

15 July 2020



Highfield Priory
Independent Day School
and Nursery

Dear Parents

Headmaster: J M Duke B Ed Hons

Well, it's been quite a year and certainly one which we will never forget!

September began with the publication of our Inspection Report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate. It declared us to be 'Outstanding' (EYFS) and 'Excellent' across all areas (School). This was followed in November with Highfield achieving 6th in the country and 1st in the North West in The Sunday Times Parent Power listings. This is our highest ever position, our second year in the top ten and our ninth year in the top thirty. This level of consistency has only been achieved by three other schools in the country and we were delighted to receive this recognition for our hard-working pupils, staff and parents.

In February, our Year 4 actors and dancers from across the school disappeared down a rabbit hole and reappeared in Alice's Wonderland. They mesmerised us with their dreamlike world of talking caterpillars, Mad Hatters, Cheshire Cats and White Rabbits; not to mention the Queen of Hearts herself and her army of cards. Little did we know that our own version of reality was to undergo a change every bit as strange as the new world in which Alice found herself.

In March, we didn't quite disappear down a rabbit hole but we were all sent home due to the enforced school closure and Government lockdown as the world was faced with fighting the coronavirus pandemic. This has been one of the most challenging periods in our school's, and indeed in our country's, history. Highfield pupils have always proved themselves to be resilient, good at problem-solving, caring, thoughtful and they aim high in everything they do. Never has this been more evident than during the past few months. Our pupils have looked after each other, celebrated the key workers in our community, embraced online learning, worked hard from their desks at home and in school and they have continued to aim high each day. I would like to say a really big thank you to all the staff and parents who have been very supportive during this period despite the strain of working from home and juggling work and family life. Without your support, the children would not have been able to continue to aim so high. I have never been more proud of Highfield and the whole school community.

In normal circumstances, there are two people who, along with our fantastic Year 6 Class, would have received a big Highfield send-off in July. We are saying goodbye to Mr Andrew Sheppeck and Mr Lee Turner.

Mr Sheppeck, our Deputy Head, has worked at Highfield for 5 years. As well as supporting the school through two very successful inspections, Mr Sheppeck has been an excellent Year 4 class teacher who has worked hard to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. We wish him the very best of luck in his promotion to Headmaster of Bury Boys' Junior School.

Lee Turner has been at Highfield for over 12 years and in this time he has revolutionised the teaching of IT across the school as well as bringing our infrastructure up-to-date and making it more efficient. He has made an excellent contribution on the games field, especially with his football teams. I know you will all join me in wishing him luck with his move to Ilkley Grammar and Skipton Academy.

As we say goodbye to our Year 6 class, we wish them the best of luck and happiness in their new schools. We have families in this year group who have been with us for several decades! Khadija's family is leaving us after being with Highfield for 23 years and Lucie's family has been with us since her Grandfather's time as Headmaster of Highfield which began in 1981. We shall miss all our Highfield families and we would like to thank them for their help and support of the school over the years. Please stay in touch with Highfield and keep aiming high in all your endeavours.

Many of our end of year traditions, including the Leavers' Assembly, the Head Boy and Head Girl's speech and Brooke's solo performance of the school song, are available to watch on Kidblog. We invite you to watch and enjoy our farewell to the wonderful 6P.

This year has shown me the true strength of Highfield and just how strong we can be when we work together, not only to achieve great things but also in the face of adversity. Being apart helps us to recognise just how much we value being together. As we emerge from our rabbit holes, let us truly celebrate the joy of being back in our real wonderland: Highfield Priory School.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J M Duke', written in a cursive style.

J M Duke
Headmaster