca Deacon who is currently Reception Co-ordinator in the Preparatory Department at Edgbaston High School.

Year 2

After 20 years at Hallfield Mrs. Francesca Still leaves to take up a new post at Hydesville Tower School in Walsall which is much closer to her home. She has made a great contribution to school life during her time at Hallfield and we wish her every success at her new school.

Mrs. Gemma Villiers Cundy who currently teaches in the Upper School will take over from Mrs. Still for one term until Miss Deacon can take up her post Mrs. Villiers Cundy will remain as Year 3 Co-ordinator throughout

Mrs. Vickki Simkin will take on the role of Year 2 Group Co-ordinator for one term.

It is hoped that Mrs. Collins will return in September after a long-term sick leave, however, if this is not possible Mrs. Beal will be appointed for the foreseeable future. Mrs. Beal has previously taught at St. George's School and Norfolk House School thus having considerable independent school experience.

Year 1

Mrs. Josephine Davies has been appointed as a part-time Year 1 Teaching Assistant from September 2010.

2. Upper School

We say goodbye to Miss Mari Wilson, 4B form teacher, who has accepted a post at the International School in Basel. We thank her for her enthusiasm and commitment to Hallfield and wish her every success and happiness in the future.

Miss Laura Burchfield has been covering Mrs. Rafiq's maternity leave as 3T form teacher. Mrs. Rafiq will resume her role in September and we are delighted that Miss Burchfield will stay with us on a permanent basis as a Key Stage 2 teacher in Upper School.

3. Support Staff

Morning Receptionist

Miss Alison Gilmartin, Bursar's PA, will work from the Front Office in the mornings for the foreseeable future.

Pre-Prep Morning Receptionist

Mrs. Elaine Sabell, currently the Afternoon Receptionist, will extend her hours to work in the mornings too.

After School Care

University students who have been working in After Care leave us at this time of the year after their exams. Miss Gayle Shein will be joining Pre-Prep and Mr. Jonathan Mould Upper School

Contacting Parents

The School will soon have the facility to contact you via e-mail or text message to enable us to advise you of any changes to the school day i.e. school trips returning late or matches cancelled. This is a great tool for communicating with parents; however, it can only work if all contact details are kept up to date. A new form will be created on the website, ready for the Autumn Term for all parents to notify us of any changes to their e-mail address or mobile phone numbers.

School Uniform

Uniform lists were enclosed in the envelopes given to all pupils on the last day of term. Your son/daughter may return to school in Summer uniform which may be worn, weather permitting, until the half term holiday in October. Please remember to provide football and hockey kit for the first day of the Autumn Term.

My I draw your attention to some new items of uniform:

Upper School (Years 3 to 6) – Boys & Girls**For all terms for PE & Athletics**

We are introducing a new hooded red top to replace the current green tracksuit top. The green track suit bottoms will remain the same. In addition we have a new windproof red jacket and a long sleeved white thermal top (both with the school crest) which we think will be very useful in colder weather.

For the Autumn & Spring Term

We have a new style reversible white/red & green rugby shirt and a long sleeved thermal top.

For the Summer Term

The white sun hat/cricket hat will be replaced with a bottle green baseball cap.

Pre-Prep (including Transition)

The white sun hat/cricket hat will be replaced with a bottle green legionnaire cap.

The Second-Hand Uniform Shop will be open on Friday 3rd September from 1.30 to 3.30 pm.

Hallfield Chess

Our Under 11 team who last year, as Under 9's, finished runners-up in the National Primary Schools Championships finished third last week at Pontins, Bean Sands. This team, consisting of Aloysius Lip, Matthew Fergusson, Hari Nijjar (Captain), Ashwin Kalyana, Aaron Vitarana and Vishal Aurora have and will continue to enjoy great success. The future looks bright since our Under 9 team also qualified for their finals of the National Primary Schools Championships –however they found the competition hard and finished eighth.

Earlier in the year our team became joint IAPS National Champions (with Nottingham High School) a magnificent performance given that many of the competitors include Year 8 children.

This side has been quite exceptional and the following have been recognised by selection for England teams:

Under 11 team	Matthew Fergusson
Under 10 team	Aloysius Lip and Ashwin Kalyana

A final thanks to Mr. Malcolm Hunt and the parents for all their commitment, time and driving to various parts of the country!

Accent Catering

Since January 2010, Accent have continued to review and implement changes into the Catering Department at Hallfield School endeavouring to meet the needs of all of the very diverse “users” of the service on site.

The end of the Summer Term has seen them gathering feedback directly from the children enabling them to target any problem areas and provide a healthy menu plan which will suit all ages.

Their focus as always, is to provide a quality fresh food provision, which meets the nutritional needs of the children whilst remaining interesting and inviting.

They are very proud to have maintained their status of “5 Star” rating for our Food Hygiene and Safety practices from the local Environmental Health and continue to work in partnership with the school to improve the facilities where ever they can across site.

During the Autumn Term Accent will be introducing the “Hallfield Recipe of the Month” a dish recommended by the Catering Manager, Mr. Neil Harris, for the children to sample at school or make at home as they will feature it on the menu. (Recipe will be available on the web site.)

The main changes planned for the Autumn Term will be to the service in Pre-Prep and Accent are looking to stop pre-ordering the lunch for the children eating in this area. This is the only area within the school which operates a pre-order system and this is having a negative impact on the lunch experience with many of them not knowing what it is they are eating. Food is about learning to recognise different dishes and textures and the children miss out on this as they do not actively make a choice from the dishes presented before them.

With effect from September 2010 Accent will not be sending out weekly menus to you as parents or guardians but asking each child to make their choice at the counter. Both catering and teaching staff will be on hand to assist the children, please be assured that any child with an allergy or intolerance will not be put at risk. To make this transition easier Accent would ask you to discuss the menus with your children to help guide them in their choice especially whilst the system is new to them. The Autumn menus can be found on the Hallfield School web site.

