

Bootham School Report to Quakers in Yorkshire 2018

by Stephen Sayers, Clerk to Governors of Bootham School

New life from old roots

Friends,

It is my great pleasure to report to you that, since my last report, Bootham School has enjoyed a busy and a successful year. The new Articles of Association, the tripartite agreement between Bootham and The Mount Schools and Quakers in Yorkshire contained in our Memorandum of Understanding, along with a Governance Manual, which is intended to assist an effective and faithful governance of the School have been adopted. After two terms of these measures being deployed, the School is now equipped to make steady progress into the future.

Indeed, early signs of progress have garnered additional momentum from several key appointments and a reallocation of staff roles and responsibilities. These follow from our Head's first year in office; a year in which he observed and took stock of how Bootham works and how its organisation might be carefully retuned in order to improve its smooth running and performance. There were several aspects of the Head's plan, but I'll mention just two here.

The first of these is that of Beth Steer's appointment as Director of Boarding and Wellbeing. Not only does Beth bring a considerable expertise to bear upon our care of boarders, but her appointment is also intended to complement the School's safeguarding arrangements by seeking to sustain and enhance the general wellbeing of all members of our School community. This is a welcome addition to the School's activities and one that is perfectly in line with modern psychological thinking. But at the same time, it is, 'New life from old roots' and, as *Quaker Faith & Practice* has it, '*The great aim of a Christian community is to enable its members to know what their gift is and to enable them to exercise it to the glory of God.*' And, '*Every conversation with another Friend, every business meeting, every discussion group, and every meeting for worship can increase our loving and caring and our knowledge of each other.*' I am confident that this new initiative introduced by our Head and overseen by Beth Steer will prove its worth in the years to come.

The second appointment I would like to mention is an internal one. Liz Gallagher-Coates has been appointed to the role of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Liz has taken over from Lis Hooley, who had, in her turn, acquitted her safeguarding responsibilities with utmost diligence and the full warmth of humanity. Safeguarding is not an easy task in any

institution. And here, I want to acknowledge the dedication of those people who are charged with the responsibility of doing it, requiring as it does compassion, endless patience, wisdom and resilience, not to mention the unrelenting necessity of keeping up with the machinery of law, revision after revision of government regulations and guidelines and changes of nomenclature. Liz Gallagher-Coates is more than equal to this task and I look forward to working with her in future. As with Lis Hooley, this will involve my meeting with her at monthly intervals to hear her reports.

There are three other safeguarding developments to report.

The first is that I now sit as an observer on the School's Safeguarding Committee that meets bimonthly and which is chaired by our Head. This provides me with an opportunity to gain an overall view of safeguarding matters in our School and to be reassured that these are being dealt with appropriately.

The second is that we now devote time to safeguarding matters in my regular meetings with Helen Todd, the Head, and Anna Walker, the Deputy Head of Bootham Junior School.

I might add here, how much I enjoy these meetings. Our Junior School is in extremely competent hands. In the last year, the Junior School has introduced a festival of circus skills to begin the new School year, an exciting homework initiative and it has been honoured by receiving an international award, which recognises its achievements in presenting the idea of global citizenship to its children. I find these visits uplifting and when I watch the children at work or at play, it gives me hope for the future. I might also add that for the third year in a row, I have been asked to don my Christmas gowns and read to the children such edifying delights as, *The Quangle Wangle's Hat* and, *The Pobble who has no Toes*.

The third safeguarding-related development that I would like to report is about bullying. Our Deputy Head, Martyn Beer has introduced several linked measures that are designed to alleviate bullying within the School. These include operating periodic surveys to gather information from students about the nature and extent of any bullying they might have experienced. We have also established regular meetings each term between Martyn, Chris Jeffrey and me in order to monitor the situation and to find ways of dealing with those circumstances in which it might occur. This initiative goes hand in hand with another that Martyn has been associated with, that of reviewing the School's Behaviour and Equality policies, which, amongst other things, address the whole notion of reward and punishment within the School. The purpose of all this is to move towards a more progressive way of relating to our students and to broaden and deepen Quaker values at the very centre of the way we do things in the common round.

Last year, I reported how well our Deputy Head, Martyn Beer, had fitted into School life in the short time he had been with us, but now, after his first full year in office, I can report how much his gentle authority has been successful in nurturing the quality of life in our School. He has worked tirelessly and beyond all reasonable expectations for the benefit of the School. His presence and wise interventions have been appreciated by the Head, the students, the School staff and Governors alike.

