

Haling Park

By Peter Ellis, Second Master

I am delighted to report on the fantastic range of activities and achievements at Whitgift School for 2018/19.

The dedication and hard work of the students and the staff resulted in some tremendous results in the summer exams. In the Upper Sixth, results in the International Baccalaureate were again superb, with an average points total of 39 out of a maximum of 45. In A Level and Pre-U examinations, 93% of all grades were awarded at A*-B; this rises to 94% when combined with the IB results. 50 pupils gained straight A* and A grades at A Level or Pre-U equivalent and nine students achieved remarkable all A* grades. At GCSE, almost 60% of entries were awarded at the top grades of 8 or 9, and success in other areas includes: nearly a third awarded at the highest level Grade 9 and 82% level 7/8/9 (equivalent to A*-A). An impressive 30 pupils achieved 8 or 9 across all of their GCSE subjects and 10 achieved the rare feat of gaining top grades in all of their subject entries. 66% of Whitgiftians are going to Russell Group universities of which 14 are off to Oxbridge, and an outstanding 81% are off to their first-choice university or placement.

Boarding at Whitgift continues to flourish. 19 different nationalities are currently represented which ensures a welcomed diversity to the House and the School. The Whitgift Summer School ran for a fifth year for six weeks during the summer holidays and welcomed 252 students from over 23 different countries. We were fortunate to have around 19 Whitgift staff involved alongside new and returning externally recruited teachers. Just under 100 Whitgift boys and Old Palace girls also took part in a range of activities from afternoon project-based lessons, sports and creative activities, meals and evening activities.

Performing Arts events at Whitgift were high-quality, varied and ever popular. *Macbeth* was a huge success in its 3-night run in December. This was followed by the equally fantastic First Form Play of *The Jungle Book* in February. In March, we enjoyed the Sixth Form play, *The Sneeze*, a collection of short stories and one-act comedy vaudevilles by Russian playwright Anton Chekov. In May, the Fourth Form treated us to Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* in an extra special, entirely student-led production. The year ended with boys of the Lower School taking on Jules Verne's classic *Around the World in 80 Days*.

We enjoyed a number of musical performances throughout including the London Myriad Ensemble collaborating with the Lower First Form once again for a fun-filled performance of *Pinocchio*. The annual Autumn Collection Concert was performed in Big School for the final year (returning to Fairfield Halls in October 2019). In November, the Whitgift Chamber Choir continued their tour around the country's cathedrals with Evensong at Portsmouth Cathedral. In the same month, we enjoyed Whitgift and Minster choirs performing a wonderful selection of English cathedral music at the Croydon Minster at the organ inaugural concert. The year ended with a trio of Christmas musical delights: Choristers singing at The Ritz once again, then joining forces with the Whitgift Chamber Choir for a Christmas Concert in Hanover Square, finished off with the ever-popular Carol Service at Croydon Minster. Musical highlights in the Lent and Trinity Terms included a showcase of Whitgift's brass ensembles in '*Strictly Come Brassing*' and an unforgettable evening of choral music with a performance of G.F. Handel's *Messiah*, both in March. The Chamber Choir returned to Westminster Abbey to sing Choral Evensong in April. The WIMC returned in April for two sensational concerts followed by a

prizegiving and gala concert featuring a stunning selection of some of the finest performances from the year's competition.

We have been pleased to welcome many visitors to the School over the last twelve months. At the annual Junior Literacy Festival in the same month, an impressive line-up of authors took part including Steve Cole, Nikki Sheehan, Stephen Davies, Matt Whyman, Karl Nova and Ciaran Murtagh. The year ended with a visit from author and historian Professor Kate Williams, who was our guest of honour at the Celebration of Whitgift Life.

The Academic Enrichment programme has continued to impress with a number of guest speakers including CEO of BBC Studios, Tim Davie (OW), art gallery owner, Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison, editor, Tim de Lisle, Lord Justice Lindblom (OW), Director of the Royal Institution, Dr Shaun Fitzgerald and philosopher, Professor A.C. Grayling.

Whitgift, once again, opened its gardens to the public over the summer for the National Gardens Scheme Open Day and the London Open Garden Squares Weekend. Visitors were able to enjoy the School's gardens and wildlife areas. Revenue received through admissions and plant sales went to the scheme's charities.

An impressive range of building and renovation work was carried out over the summer which included the renovation of three more laboratories, a complete refurbishment of the History and Classics classrooms and all Junior School classrooms, resurfacing of the Junior playground and redecoration of North Entrance.

Whitgift students have continued to excel in sport this year. Our portfolio of National titles remains impressive with team and individual medals in sports as diverse as Rugby, Rowing, Football, Hockey, Table Tennis, Swimming, Water Polo and Skiing to name but a few. Additionally, many pupils, current and past, have represented their country in their chosen sports. Five Whitgift students are currently playing for national football teams, three students and playing for national cricket teams and four for GB Hockey teams which is an outstanding achievement. OWs continue to progress in their sporting careers. Particularly noteworthy are Jason Roy who was part of this year's World Cup winning England Cricket Team and Elliot Daly who was in Japan as part of the England Rugby World Cup Squad. Additionally, OWs Jamie Smith, Rory Burns and Dominic Sibley continue to excel in their cricketing careers and Callum Hudson-Odoi has signed a five-year deal with Chelsea FC.

I do hope this summary has given you some insight into the goings-on at the School and the activities we can look forward to over the coming year. Also, a new Masterplan and Vision for the School in 2025 (can be found on the School website) has been announced and the future of Whitgift looks very exciting indeed. As ever, Old Whitgiftians are always very welcome to revisit or reconnect with Whitgift at any time and I would encourage you to do so – please contact the School's Alumni Relations Coordinator, Zohra Jeraj, on Z.Jeraj@Whitgift.co.uk. School events are open to all and are published on our website www.whitgift.co.uk/events.