

Clerk of Committee's report to Quakers in Yorkshire, The Mount School York

It is a pleasure to be here again, as Clerk of the Mount School Committee, to present our report for 2018.

First of all I'd like to say something about the Committee.

It consists of ten people appointed by QiY - six Quakers, two old scholars and two parents - and we also have three co-opted members.

At the end of 2017 we bade farewell to Tim Phillips after his four years as Clerk, and this year Janet Dean and Joanna Mahler's terms of service come to an end. They have both given much of their time and energy to the work of the Committee and we are sad to see them go.

The Full Committee meets once a term with Sub-Committees in between, and our work is wide ranging.

As trustees of the charity that is the Mount School we are responsible for the School's overall strategy, for monitoring compliance with all aspects of legislation and good practice, appointing senior staff – you will hear from our new Director of Business Operations (or Bursar) in a few moments - and planning to meet all the challenges facing us in today's rapidly changing world.

The Mount's charitable objects are 'to advance the education of children and to carry on and conduct a school known as The Mount School York in accordance with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).' Our students have already ably demonstrated the influence of Quakerism on their school lives earlier this morning.

In order to 'advance the education' we have to invest in our facilities, to make sure they keep pace with current needs and are of benefit both to our pupils and the wider community. In setting the financial strategy to underpin this aim, governors took the decision to sell a parcel of redundant playing field land at the south end of the site. The process of sale is well advanced and planning permission has been sought by the developers for the building of 12 houses.

In addition, we have just received planning permission to separate two boarding houses in Driffield Terrace so that one can be sold. Boarding numbers are not as high as they were in the past, and we no longer need the capacity that both these buildings provide.

Being a governor is not all hard work and strategic discussion. We have had the pleasure of visiting the School for concerts and drama productions throughout the year as well as seeing the ongoing work of staff in the classrooms. I know I speak for all governors when I say how impressed we continue to be with the hard work and dedication of all the staff at The Mount School York.

Margaret Bryan (Clerk to Committee)

Quakers in Yorkshire Report from the Principal of The Mount School York
Saturday 20 October 2018

I would like to begin by introducing Rachel Capper, Head of The Mount Junior School. Rachel and I together run The Mount School. The Mount is an all-through School situated on one site and Rachel and I work closely together to lead and manage the School. We thought we would present today together to show you our shared vision for the future of the School.

Our Quaker ethos continues to be at the heart of all we do in School. Quaker Week this year, as you know, was on the theme 'Room for More'. In Senior School we focused on exploring our Quaker Values and asked the girls in each year group to make 'room for more' simplicity, peace, truth, equality or sustainability. Each year group is working on a different Quaker Value and the girls have developed some interesting ideas. We have continued our work this year too on developing within our teaching and learning the use of the Quaker learning wheel that we created last year during Quaker Week and which I demonstrated last year when I reported to Quakers in Yorkshire.

In Junior School our Quaker ethos underpins everything we do and the Quaker Values are understood by all. In the last two year's we have had two very thought-provoking Quaker weeks. Last year the theme was 'In turbulent times be a Quaker'. The challenge in the Junior School is to make these themes relevant to the age of our young pupils. This week involved circle times in Pre-school focusing on friendship and what you do if someone does something wrong. The theme was developed with different age groups and our older girls discussed turbulent global events. This year for the theme 'Room for More', our younger children looked at more room in our hearts to make a difference, to us, our friends and our community. The older Junior School girls considered inequality and room in our hearts to consider others.

This year we have appointed a new charities coordinator as Linda Moore, our longstanding Head of Religious Studies and charities coordinator, retired from The Mount in the summer. We took the opportunity to appoint a Junior School teacher to the charities role and this has enabled us to have an even better focus on the whole-school nature of charities with Year 6 charity reps working closely with our Sixth Form charity reps. Year 5 and 6 are joining in more with Senior School morning meetings and there is a definite sharing across the school of ideas as our charity work diversifies along with our ever present whole school Quaker ethos.

Charity work and raising money for school charities is so important to the girls and they find new and exciting ways to involve themselves in charity fundraising every year. Last year in the Junior School pupils raised money for the NSPCC, who delivered safeguarding workshops to parents and children, and national charities such as Children in Need and Sport Relief. Junior School girls also wanted to support the Senior School charities. One way they did this was to organise a Santa Dash to raise money to buy pencil cases to give to the Senior School Learn Bag Appeal. They also organised their own Global Awareness Day to raise money for the Senior School Namibia trip.

Senior School girls also worked hard with their charity fundraising last year raising £5,000 for 'Solving Kids Cancer' and several thousands of pounds for the School Namibia trip. The whole school charity this year is 'Pancreatic Cancer UK', and we look forward to planning many events and whole school activities to raise money for this great cause.

Our examination results this summer were once again excellent, with 45% of grades at GCSE at A* level and over 15% of grades given the new level 9. At A level, our girls continued to achieve grades well above the national average with nearly 40% of grades at grade A/A* and girls attained places at a range of Russell Group Universities. All our girls are individuals, however, and what matters most is that each girl attains the grades they need to go on to the next stage of their education, wherever that may be and not necessarily to university. Some girls chose to take a GAP year and gain work experience before embarking on a university course and others chose to go on to Art College or to

move into vocational training. The diversity of our girls and what they choose to do after Year 13 is what makes our Mount girls so special.

A big focus of last academic year for staff was the work we did with the Tuke Centre on developing a compassion focused approach to our work and everyday lives. This was run by staff from the Tuke Centre and funded by a grant from the Retreat Benevolent Fund. Staff from the Tuke Centre came into The Mount to lead on staff inset training. The focus was on showing teaching and support staff how to use compassion focused therapy to become kinder to oneself in the first instance, and then how to apply it in the workplace and within teaching and learning and everyday interactions with pupils. It has been extremely successful with staff and we are now embedding the practice with further work and training taking place as part of this year's inset programme. Adrienne Richmond has written an article about the project which is published in your programme today, which you may like to read if you have not already done so.

The Mount is at an exciting moment in its history, with the pending sale of the land. This will give us an injection of income which will enable us to invest in our sports and performing arts facilities. The new performing arts studio that I mentioned to you last year, is now at the planning application stage and we await York City Council's decision. Once approved, we will be driving forward the tendering process and I am determined that we will be digging the foundations next summer and that the new studio will be open for use next academic year.

A further project we are focussing on in terms of investing in our facilities is the extension and resurfacing of our netball/tennis courts near the Junior School adventure playground. Girls across the school are excited by this development as they love their sport from a very young age at The Mount, with girls as young as age 8 playing in local netball and hockey teams. Girls in Senior School play both hockey and netball at County level and take their sport seriously.

Another exciting development for us both is that we have this term, taken the decision to focus on our core strength of educating girls and our marketing message has changed accordingly. It came out of a proposal taken by the Senior Leadership Team to the governing committee, backed up by a thorough analysis based on what our current and prospective parents tell us about the power of an all-girls education and what that means for their daughters.

We know that there is a real niche in the local market for all-girls education from age 2 to 18. We are as a senior leadership team and as a school very excited about being able to drive forward this message as we look to grow the school. Last Saturday we had a very busy Open Morning which proved that our new marketing strategy is working. Parents and prospective pupils came from far and wide and people loved what we had to offer.

The Mount School has a rich heritage in educating girls and the Quakers were quite rightly very proud of what they did in the 17 and 1800s to advance the education of women, in an age where women were prevented from being educated just for being women.

A little bit of history for you that you may or may not be aware of: The Mount was one of the first places in the UK to train female teachers, long before Girton College in Cambridge was set up as the first university College to educate women. The Quakers at that time recognised how much their Quaker women could bring to education and they took the bold step for that era in setting up a teacher training College for women.

With such a rich heritage, how could we not still in this day and age be pioneering education for girls in the name of Quakers? I feel very passionate about education for girls as a woman myself, in a world where many girls are still disadvantages in some societies, and my drive is to continue to make The Mount locally, nationally and internationally a recognised forward thinking centre of excellence for all-girls education.

