

Committee(s)	Dated:
Board of Governors of the City of London Freeman's School	12 October 2020
Subject: Head of Junior School's Report	Public
Report of: Matt Robinson	For Information

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of events in the Junior School since the last Board meeting in the summer term.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Members note the contents and receive this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of events in the Junior School since the last Board meeting. Life in the Junior School was extremely interesting for the staff and pupils before the summer break with lockdown then its easing. Children, staff and parents needed much reassurance and logistics had to be carefully considered.

Fortunately, we are back now and, as is often the case, once one gets going, problems and concerns either disappear or are quickly resolved.

This report will give Members a taste of the many activities in which the Junior School staff and pupils participated from the end of last academic year and the start of this one.

Staff News

2. We have new permanent staff in the Junior School. A new teacher has joined Lower 2 as the usual teacher is now working for three days a week. A colleague who has covered several times before has returned to us, having worked at Freeman's in a number of year groups previously. She is the main class teacher of L3H. A new colleague has joined the drama department and is an Upper 3 form teacher. The Junior school administrator is on leave and her temporary replacement has been seconded from another office, who has made a fantastic start.

3. Five colleagues have joined as graduate assistants, and will be form teachers in the Junior school, one being aligned in great part to Form 1).
4. A colleague left at the end of the year, creating opportunities. The Head of Lower 3 has moved to Head of Upper 3. A colleague was promoted from Head of House to Head of Lower 3. A colleague who started last year, became the new Head of Junior Whittington.

Covid keyworker children

5. From the start of the pandemic's restrictions we remained open for the children of keyworkers, ranging from 25 – 5 pupils on different days. On only a few occasions were there children from the Senior year groups. The staff gave up their time voluntarily during the Easter break, Summer half term and 10 days into the Summer holiday.

Second half of Summer term

6. As per government instructions, Lower 3 (Yr 6) returned to School after half term and remained in three distinct bubbles based in the Junior Hall, the Recital Hall and the Stable block. The children, staff and parents became quite used to the strange systems at drop off and pick up times, which have become standard since. Not all the children came in, as a good number of parents chose to keep them at home, but each class was over three-quarters full at all times.
7. When the lockdown eased, we were able to facilitate more opportunities for the children in the Junior School, hosting a class from Form 1, Lower 2 and Upper 2 each day in the Boarding House, Dining Room and Sports Hall respectively. Each class came in on three occasions. In the very last four days we had each class from Upper 3 and Lower 4 in for a morning. We were very proud to have given every Junior child a chance to come back to school during the lockdown. Parents and children were very grateful
8. Governors have expressed their gratitude which was entirely appropriate as staff worked extraordinarily hard and in trying conditions through the Summer term, increasing their IT skills, knowledge and confidence. All children received live lessons, tutorials and assemblies; their work was marked and returned, and learning continued at pace. Due to there being no trips, no matches, no concerts and no Prize Day to prepare for, the children went beyond their usual curricula.

Works

9. The Junior School has seen very few improvements over the Summer; some painting has occurred, there have been new ceiling and carpet tiles and slightly more technology around the building. Our concerns about play space remain as the cage is being used for parking while the Main House works take place (with my blessing) and Main House parking has been stopped. We are confident of further great improvements once that phase is complete.

School roll

10. 94 children joined the Junior School this September, 51 into Form 1. The Junior School starts the term at 405, the largest number ever. Families continue to contact Admissions to join mid-year.
11. The end of the School day has been altered for their first two weeks as in previous years. Form 1 pupils finished at 3.30pm and this has again proved to be very successful, not least assisting the new approach to pick up which sees parents unable to stop for more time than it takes for their child to get in the vehicle. In week three the whole of KS2 were picked up at 3.50 and Upper 3 and older from 4.10 pm.
12. Recorded videos and two webinars, which acted as our Information and Social Sessions, have helped parents to settle in. The Heads of Year introduced their Form Tutor teams and gave relevant information about the year ahead.

New children welcomes

13. The Assistant Head and I held welcome breaktime "Hot chocolate and chat" sessions to give those new children an opportunity to feedback to us their initial experiences.

Last Academic year

14. One of the key aims of the year was to embed RAID (Read, Answer, Initial, Do) in Junior lessons so the pupils consider carefully their feedback and act upon it. Covid rather affected this constructive initiative but it continues this year.
15. Colleagues' IC literacy continued to grow as staff moved all resources online, using a number of platforms: SharePoint, Teams and Freelearning.
16. A Junior teacher continued her Model United Nations club (which involved Junior and Senior children), debating virtually on the COVID crisis, euthanasia and behaviour around public protesting.
17. The Musician in Residence created a glorious collaboration with local primary schools, including one for the physically handicapped, called *Even Apart We're Together*. An ensemble choir of primary age, the video cropped 30 or so children in and out ... it was extremely heart-warming and very well received, not least in the context of Prize Day.
18. Parents' evenings took place despite lockdown, via Teams, which the parents and staff very much enjoyed. It may well be a model for the future.
19. As the children continued to work so hard in lockdown, merits and distinctions continued to be given. We were able to hold a virtual announcement of the Kemp House shield, which was won by Hale house, in the Head of House's first year in post.

20. The Black Lives Matter initiative has had a direct effect on learning and teaching, with PSHE, RS and History curricula having been revamped. I gave an assembly on unconscious bias and segued the following week into micro-aggressions.
21. Having won the Dorking Rotary prize for creative writing earlier in the year, a pupil in L4Z was notified recently that he won 3rd place overall nationally in the Intermediate group. We await his trophy!
22. A colleague has accepted the challenge of fulfilling our Shakespeare Schools' Festival commitment, directing a virtual Julius Caesar. The Lower 4s have learned their lines and rehearsals take place via Teams.

Sport

23. Before the pandemic struck, the games department had succeeded in achieving the ambitious goal of every child in the Junior School having participated in fixtures.
24. The hockey girls had a good year with Surrey County honours: three of the present Upper 4 made the U13s, one made the U14s, and another the goalkeeping academy.
25. One Upper 4 girl was selected for the Surrey U14 netball squad.
26. We had planned our first ever U13 girls' touch rugby match ... which we intend to hold again as soon as possible. The development of boys and girls offered the opportunity to play all sports, rather than gender specific ones, continues; indeed, this term all sports clubs are available to Junior School boys and girls: cricket, tennis, football and hockey.
27. The highlight of the affected Summer term was the whole School virtual sports day, in which the children were set all sorts of different sporting challenges. The Director of Sport and his team created a really special day of home-garden-based activities.

Charity

28. The Junior School's charitable giving was obviously curtailed by Covid but we were still able to support our charity for the year, Sightsavers. The Sponsored Read raised £1854 + £5000 via the Edith Murphy Foundation and the Junior School Sponsored Walk £50. The Junior School Prefects Fair raised £197 and the pancake tea £205. Many thanks go to ECN our new Charities co-ordinator.

Twitter

We are up to 771 followers.

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