

Welcome to our Speech Day 2008. I have to say that this year has absolutely flown. It's been another incredibly busy year, packed full of events. This report is a mere snapshot of the busy time it has been.

But before we go any further, I have to mention a recent and outstanding achievement that as a school we are so proud of. Elmhurst are the U11 National Cricket Champions. Can we all put our hands together to congratulate all the boys involved, as well as Mr South and Mr Forrest for this remarkable achievement. We always knew the boys were champions and now the cricket community across the UK knows it too.

Staff Changes

In September, we welcomed some new staff to our team in different areas of the school. They all settled extremely quickly and well into the school and have significantly contributed to the ongoing development and success of both the boys and the school.

Mr Jiwanji, as you know is taking a very well-earned retirement, though his youthful looks hide him being anywhere near retirement age. I would like to thank him most sincerely for all his effort and dedication during his 10 years at Elmhurst. It is very much appreciated. I know now he is looking forward to moving over to Fiji, dipping his toes in crystal waters, basking in the sun and spending time now with his son, Daughter-in Law and his grandson who live there. We hope you have a very enjoyable and relaxing retirement.

As we have previously announced next year, Year 5 and Year 6 will benefit from the dedication and considerable expertise shown by Miss Allen. Mr Jiwanji and Miss Allen have been in close communication as he hands over his mantel to her as Head of Mathematics. Perhaps we should have a kind of ceremonial handing over of the 'Golden Calculator!'

Following Miss Allen's promotion, we are excited and looking forward to Mr Sayer joining us full-time in September and to Mr Ryan taking on his responsibility as our new Director of Studies in January.

Following confirmation from Mrs Pritchard-Wallace recently that she will not be returning from her maternity leave after her new baby, Maddison we began a selection process to find her replacement. After many applications, we are very pleased to have been able to appoint a very experienced teacher. We look forward to Mrs Twyford taking on the role of Head of Science as from September.

Finally here, as you may know. We will be having a new school secretary joining us in September. She will look the same as Miss Rowland; she will have the same amazing ability to multi-task a stream of jobs all at once. Her name will be Mrs Crawford and she will be sitting in place of Miss Rowland, no doubt with an even larger smile than normal. I am sure you will all join with me in wishing Paula all the very best for her coming 'Big Day' and we wish her and husband-to-be a very happy married life together.

I would like to take this opportunity to say just how lucky we are to have two such amazing people in the office. I know you will agree. The smile they bring to their job, the thoroughness they bring to it, as well as the unstinting devotion and care they show for the boys goes beyond anything in their job description. This is very much appreciated by myself, by the staff and I know by the boys. Thank you both.

I would like also, at this point, to thank all the teachers. Teaching is primarily about people and the people at Elmhurst who care for, guide and encourage your sons are truly outstanding in what they do. I feel privileged to work alongside such a dedicated and talented team.

Trips

We have had numerous day trips through the year, too many to mention but all of value in educating the children in the widest sense. Similarly we have had a great range of visits from workshop groups or individuals all of which have enhanced the learning process.

Avon Tyrrell

Again this year we visited Avon Tyrrell in the New Forest. It is an amazing place and a wonderful experience, full of challenges from shelter building, raft building to racing down the zip wire. The first difficult challenge that struck me was the boys trying to make their own beds! Some of them clearly had not done this before. I will never forget the image of the boys climbing inside their duvet and wrestling with them on the floor, completely unsure of what to do.

Seriously, this weekend is about many things. It's about listening to each other and working together; it's about facing challenges; it's about boys surprising themselves with new personal achievements. The instructors all commented on the boys' maturity and how sensibly they tackled all these challenges. All boys did so well.

The sun smiled upon us, the boys certainly enjoyed themselves and hopefully this is one of those experiences they will remember for many years to come.

Independent/Grammar School Results

Okay, it's warm in here and for those of you who may have drifted off to sleep, this is the most important part of my speech. This is the one of the reasons you send your boys here.

Again, this has been is one of the best years Elmhurst has experienced for scholarships maintaining last year's significant improvement. Scholarships and places offered were high, with 42% of the boys who went for Whitgift achieving Scholarship and 37% achieving scholarship at Trinity.

With Wallington Entrance test falling early this year, we adapted our timetable to incorporate a focus upon English and Maths the week before the exam this year.

This worked well. Results improved even upon last year's improvement. We will continue this next year.

This year in Year 6, 19 of the 25 boys who went for Trinity passed and 24 of the 27 boys who went for Whitgift passed. At the Grammar Schools, Wilsons offered 15 places; and Wallington 24 places.

If Mrs Arnold, as the Head of Literacy will forgive me, I will say "The boys done good."

My desire will be always be to extend the excellence in our results, to add further depth and quality of achievement for our boys.

With the very successful English Booster Class that we introduced this year, Miss Allen will also be introducing a Maths Booster Class next year, which I am sure will be just as popular.

In January, the Director of Studies role will start focussing upon tracking and ultimately developing each individual boy's achievement. This is a further exciting development I am looking forward to!

Sport at Elmhurst 2007/08

It has been an extremely busy year of sport, particularly for the boys in the upper school. Most year 6 boys and many in year 5 have been involved in one or several of our house competitions.

This year, Squire House did particularly well winning the Basketball, Swimming, Water-polo, Tennis and Chess. Scott won the hockey, athletics and cricket whilst Anderson were triumphant in football and rugby.

Two sports days were well organised, both in glorious sunshine, and much enjoyed by the boys, parents and staff. Years R-3 held the junior event at the Old Whitgiftians, with *Squire House* as the winners, whilst years 4-6 competed at the grounds of Trinity school for the 2nd year running. Scott won the Senior Sports Day.

Our success in inter-school fixtures and competitions continued this year with the school honouring a record number of fixtures and tournaments in all age groups.

For the first time in the sports history of Elmhurst, the school entered a year 2 team in the new U7 ISA football festival. Our youngest representatives did the school proud by winning 3 matches and drawing 1, without conceding a single goal.

Football

We had great expectations of our U11 first football team as they entered the competitive Croydon league. They won 8 out of their 10 league matches, which resulted in a strong 2nd place at the end of their league campaign, only losing out on the top spot to Park Hill on goal difference.

Our talented U11 boys went on to win the ISA regional championship to become the London South champions. We went to Suffolk, to represent London South in style. Only an unfortunate penalty shoot-out stopped us from reaching the semi-final in the Nationals. The boys did not concede a single goal in open play throughout the whole tournament. Our most prolific players throughout the season were our captain Matthew Jeffrey and Louis Gittens our top goal scorer.

Rugby (by CAS)

Rugby has continued to flourish at Elmhurst. All year groups from 3 – 6 performed really well. Our U11's were involved in some great matches, however the peak came against Breaside, a pulsating game which we eventually won. This was one of the best performances I think we have seen from an Elmhurst rugby team.

Further highlights were Year 4's aggressive running by Henry Biggs and solid tackling from Callum Cripps and John Whitfield in the Caterham U9's tournament. Decisive and effective scrum half play from Ashwyn Gomes in Year 5's match against Laleham Lea is also worth mentioning.

My thanks go to Mr Forrest and Mr South who have been tremendous in coaching the boys this year at all these levels.

Hockey

Our hockey boys also showed plenty of talent and fighting spirit. Under the captaincy of the skilful and versatile Gihan Fernando we made a good impression at the annual Surrey Mini-Hockey Championship, open to the best schools and club teams in the county. Our most memorable moment of the season was having beaten Trinity in two matches.

Athletics

In athletics, our year 4, 5 and 6 representatives improved on last year's overall 4th place at the ISA regional meeting at Norman Park, Bromley, by coming 3rd amongst 16 schools. Although we did not have any Elmhurst boys representing the area in the Nationals this year, we clearly showed plenty of strength in the depth of our squad. In year 6, Dominic Augustus came 2nd in the shot-put and Satbir Mann was 3rd in the cricket ball throwing. In year 5, Kyziah Nelson-Payne achieved a 2nd place in the high jump. Henry Biggs ran very well to come 2nd in the year 4, 60m. final. Many of our other boys reached various finals on the day.

Cricket

This season has seen Elmhurst play more cricket than ever before. Most groups playing at least one match against other schools. Mr Forrest and Mr Danny Dighton did a great job in organising things from U8 through to the U11 'B' team.

The U11's entered 3 tournaments this year. In the Surrey Cup they narrowly lost to City of London Freemans and in the Croydon Cup they played very well reaching the final, though they were sadly beaten.

The highlight of the cricketing year was the U11 convincing win of the ISA National Championship. This is the first time we have won a national title at cricket! Congratulations to them on a great team effort, everybody contributed through the day, but of special note is Gihan Fernando who averaged 104 for the tournament!

Table tennis

Table tennis has been very much brought alive this year thanks to the efforts of Mr Croft with an increasing array of practice sessions, try outs and fixtures organised.

Last year we started our provision of table tennis with friendly matches. This year we have introduced both an 'A' and 'B' team to a competitive league format, another added opportunity for our boys.

Two new in-house tournaments, Singles and Doubles Championship were also been introduced this year, as an addition to our standard House competition. After a strong competition, Matthew Jeffery and Aaron Massiah managed to win the Doubles and Curtis Rose won the Singles. Table Tennis has certainly taken a foothold in our provision making huge strides forward!

Swimming

Mrs Prior, as Head of Swimming has added further depth to an already strong area of the school this year. The morning Swimming Squad sessions have helped provide this. New heights have been reached! New opportunities have been provided. A particularly worthy mention being Anthony De Souza who recently competed in the London Youth Games, against 32 London Boroughs and came 1st and 2nd in both his races.

We came first in the ISA Regional Gala and the Year 6 team, Kunmi Ogunfeibo, Evan Reekie, Anthony De Souza and Pavan Murali went on to win the ISA finals in Coventry. Another team of National Champions!

Music Department

Music has been very much alive again this year! Our choirs took part in the Purley and Coulsden Music festival and the Croydon Music Festival with all choirs performing extremely well.

For those of you that attended the Whitgift Music Concert on Monday, I think you will agree that the performance of all of the boys there was amazing and the solo

performances really showcased the individual talent that is being developed at Elmhurst. Well done.

Our Sixth Form Recorders Group spent their annual day at The Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton, playing early music dressed up as Tudor minstrels. Mrs Gascoine reported how pleased she was with their behaviour and commitment.

In the individual music scene many successes were gained in grade examinations in a variety of instruments throughout the year. All this underlines the continued strength and reputation of our Music Department.

This is but a taste of the musical achievement that has taken place this year and congratulations go to Mrs Gascoine and Miss Cole in continuing the excellence of music within the school.

Conclusion

We have spoken about Avon Tyrrell already and what is about. After that weekend, standing before you today, I've never been surer that the boys here now are ready to move on. They have reached the end of one journey and are ready to begin another. They are ready to face new challenges, ready to reach for new heights and ready to work with new teams. I know Elmhurst has prepared them well for what lies ahead. We will miss you, we will miss you all, but we wish you well.

Whether you receive an award today or not, well done to all boys for your achievements and your hard work. Good luck and stay in touch.

I would like to introduce Mr McGovern, our guest speaker.

Boys, do you know the games Fifa Soccer, Mortal Kombat? Well Mr McGovern is responsible for these games and many others. I'd like to thank him very much for coming to be our Guest Speaker today. We will now ask him to present the prizes. Please put your hands together for Mr Fergus McGovern.