His influence, along with other relatively new members of staff at Bootham, including our Bursar, Gavin Blackstone, and established members of staff who were newly installed in their roles, like Lis Hooley, the then Designated Safeguarding Lead, was particularly valuable during the Independent Schools Inspectorate's Regulatory Compliance Inspection that was held in January of this year and, as a result of which, we were declared to be fully compliant.

We approach the year ahead with confidence. We have had the most successful year on record for recruitment. We will turn our attention this year to consolidating and improving recruitment to our Junior School. And in a further initiative, we will seek to continue our progress of establishing new ways - based on old ways - of co-operating with our sister Quaker School in York, The Mount, for our mutual benefit, and to build an agreeable and a secure foundation for our future development.

Stephen Sayers,
Clerk,
Bootham School

Chris Jeffery
Headmaster, Bootham School

Report to Quakers in Yorkshire
Saturday October 20th, 2018

I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity this morning to update you on the progress that we have made at Bootham School over the course of the past twelve months. Those who were at the equivalent gathering last year at Bootham will have heard me enthuse about our 5 year strategy -at far too great a length and by using more time than I had been allotted (for which I apologise, albeit it 12 months late, both to those present and to our friends from The Mount, who kept perfectly to time). Our aim today is to show how the implementation of that strategy is progressing in practice.

At the very core of the strategy is our desire to continually examine and develop the way in which we understand ourselves as a Quaker school and how we express that in our daily life. As I explained last year, we believe that is both the right thing to do to honour what is at the heart of our foundation, but also the best (and most honest) way to be distinctive and attractive in a very competitive marketplace, given the time honoured answers that the Quaker approach to young people and their education offers to the preoccupations of the modern parent in choosing a school for their child. You have heard already from our fine young people of a number of the activities at the heart of our approach and I am not going to repeat much of what they have shared so much more effectively than I could.

To paint with broader brush strokes: over the course of last year a group of staff worked with Deputy Head Martyn Beer, himself a member of Friargate Meeting, to examine the gap between our Quaker ideals and our practice. Excellent discussions were also had with groups of our young people as well. The outcome of this process, in its most obvious form, has been the formation of what we are calling our Quaker Care and Oversight Committee, which meets for the first time on Monday. One of the roles of this group, which comprises staff, students and governors, is to advise, when asked, about whether specific initiatives or aspects of school life reflect our Quaker principles as much as we would want them to.

Another is to be concerned for the atmosphere and conduct of our morning Meeting for Worship, and the Friargate Meeting for College on a Wednesday, alongside our friends from The Mount. It is early days yet but I hope you will agree that this initiative demonstrates how seriously we take our desire to be authentic and 'quakerly' in the way that we approach our life as a school, and all the members of our community.

The outworkings of this have seen the continued growth of our Reflect 30 meeting for worship, held on Saturday mornings at various times during the school year. It has been gratifying to see how many parents new to the school this term have joined this group over. We are indebted to Graham Ralph, who presented briefly at our most recent meeting on the nature of Quaker worship to the great enlightenment of those keen to explore the practice of Quaker silence with us.

As the Head Reeves mentioned just now, we were keen to immerse new members of our community to our Quaker heritage, hence their report of our year seven induction residential this year. As part of that it was an enormous privilege from me to sit at the summit of Pendle Hill with 57 young people, very few of them older than 11 years of age, in stillness and silence contemplating the breathtaking view before us, and George Fox's own vision as he gazed on it 366 years earlier. Our staff in-service

training day in April will take this one stage further as we hope to take as many members as possible of our adult community across the two parts of the school, both teaching and support staff, to Pendle Hill so as to further increase our common understanding of the roots of the school that we are part of and what makes its distinctive in the way that we approach our education of our young people.

Other aspects of school life but have shown signs of greater engagement from students are related very clearly to the core values of the school: our head Reeves have mentioned increased participation in World Peace day vigil over the past two years; the wonderful collection for a local food bank as part of a reverse advent calendar concept; and the large group of students, staff and parents who represented the school at the York pride festival in May. All these things demonstrate, I hope, there our young people are engaging with the values that are close to the heart of a Quaker community.

Moving from the 'pure' to the 'applied' we believe that we are seeing encouraging signs of this approach working from a business perspective: a weighty body of anecdote tells us that our increased focus on the Quaker values at the heart of our school and, more importantly, the avowed purpose that arises from those values (in other words our desire to produce young people who rise to the challenge of using 'that of God' within them to making the world a more just, peaceful and fairer place for everyone), seems to be at the heart of a pleasingly increasing number of enquiries and admissions. We are very encouraged that this past September saw the biggest intake into Bootham Senior School for at least 22 years with 122 new students including a Year 7 of 58 and 30 new members of College.

