

The Mount School - Clerk of committee's report 2019

I am very pleased to be here again as clerk of the Mount School Committee to report to you on the work of the school's governing body.

First of all, let me remind you of the changes in the committee membership. At the end of 2018, Paul Stansfield (co-optee), Janet Dean (Quaker nomination) and Joanna Mahler (Mount Old Scholar) stepped down from the committee. At the beginning of 2019 we welcomed Quaker Ursula Fuller & and Old Scholar Era Gjurgjeala, leaving the co-optee space open. Our committee members, who come from as far afield as Edinburgh and Canterbury, cannot all be present today, but I'd like to introduce Julian Pattison to those of you who do not already know him.

As you are all well aware, the committee's role as charity trustees is that of governance. We share the educational vision of our staff and their commitment to the Quaker ethos, and it is our role to support them through a sound financial strategy – in other words managing the money and the property – and to monitor compliance.

Let me take compliance first:

This is making sure we have all the right policies and procedures in place, kept up-to-date in the light of ever-changing legislation, and that we are adhering to them. All of this was rigorously tested in November 2018 when we had our Educational Quality and Focussed Compliance inspections. I am delighted to say that the outcome was a rating of Excellent in both areas - a great tribute to our wonderful staff team and those who lead it.

Now, finances:

We are not alone in recognising the considerable political and economic uncertainties and structural changes that currently face us in the country in general and the independent school sector in particular. The long-term decline in boarding nationally poses a considerable challenge for smaller schools such as The Mount.

Those of you familiar with our site will know that The Mount has a very large footprint, and it can be expensive to maintain buildings of such an age, so we keep the best use of all our estate under constant review.

You may remember from last year that a small parcel of redundant playing field land at the southern end of the site, adjacent to Towton Avenue, was

being sold to developers for housing. We have finally completed this sale and building work was due to begin on Monday last. We will now be in a position to move ahead with some refurbishment, and with the fundraising needed for our Performing Arts Centre. Planning permission for this was given in March and the design is in its final stages.

Investing in our facilities, to make sure they keep pace with current needs, is not just of benefit to our pupils. To give you a flavour of this, the School's swimming pool and sports pitches are used in term time throughout the year by a number of state school groups, and we also welcome over 20 independent sports clubs offering swimming, trampolining, gymnastics, handball, badminton, football, yoga, cricket and rugby tots. And should you think it's all about sport, York Symphony Orchestra hold their weekly rehearsals here too. The Mount is a key member of the Independent State Schools Partnership which provides shared educational opportunities for 3 private and 10 state schools in the York area.

It is a pleasure to visit the school for concerts and dramatic 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 MSY.