

Annual Report 2019 – 20

Funded Projects 2019-20

Among the projects funded in the past year are:

- Further replacement cladding to sports and 6th Form Blocks (90% Grant Awarded)
- Replacement flooring in the Refectory and Servery (90% Grant Awarded)
- Further sections of Perimeter fencing (90% Grant Awarded)
- Phased Replacement Windows in the Art Block (90% Grant Awarded)
- Complete refurbishment and damp proofing of Higher Line Toilets (Parental Donations)

Parent contributions to the school fund have enabled successes through extracurricular **Sport** throughout year groups. Sport is an important part of boy's lives, it is a great way to not only relieve stress of exams and school lessons but also as a way to prove they can manage their time, energy and effort in their future lives.

Rugby We have had another hugely successful season with over 300 boys regularly representing the College and showing the amazing talent and ability that we have at the College. Competing against some of the strongest schools in the London & SE region our teams' overall success was; played - 168, won - 86, drawn - 15, lost – 68, with a win percentage of 51%. Notable successes include the 1st XV who have had another successful season, with a winning percentage of 65% and reaching the 3rd round of the National Schools Cup, the U13A & U14A teams who have only lost 3 games between them and especially the U15As who have beaten Epsom College and St Paul's School on route to setting up a last 16 clash against Harrow School in the National Schools cup competition, in January. They currently have an 85% win rate.

Football - Our First XI found themselves facing St Ignatius College, Enfield in the London Catholic Schools Football Cup and I am pleased to say that we were victorious. The weather and C19 shortened the season.

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, we lost the entire school **cricket** season last year. This was particularly upsetting for last year's Figures students who were starting their cricket journey at the College, or perhaps even experiencing this fantastic sport for the first time. We look forward to Winter nets starting up again after Christmas and hopefully a successful Summer season after Easter. All ages and abilities are welcome.

Swimming team had a number of personal bests registered and with convincing wins.

Athletics: The 2018 – 2019 season ended in spectacular style with us being granted the opportunity to field teams to run at the London Olympic Stadium! It was an event called the 'London Borough's Connect Relays'. In this event we were invited to field one team will contest a 4 x 200m relay (KS3), and the other a 4 x 400m relay (KS4). The best teams were then invited back to compete in front of thousands of people as the curtain raiser to the '2019 Muller Anniversary Games'. We qualified, and returned the next day to contest the finals! In the finals our KS4 4 x 400m team came third in their competition.

Prior to lockdown, the 2019 – 2020 Athletics season had started extremely positively. We had a Year 10 boy compete for Surrey in Exeter at the '2019 English Schools Athletic Association Combined Events Championships'. We competed in the 'Kings Trophy'. A Cross Country race against Kings College School (Wimbledon), and a host of other independent schools, on Wimbledon Common. We fielded three teams of boys from Years 8 – 10, (14 boys in total). We sent teams to the '2019 Merton Schools Cross Country Championships', and came back with 6 medals: 2 x gold, 2 x silver, and 2 x bronze! We entered teams in the '2019 English Schools Athletic Association Cross Country Cup'. The first round of the competition took place at Stoke Park, Guildford. We took 11 boys, which made up two teams: 'Junior Boys', and 'Inter Boys'.

We also competed **indoors** in the 'Surrey County AA Sportshall Championship'. On the back of their performances two boys were invited to attend the 'Surrey Sportshall Team Trials' for the opportunity to represent Surrey in the National Sportshall Finals.

After our performance at the **Merton Schools Cross Country** Championship boys from The College made up the majority of the Merton Team for the '2019 London Youth Games Cross Country'. At the '2019 Cardinals Cup Cross Country Championship we had two medallists. At the '2020 Merton Year 8 Sportshall Athletics Championships', we came a very close second. Our **Cross Country** running is getting stronger and stronger, and this year 5 boys from across the school represented Merton at the '2020 Surrey Schools Cross Country Championships'. This year we took two year group teams to the '2020 Simmonds Cup – Winter Championship', the Year 9s and the Year 10s. As always the quality of the opposition was very high, but our athletes knew what to expect and rose to the occasion, and really performed very well. In the end we had two individual event winners, both in the Year 10 competition, which helped the Year 10 team to come 3rd.

Boxing Club, in an interrupted and cut short Boxing season the College Boxing Squad managed to still be highly competitive during the active months. For the first time since the Boxing Club was re-established in 2002 here at the College, we entered the 'School Boys National Boxing Championship' and gave an excellent account of ourselves with our Club Boxing Captain (Benedict Ojimen Lower Grammar) progressing to the semi-final of his weight category before narrowly being out scored on points in his bout. The Sport continues to be extremely well attended and enjoyed by all those who take part.