Our Quaker outreach is very important to us. We have a number of pupils and parents who come to The Mount not having experienced anything of the Quakers and find that they love the ethos so much, that they seek to find out more and end up attending a local Meeting. You may know of people from The Mount who have done that, in particular at Friargate and Acomb Meetings. We hope that by making that sort of difference to pupils and families who come into our special school community, we can help to grow the Quaker community and support the Quaker Quest.

As you can see, we are very passionate about The Mount and the education that we provide the girls in our care. In sharing that passion with you, hopefully you will be able to see that we also have a hugely important part to play in helping to spread the Quaker message and ethos to as many young people as possible. Many of our Senior School girls leave with a real desire to find out more about Quakerism and I know that some have even started to attend local Meetings once they have their own families, as their experiences whilst at The Mount have left them with a lasting impression.

Adrienne Richmond (Principal)

Rachel Capper (Head of Junior School)

Quakers in Yorkshire Report from the Director of Business Operations of The Mount School York

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you at my first Quakers in Yorkshire meeting.

The Mount School York continues to evolve and develop to meet the changing needs of its community, as it always has. As you will know, we have been through a difficult period in the past few years, like many small independent schools, with a fall in pupil numbers caused by several factors including the global economic downturn impacting on international boarding numbers.

Over the past two to three years, significant changes have been made to the senior staff of the School which has brought a sharper focus to our educational offer, to business planning and to marketing.

At this point I want to pay tribute to the work of Kate Linfoot, who has been Director of External Relations at The Mount for a little over a year. She has quickly brought a real emphasis on proactive marketing and pupil recruitment. The School's website and the recent very successful Open Day are testament to her vision, skilful planning and careful delivery. We have also strengthened the Admissions team, especially in the Junior School. Through these and other initiatives, we confidently expect pupil numbers and therefore the financial position to improve rapidly. More of that in a moment.

The main purpose of my part of this presentation is to report on the 2016-17 financial year. The annual report and accounts are published on the Charity Commission website and I have a couple of copies here for anyone who wants to take a closer look. I'll give a brief overview and pick out a few salient details.

The Mount School's total income in 2016-17 was £4.4 million. This was a reduction of £456k on the year before.

Total expenditure was £4.7m, a reduction of £406k on the year before. This gave an operating deficit for the year of £265k.

In a bit more detail, 42% of expenditure went on teaching, 16% on student welfare and 12% on premises. During the year, the school employed 63 teaching staff and 49 support staff. Bursary support for pupils who could not otherwise afford School fees accounted for £506k or 14.9% of expenditure.

The school manages its annual spending effectively and the year-end out-turn was within the budget agreed by the Trustees.

Since 2016, the School has taken steps to reduce costs significantly through staff re-structuring and careful control of expenditure. This programme continues with a forensic analysis of all expenditure and carefully targeted spending on areas that will make a difference to the pupils' experience at The Mount.

In addition, efforts are being made to increase revenue from fundraising and from community use of facilities. The School's trading subsidiary, Mount School Estates Ltd, promotes and develops community use of facilities both to generate income and to extend further the charity's public benefit. In 2016-17, this company earned revenue of about £140,000 from more than 40 local schools, clubs and groups who use the facilities weekly, as well as lettings of the boarding accommodation during the school holidays, and we have a business plan to increase this community engagement and the revenue stream.

The School has no long-term debts or significant loans. We are however disposing of some unused capital assets, as Margaret has mentioned. Capital receipts from these disposals will be used to reinvest in the School's buildings and facilities, accelerate pupil recruitment and support cashflow as pupil numbers recover.

The sale of a strip of unused land on the edge of the playing fields is currently awaiting planning consent for a small housing development. We expect to exchange contracts on the sale of 3 Driffield Terrace, previously used as a School boarding house, in the next few weeks. These disposals will allow us to invest in a new dance/drama studio as phase I of the performing arts centre as well as extending and improving the netball/tennis courts and other sports facilities.

In the next couple of years, the School's financial position will return to surplus as the number of pupils increases again. We have a renewed recruitment drive this year and we have set realistic targets to increase the number of boarding pupils and day pupils across all year groups. Our marketing plan foresees this position being reached within three years, so the financial outlook is much more positive, so long as we stick to our plans and achieve our targets.

Nick Higgins (Director of Business Operations)