One of the other key areas of our strategy has been the improvement of standards of behaviour and a clear articulation of expectations we have of young people within the school. For example, important changes have been introduced to our sanction systems to ensure that they are genuinely more focussed on changing behaviour rather than merely punishing it, something that we hope will be reinforced as we spend a grant from the Retreat York Benevolent Fund to help us develop a more compassion based approach to behaviour management.

As part of that we have made significant changes to our pastoral leadership team. We have, for the first time, appointed a Director of Well-being -Beth Steer- who commenced duties in September. She combines that with the role of Director of Boarding and has made a very positive impression on the boarding community, bringing a breath of fresh air to that aspect of the school. The same sense of renewal has been felt in our pastoral structures with 75% of the Head of Year team new in role this year.

More prosaically, A Level results were particularly pleasing, with well over 70% of students winning places on their first choice courses. Just as encouraging were the added value scores that better reveal the truth behind the mere grades. These showed not only that were we in the top 4% of schools nationally for adding value between GCSE and A-level, but that this score could be confidently ascribed to the quality of teaching our young were people receiving. GCSE results were less impressive statistically, but contained some very fine examples of students with real difficulties surpassing expectations.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging in passing that the school faced and passed an ISI Compliance inspection in January, with no issues raised.

In terms of our engagement with the wider community, we have continued, along with The Mount and St Peters, to play a central role in the success of the York Independent State Schools partnership, which is rightly held up nationally as the best example nationally of state independent schools collaborating as equals in a project that provides real benefit to students in all its schools. As part of that we hosted the Schools Together conference at York with St Peters in the summer following its inaugural manifestation at Eton College last year. The Head Reeves have spoken about the wonderful All our Futures Conference, which happened a few weeks after this. In addition, I spoke at Friargate at a public meeting earlier this week to offer our willingness to do what we can to help keep Bootham Park hospital in public hands, especially in helping to find ways of using its wonderful parkland for community sport.

In summary, then, it has been a really good year for Bootham School. Looking ahead, while there are significant obstacles in the path ahead for all schools, as Gavin Blackstone will explain, but we approach them confidently, in good shape, and with our Quaker heart firmly on our collective sleeve. Thank you.

Bursar's Report to Quakers in Yorkshire for the Academic Year 2017 - 18

October 2018

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to speak to you this morning. This provides for me an opportunity to look back on what has been a busy and successful year for the school financially and also to give you a brief insight into our plans for the next year or so.

Financially, Bootham remains in a very positive and secure position but there are significant challenges looming on the horizon. Not just for Bootham but for most, if not all, independent schools in the country. My challenge, with the rest of our senior leadership team and Governors, is to ensure financial resilience, whilst continuing measured strategic investment to develop the education that our students so demonstrably benefit from.

Firstly a brief summary of the financial highlights of the year ended 31 August 2017. Our accounts for 2016/17 were approved by Governors in March and I have brought some copies of the accounts and Trustees Report along today. Please do ask me for a copy if you would like some light bedtime reading. It's worth mentioning that the accounts are also publicly available through the Charity Commission website.

During the year our income exceeded our expenditure by £513k and, after accounting for gains on our investments, we have increased our overall funds by £676k. This is an improved position from the previous year by around £125k. Our income from fees was in line with the previous year and we have reduced our costs, focussing on continuing the quality of provision but negotiating better contractual terms across a range of areas of procurement. We have grown our non-education trading income by hiring out our facilities more regularly in the school holiday periods. This is an important revenue stream for the school and also attracts people, particularly potential parents, into our school to meet our staff and enjoy our facilities.

During the summer we revitalised the pedestrian entrance to the school which has provided a more attractive and secure first impression for visitors to the school. At the same time our famous observatory has had a new turret roof installed meaning that our students and the wider community can continue to enjoy this facility which plays an important part in the city's astronomy.

Our attention and focus has been on planning a resilient long term financial plan to grow our pupil numbers but to ensure we have sufficient reserves in place to protect ourselves from some potentially rainy days ahead. We expect to report reduced levels of surplus in the next 2 years as financial pressures arise, but a surplus nonetheless. In recent weeks rises to the contributions schools make to teachers'

Bursar's Report to Quakers in Yorkshire for the Academic Year 2017 - 18

pensions have far exceeded what was expected. This impacts all schools in both the state and independent sectors. Whilst state schools, at least in the short term, will receive funding to cover this rise, independent schools must fund this from within their budgets.

If we add to this the potential imposition of VAT on school fees and it is not difficult to foresee some particularly challenging times so we will have to be very cautious with our financial planning. Revenue streams are also under pressure due to difficulties within the boarding market. We have 100 boarding students from across the UK and overseas which provides important diversity in the cultural experience for our students. Some of our traditional markets are reducing for a variety of factors and the uncertainty of Brexit could provide additional barriers to student recruitment. However, we are viewing this as a positive challenge and are exploring new markets for our boarding recruitment. The addition of Spanish, German and Thai students has undoubtedly further enriched our boarding community in recent months.