Basketball - Both Year 8 and Year 9 Basketball teams reached the semi-finals of the Surrey cup. The Year 8s have also made a very successful start to their Junior NBA campaign representing the Atlanta Hawks. The success of our U13 team has continued and they are to be congratulated on reaching the Junior NBA Finals.

The boys have also shown a good commitment to **Badminton and Squash** club which continues to thrive on Thursday evenings after school at the Racquets club in Wimbledon. The support we receive from parents is commented on by other schools and the school and the boys are always grateful for the time and effort put in to support the school. We are also able to offer a huge range of activities at school ranging from fitness club to table tennis with the help, support and time of many other members of the school staff. The total cost of funding for sports this year was around £58k.

The **Chaplaincy Programme** is at the heart of the school and ensures there is an active Christian life in which boys are invited to participate. The total cost of funding the Chaplaincy this year was £73.5k (which includes salaries). The **Jesuit Trustees** continue to support the school by funding Chaplaincy Expenditure.

Music continues to play an important role in the life of the College. The busy extra-curricular timetable includes choirs, orchestras and ensembles for boys who wish to play pop or rock music. The music school facilities are used every day by boys who wish to practice either on their own or in groups. The Strings Project continues to flourish and boys are given the opportunity to learn the violin, viola, cello and double bass. This is entirely subsidised by the College and it has enabled boys to discover and enhance their musical talents. Instrumental lessons are given to an ever-increasing number of pupils, with a good uptake from the new Figures pupils - again utilising the Music School practice rooms to the full.

Musicals and plays The unusual academic year 2019-20 saw only one production: a version of "A Christmas Carol" by Gary Owen and Adrienne Quartly, with additional songs and music by the producers. Co-produced by a team of Kate O'Brien, Ifor Thomas, Nick England and Simon Potter, this show featured a big cast of 50 boys from the lower school, with Syntax pupils in the parts of Scrooge and Ghost of Christmas Past. Eight further pupils were in the band, six in the lighting and sound team and a further eight involved in props making and scenery painting. The producers had great help

from Adam Carrier-Sippy, Roschelle Brown, Andy Newman and Mark Walker (who constructed the large set to Nick England's design.) The show therefore involved both experienced pupils on stage and behind it, and plenty of keen drama newcomers from Figures (Year 7) to Grammar (Year 10). It played to full houses and was much liked. While rehearsals for "A Christmas Carol" were running, song-practice for the planned Sondheim musical "The Frogs" took place in the Music School. Alas, this show had to be cancelled in early March 2020, as did the Drama Department's plan to stage "The Mysteries" at Easter - both victims of the coronavirus.

Having received quotations from White Light for the re-equipping of the Hall lighting to LEDs and the phasing out of tungsten-filament stage lanterns, the Head Master and Simon Potter met to discuss the very large sums of money involved. It was decided to take advantage of the probable ten-year delay before tungsten-filament lamps cease to be available and equip the system with plenty of spare bulbs - on the grounds that "they will see us out"! This ensured that the recently purchased computerised control desk and dimmer packs will have a long further life. Before the lock-down, spares, as needed, were also ordered for the radio-microphone system in the hope that it will be fit for purpose for many more years. In the meanwhile, the renewal of our radio-microphone permit has been made.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict what - if any - extra-curricular theatrical events will be possible during the current pandemic. As pupils are in "bubbles", rehearsals which feature boys of different ages will not be possible. Choral singing is not recommended, which will no doubt rule out a musical, as are likely restrictions on the movement of UHS girls to be in College shows. There is still a question-mark over the place of activities after school in a time of staggered departures. The production team will no doubt think up possible socially-distanced theatrical/musical events for later in the year - but they haven't been able to do so yet!

The Music department gave its usual delightful Christmas joint WC/UHS carol service in December 2019 and provided music for the College Masses up until lock-down. The joint WC/UHS orchestra was also in rehearsal throughout the Christmas term. Sadly, however, the choir had to abandon its proposed European tour and there is no likelihood of the usual choral training taking place at present.

When normal activities resume (after a vaccine has been found) College boys will, as ever, be involved in set design, construction and painting for the shows, as will the College carpenter Mark Walker and the Art department led by Nick England; special effects, lighting and sound will also feature a team of boys. The broad range of involvement in after-school activities such as these provides opportunities for boys and girls to work together, engendering strong loyalty to the school, encouraging team-building and the confidence to cooperate and perform with others of different ages and abilities, so we hope that they may be able to resume, at least in part, at some time in the forthcoming academic year.

(Simon Potter and Kate O'Brien)

The school fund contribution to the development of Music and Drama this year was £14k.

The School Fund also provides modest support (this year around £3k) for pupils from families who simply cannot afford school uniform and participation in school activities and trips.