Should you have any comments or feedback on our service Accent are always pleased to hear from you.

School Nurse

On Tuesday 31st August and Wednesday 1st September Mrs. Amandeep Bhandal will be available in school from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm to talk to parents about any medical concerns they may have about their son/daughter.

Music News

Congratulations to Jonathan Green and Reece Velangi who have both been accepted to join the Birmingham Schools’ Training Brass Band following city-wide auditions. Also to Hendrik Vogt who will be joining the Birmingham Schools’ Training Wind Orchestra in September.

The Nursery has now several younger brothers or sisters of original nursery children and continues to take on “clients” via “word of mouth”. The Turtle Bus (a six seater buggy) has proved a great success with children. They are now able to visit the Nature Centre, Central Library, the University Vale lake, Cannon Hill Park, the Sea Life Centre, Science Museum and other venues further afield. The Buggy is now well known in the area.

Parents and staff of the Nursery have sponsored Mrs. Wilkinson and her daughters who completed the 26 mile BRMB walkathon in aid of “Help the Heroes” for the QE Hospital. Miss McGeown also completed in the “Race for Life”, again sponsored by nursery parents and staff. The children took part as pirates in the Barnado’s Toddle in July and other fund raising charity events also take place each year. Staff are working hard to provide a discovery garden for the babies and toddlers and did a lot of work on their very wet training day creating some very interesting areas for the children. This is ongoing and, as ideas arise, new areas will be added into the garden.

Transition

Transition has been really busy this term. The children went to Twycross Zoo to see all the animals. They loved looking at the baby elephant and watching the noisy monkeys playing. The weather stayed dry and the children were a credit to the school as they were so well behaved. The Animal Man brought lots of exciting animals for the children to look at – a bearded dragon, tarantula and a snake to name a few. The children were very brave and enjoyed their experience.

Transition Sports Day was a great success. The sun shone, the children had fun taking part in their races and the parents cheered and took lots of photos. Everyone enjoyed the picnic afterwards.

The children have been spending some time with their new teachers and all the staff in Transition wish them well when they move into Foundation.

Toys in Pre-Prep

There have been a number of incidents when children have become distressed when a toy has been lost or broken. From September 2010 the Pre-Prep Department would like to discourage children from bringing any toys to school. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Car Park

It is not possible for Hallfield to continually monitor, or enforce safe driving within our car parks, but Mr. Rod Davies, the Estates Manager, does spend quite a few mornings and afternoons in the main car park monitoring the traffic situation. I do ask you to be patient at busy periods.

Parents’ Association

The two events this term have left the committee in a state of exhaustion! They made a brave move to have a change from the usual Summer Fayre this year and also a change of date (it previously coincided with Glastonbury and it always rained!). They put on a Children’s Fun Day with giant inflatables and go-karts; the sun shone, the children enjoyed themselves and the samosas sold like proverbial hot cakes.

A few weeks later, with the marquee in place on the playing fields, parents and staff were singing along to Abba songs at the Summer Party. It was a great evening with lots of hilarity over the costumes some the Abba lookalikes were wearing, delicious food, good company and a good cause – Hallfield is supporting Acorns Children’s Hospice.

Thanks to all parents who supported the Parents’ Association events and helped raise funds that have enabled many extra items to be purchased. Children from all parts of the school have benefited from your support.

Old Hallfieldian Society

An invitation for the Year 6 Leavers to join the Old Hallfieldian Society is enclosed with The Bulletin. It is a good way to keep in touch with the school and various events are organised for the recent leavers to get together again.

The Old Hallfieldians like to contribute to school life and they have kindly paid for the restoration of the big school clock which sits on top of Upper School hall and can be seen from all around the main part of the school. The workings had suffered from wind and rain damage over the years and we are very grateful to the OHS for sponsoring a complete refurbishment, which should now give us many years of untroubled service.

Enclosures

With this Bulletin:

Year 6 Leavers' letter from the Old Hallfieldian Society
Years 3 – 6 Clubs Lists for Autumn Term

At the end of term you should have received the following enclosures:

Upper School parents:

Uniform lists
Information on Classics Club and Ballet
Year 6 Leaver's letter
Year 5 Curriculum review letter and Form Teachers and form list for next year
Year 5 Reading lists and letter from Mrs. Clinton, Head of English
Year 4 Curriculum review letter and Form Teachers and form list for next year
Year 4 Reading lists and letter from Mrs. Clinton, Head of English
Year 3 Curriculum review letter and Form Teachers and form list for next year
Year 3 Reading lists and letter from Mrs. Clinton, Head of English
Year 3 moving to Year 4 Minutes of meeting held on 22nd June

Pre-Prep (including Transition) parents:

Uniform lists
Year 2 Curriculum review letter and Form Teachers and form list for next year
Year 2 letter regarding staffing for the Autumn Term in Year 3
Year 1 letter with Form Teachers and form lists
Year 1 letter regarding staffing for the Autumn Term in Year 2
Foundation, Transition and Year 1 target booklet and letter advising form and Form Teacher

Hallfieldfirst parents:

Children moving to Transition welcome letter and target booklet

And finally, the Headmistress of King Edward VI High School for Girls, Miss Sarah Evans, and the Chief Master of King Edward's School, Mr. John Cloughton,, will come to Hallfield to talk specifically about their schools to interested parents on Wednesday 22nd September and Thursday 23rd September respectively at 7.00 pm in the Pre-Prep hall. This is advanced warning and these dates do appear in the calendar for the Autumn Term which will be sent to you in August.

Have a lovely break if you are going away – and I'll look forward to seeing you in September.