This provides us with a considerable challenge, but our financial results in recent years show that we have solid financial foundations and can confidently continue to invest in key strategic areas. We are currently going through planning permission to undertake a major redevelopment of our College (or Sixth Form) facilities. Commencing in the summer of 2019, and being completed in 2 phases, we will centralise all our college facilities and provide a modern, attractive working environment for our students which will help them prepare for University life and beyond. This is an exciting project being led by our new Head of College, Helen Sharp, and will have input and design help from the students themselves.

At the junior school we are developing our early years' resources by building a new play area for our young pupils in our nursery and reception. There will be a variety of new play equipment to enjoy, a sensory river to help learning and understanding and a stage where the little ones can perform. The work will be completed by the end of October and we are looking forward to showing the new facilities to our pupils and parents when they return after half term.

Thank you for your time this morning. In summary, Bootham School is in a position of financial strength but we are aware that we must plan appropriately for challenging times ahead to ensure that we are still flourishing in many decades to come.

Report from Helen Todd, the head of the junior school at Bootham

The Quaker life of Bootham Junior School continues to be nurtured and celebrated as a defining feature of the education we offer. The notion of active citizens who are a force for good in the world and who are alive to the challenges we face appeals to our parents and is central to our school vision.

Therefore, we are actively working to enhance this aspect of school life and over the last 12 months small staff teams have been created, each charged with an area we would like to grow and develop further. These areas include Quakerism, Volunteering and Service, Pupil Voice and the Environment for instance.

It isn't left to staff to lead these areas alone, all of our Year 6 pupils also take some responsibility as Stewards for one or other aspect of our school life and many of these are intrinsically tied to our Quaker ethos. They are helped by a staff team and together they work to improve these areas of our school. For example:

Our Pupil Voice Stewards lead our School Council and they are currently working with the staff representative in charge of Charities looking at our fundraising goals. Last year, the children heard from members of Year 6 about a large number of charities and these were gradually narrowed down until WaterAid emerged as the children's main charity for the year. That process is about to start for this year.

Eco-Stewards lead assemblies as well as our Mini BEAST group (that's the mini, or junior version of the Bootham Environmental Action and Sustainability Team). They have been instrumental in reducing our Food Waste and removing single-use plastic bottles from school.

Community Stewards help to ensure our playground is a safe, happy place for everyone. They also work with the staff team leading on Service and Volunteering and at the moment we are developing links with local Care Homes. We hope that our younger children will be able to work with residents on story and craft activities just as our older children visit to sing, play instruments and chat.

Our 3 Quaker Stewards from Year 6 had a major role in planning our Quaker Week activities. They gave a super introduction to Meeting for Worship at our Meeting for Families and Friends this term which we held at the start of Quaker Week – this was an open opportunity for all members of the school community to join the children and staff and see what our Silent Meetings are all about. It's a very similar idea to the Senior School's Reflect 30, albeit somewhat shorter.

Other activities to celebrate Quaker Week included the Year 3 children creating posters to illustrate personal short and long term goals that would Let Their Life Speak (ideas ranged from tidying their bedroom to becoming a marine biologist). Reception took hold of the theme of Room For More and set about making friends with a reception class at a different school – they have sent cards and videos to introduce themselves and hope to meet up soon. They also held a bring and share celebration for all of their families where they

introduced their classmates to foods from their home cultures. Year 5 heard the story of Sadako and created a peace tree full of folded paper cranes.

Year 6 researched the lives of prominent Quakers, including Millican Dalton and they have just returned from a visit to the lakes where they held their Meeting for Worship in his Cave. They have also been writing to Sidwell School and were amazed to find they didn't have a Quaker Week so ideas have been flying back and forth and we hope for some joint activity next year.

Twinning with other schools is high on our agenda at present - not just because there is always Room for More Friends in our lives but also as part of our determination to help our children become true global citizens who understand, respect and empathise with people from all countries and cultures. We recently achieved the International Schools Award, Foundation Level in recognition of the work done last year in our International Arts Week and Global Peace Art project. The Project for Peace saw us exchange art work on the theme of Peace with schools in China and Vietnam, along with short videos and letters. It wonderful for our children to hear firsthand that children across the globe share their desire to live in a more peaceful world.

This year, as a progression, we have made initial links with Quaker Schools in Costa Rica, Hobart and Washington DC and we hope for even more fruitful exchanges of work and ideas.