

Bootham School Report to Quakers in Yorkshire 2019

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring.

Friends,

It is a pleasure to report that it has been another successful year in the life of Bootham School. Our student numbers are slightly up on last year and it is particularly gratifying to learn that we now have a full School Room and 81 students in College 1. Consequently, we have a healthy operating financial surplus and one which we expect to see again in the academic year 2020-2021. This has been achieved despite rising costs associated with teachers' pensions and other potential financial pressures.

The first stage of our refurbishment of College facilities was completed over the summer and now we can offer our students a congenial working environment in which we hope they will thrive. The second stage will be completed in the summer of 2020.

The Heads and Clerks of the two York Quaker schools have met and they have resolved to accelerate the co-operation between our two schools. I am convinced that the future of our schools depends largely upon the ways in which we can develop a sound co-operative relationship and I remain optimistic that we will be successful in doing so.

In the meantime, I am happy to report that in Spring of this year, Meeting for Sufferings registered Bootham School as a Quaker Recognised Body of Britain Yearly Meeting. Several other Quaker schools have also been registered.

One of the most notable aspects of school life is the work Bootham does for the wider community. Sometimes this work is overlooked, but I believe that it is important that the work should be acknowledged from time to time. That being so, I should like to use this opportunity to report some of the contributions that Bootham makes to the wider world.

Let me begin by mentioning Saturday Morning Parents' gatherings at the Senior School. At parents' gatherings, our Head, Chris Jeffery, invites parents to a period of Quaker worship in the School Hall. Some parents have reported that these meetings have prompted them to inquire about Quaker life and to consider attending meetings for worship elsewhere. Parents are also offered Saturday breakfast and lunch, as well as attendance at life-skills courses. One of these was about supporting children who are engaging in public examinations and another addressed ways in which parents might care for those children who are beginning to gain independence as they approach adult life. In the near future, Chris will also give a talk

about the benefits of positive psychology for promoting family life. BBC Online and British broadsheet newspapers have reported these activities as a model for other schools in Britain to follow.

The York Independent State Schools Partnership continues to flourish. It is an equal partnership of schools that was initiated in 2006, by the then Head of Bootham School, Jonathan Taylor, and which is supported most notably by the University of York. The partnership consists of 12 secondary schools, 9 state/academy schools and 3 independent schools. The purpose of the partnership is for schools to learn from each other and to promote best practise, to hold master classes for students across the city and to provide opportunities which schools cannot offer alone. The partnership also offers training opportunities for teachers and conferences for students.

Bootham Senior School serves the people of York by offering access to life drawing, the swimming pool, cultural events in the Recital Room and a community choir. The school is also a School of Sanctuary. In concert with the City of York Sanctuary movement and Refugee Action York, it provides support for those asylum seekers who live in our city and, during Refugee Week, it hosts events which examine why people seek asylum in the United Kingdom.

Bootham staff and a large number of students demonstrated their concerns for the environment by participating in the Global Climate Strike in September. They also participated in York Pride.

Bootham Junior School offers a Baby's Art Club, a Save a Baby's Life Workshop and provides School facilities for clubs and groups during holiday periods. It also hosts the long-running and highly successful 'Inspire, Challenge, Enrich Workshops.' These were introduced some years ago by our Junior School Head, Helen Todd, and offer children in the York area access to the teachers, facilities and resources of the school. Over the years, hundreds of children have enjoyed and benefitted from the workshops. Junior School families have also donated a large number of books and sufficient to stock the library of Tang Hall Primary School. The school has also gifted educational supplies to the same school. Junior children support York Food Bank and they have just provided harvest donations.

The Junior School children have further distinguished themselves through the Intergenerational Project, which brings Reception Class children into weekly contact with people with dementia to share stories, crafts and songs.

Not to be outdone, the Seniors have played a significant part in the activities of York Neighbours, an organisation which, by way of companionship and entertainment, offers support to elderly people in York. Seniors also visit Lamel Beeches, a York care home, fortnightly to meet and enjoy the company of residents and, through annual concerts, they have raised money for both Lamel Beeches and Action for Elders.

Seniors have taken part in Sleep Outs and this year they have raised £23,281 to support the work of SASH, a charity that provides vulnerable young people in North and East Yorkshire a safe and stable place to stay when they have become homeless.

International charities have not been neglected and in the last year, Bootham has supported projects administered by the Bhopal Medical Appeal, Oxfam, Toilet Twining, a charity that provides proper sanitation to people around the world and The Dragonfly Schools Foundation, a charity working in Rajasthan, Northern India, to provide free education and vocational training for those children who do not receive any form of education due to poverty, neglect or social exclusion.

The School's Annual Charity Report 2018-2019 lists support given to 11 charities including Children in Need, Centrepont, which is a charity in support of homeless young people, the NSPCC and Macmillan Cancer Support.

In total, last year, the Junior and Senior Schools of Bootham contributed more than £33,000 to charities at home and abroad.

But in my view, the most significant contribution that Bootham makes to the wider world is secured through its annual dispersal of young people, who are sent out into the world to live lives that have been imbued to a lesser or greater extent with Quaker values. As we approach our bicentenary, one might be given to believe that this attitudinal harvest might have made a material difference. If it has, I pray that it will continue.

I hope you will accept that what I have described here is by no means complete, but it is indicative. I trust that it will convey to you the charitable health of the school and the abundance of its fruits, which are its people.

I hope you will join me in thanking them and wishing them well.

Stephen Sayers

Clerk to Governors

Bootham School