

The Swaminarayan

EDUCATION IS THAT WHICH LIBERATES

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Theme for next week

The theme for the first week after the summer holidays is “**Our mother and father.**” I have written about it on the back of the newsletter. It is fitting and very appropriate that we honour our parents in the first week back because they are our most important role models.

Thank you to everyone for another wonderful year

This year has gone by so fast that we have hardly had time to pause and reflect. It has in many ways been a sad year, because of the passing away of our beloved Founder PP Pramukh Swami Maharaj, and the unexpected sadness of hearing the news about the closure of the 6th Form. Yet we end with so much to look forward to with the 6th Form rescued, new pupils starting, the anticipation of the refurbishment of the Gymnasium, finally, and of course, the prospect of helping the pupils to reach for the very best that life has to offer.

Apart from all the staff who have all made a noble effort throughout the year, the pupils too have worked with great diligence and purpose and after having signed the reports and written a comment in each and everyone one, I have seen a great deal of progress from most of them. I know the parents have equally been wonderful and supported in the true spirit of parenthood because, as I often reflect in front of all you in meetings, our children are under tremendous pressure to succeed. Our sincere thanks to the staff, parents, santos, trustees, governors, friends, the pupils and anyone else who has had a part to play – large or small, in the success of this year. Have a relaxing summer break, find some quiet time to reflect upon year, to pray, go to the city, discover the many museums and theatres and make it a summer to remember.

Prep Prize Day – Thank you

I want to humbly thank Mr. Raja, the staff, parents and the wonderful pupils for their warm reception to my speech at the Prep Prize Day. It was an absolute honour to speak to all you and learn about your unshaken commitment to your children and the school. You should know that TSS is not a job for me, but a passion. Many of you asked for a copy, so I have printed it below.

We live in challenging times, where the sharp tooth of competition is at every edge, where good manners and good values are a rarity. Over the last few years, the staff in all departments of the school have come together, to make sure that there is continuity from Foundation to Infants, from Junior to Senior and from senior to 6th Form. This continuity is founded on the core values of TSS, of Friendliness, Respect, Humility, Honesty and Teamwork. All of them have one source – Non-violence – Ahimsa, in any form. Bhagawan Swaminarayan defines it as the highest ethical principle by which all our lives should be guided, no matter how young or old we are.

The beneficiary of these values are the pupils, because, what you don't see is what I see. Subject leader meetings between Prep and Senior teachers which allows the curriculum in all subjects to flow from one stage to another, from one year to another, providing pupils with a seamless transition in their development.

This is so apparent when pupils transfer from Year 6 to Senior 1 – Year 7. Heads of English and Mathematics work with Year 6 teachers in preparation for the Entrance Examinations, in fact starting the consultation at Year 5 when they meet parents and give them the guidance about the focus of the exams. Supported by the dedication of the Prep teachers, it is not surprising therefore that most of the scholarships are won by our prep children.

At the later part of Year 5, pupils enjoy the benefits of Taster lessons with the senior teachers, experiencing such diverse curriculum as Drama where our award winning teacher in Mr Benenson takes them through their paces with great gusto, in Art where the experienced eyes of Miss Morrison gently trains the pupils in the complexities of creating a fine painting, in Science, where Mr Ragvani brings lessons alive with dissections of a pig's heart. This year, Mrs Austin and Mr Worth took the bold move of taking them to Welsh Harp, where they enjoyed kayaking under the watchful eyes of a trained coach.

In Mathematics, Mr Stewart –Brown works with prep teachers to prepare the pupils for the Mathematics Challenge Tests, guiding and supporting them with his challenge videos, so meticulously prepared to give them the best chance of Gold Awards.

The beauty of seamless transition from one stage to another cannot be underestimated, because, research shows that pupils lose six months to a year when they move from one school to another while they are settling down and getting used to the new environment, new teachers.

Our pupils benefit, because they finish GCSEs in Mathematics, RS, Gujarati, Computer Science and French by the end of Year 10, one year early. The current Year 11 have testified its benefits; all had completed four to five GCSE by the end of Year 10, achieving an A*-A percentage of 88%, prevented only by achieving 100% by few weaknesses in Gujarati. This would not have been possible without the strong foundation laid in the prep years and our audacity to start the teaching of the GCSE curriculum from Year 9.

Further collaborations are visible in the sharing of pupil information so that we can allow all of them to reach their true potential, about health and welfare, LAMDA, weekly meetings between Mr Raja and me, so that the school functions as one, together, united in our joint efforts to make it into what it already is – one of the best schools in the country. Where the people are willing, where the heart is strong, the limits of facilities and environment or the lack of them, cannot hold us back in making TSS one of the great schools of the world. You see, education is not about buildings, bricks and mortar, it is about people, about nurturing people to look beyond their limits.

I want to end by congratulating Mr Raja, the staff and the pupils, for another wonderful year of delivering outstanding success.

Next Year

I have attached the end of year Swaminarayan with this newsletter, and the all the important dates for the academic year 2017/18 to enable you to plan in advance. Please remember that the school will open for pupils to return on Monday, 4th September 2017. Staff will return to school on Thursday, 30th August 2017 for two days of training.

GCSE & A Level Results Publication Dates

I will, of course, be here with many senior teachers on the days of the publication of the GCSE and A Level results:

A Level Results Published: Thursday, 17th August 2017
Urgent Remarks for A Levels Thursday, 17th August 2017
GCSE Results Published: Thursday, 24th August 2017

Our Mother and Father

Think

Those of you who have a family will know what I mean when I say that your family must be the most important group of people in your life. We are not all lucky to be born into happy families. You will have heard about it from your friends; sad, sorry stories about how unhappy they are, how their parents will not allow them to go out, where their mother and father argue all the time and their brothers and sisters don't get on. Yet you must know that your mother and father love you more than you can imagine. You would not have become the child that you are now if they had not loved you. Situations where a child is not loved by their parents are rare.

Feel

When you are down it will be your parents who will come to you, put their arms around your shoulder, wrap you up in their warm embrace and say a few soothing words to lift you from sadness, and don't you feel like all your troubles have floated away? They are not perfect and they will be the first people to own up to that fact. Sometimes they will not get everything right, but know that they are trying very hard. It isn't easy for them to go to work, keep a house, put food on the table everyday, dress you, buy you things that you may want just because Amar's or Sonia's parents bought it for them. Be patient with them and tell them that you appreciate all the effort they making in raising you. They like the feeling of your embrace as much as you like the warmth of theirs.

Do

You are the way you are because of the unselfish love of your parents. Ask those who do not have that privilege and hear them say how lucky you are. Remember that always and don't ever take them for granted because one day, before you know it, they will not be there and then you will know how much you miss them and be sorry that you didn't tell them enough times how much you loved them and thanked them for everything they had done for you. You must cherish them always.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani