

Friday 8 November 2013 – Foundation Newsletter Follow us on Twitter: @SPFSchools

The need to think critically has never been more important

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the start of a new half term at the Stephen Perse Foundation.

As an independent school, we have the space to determine our own education philosophy. For us, in a time of rapid change, we believe absolutely in the concept of educating a "critically literate citizenry". The vital importance of critical thinking – rarely mentioned in our national debate – is a prerequisite for anyone being educated in the digital age. With the emphasis on league tables and concomitant focus required from schools on this metric, it is quite possible that a young person can leave school with a clutch of good grades but frankly an inability to think independently. Indeed, we have received feedback from HE Admissions' tutors who despair of candidates from very successful schools with a starry "A" profile yet cannot respond to questioning which takes them out of their specification comfort zone.

This is not an either/or issue. We believe strongly that students can achieve the necessary results to support their life chances but this need not be at the expense of their broader education. In the end, this is about what we value. Our school values a holistic approach to learning which is about the development of the individual. In the sound and fury surrounding education debate in this country, it is timely to remember the importance of educating the individual who must be critically literate in our brave new technological world.

With kindest regards,

Tricia Kelleher
Principal

Follow Tricia on Twitter: @StephenPerse

Education – it's all about the economy isn't it?

The introduction above forms part of the latest blog piece from Tricia Kelleher.

You can read the full article, which gives a more in-depth explanation of our thinking, on Tricia's blog here: <http://stephenperse.wordpress.com/2013/11/03/education-its-all-about-the-economy-isnt-it/>

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News from across the Foundation

This week's newsletter is a little different, as we're just showing you some snippets of news from around the Foundation.

We look forward to telling you about arts and drama next week, as part of our series of learning newsletters.

Pre-prep

The KS1 children have returned to the Fitzwilliam Museum to investigate using their magnifying glasses and research using their binoculars. Cambridge truly is our campus as the children are now asking if the Fitzwilliam Museum is their new classroom!

They went to find out more about ancient jewels and armour that kings and queens over time had in their possession. The children used the images to collect information and then made Pic Collages on site. They also collected numerous sketches and read labels carefully to get further information. We hope that our clay versions of what we saw will be equally as impressive.

Read this on the website: [click here](#).



Junior School

The Under 11 hockey teams played Perse Prep on Wednesday; A team drew 0-0, B team won 1-0.

Year 3 classes have completed their first topic of the year 'Our Community' – as well as working on this theme in several subject areas at school they really enjoyed exploring their home neighbourhoods and sharing that through their 'Community Challenge' projects with others in the year group.

Year 3 nature club members had a great first visit to the Botanic on Tuesday.

We are marking Michael Morpurgo month with readings from a different book every day and JS pupils will be entering his competition later in term.

We are looking forward to Music and Drama workshop tomorrow afternoon.

The Sports Liaison committee from Year 11 visited the Junior School assembly this morning and shared how we will be holding a Dodgeball Tournament in aid of British Heart Foundation later in the month.

Follow the Junior School on Twitter to see photos and keep up to date with all their news: [@SPFJuniors](#)

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Dame Bradbury's School

Dame Bradbury's has had a very busy start to the second half of term, beginning on the first day back with the Primary Arts Festival. Nearly 300 children from 10 different schools in Uttlesford were united in a series of creative workshops, three of which were held at Dame B's, the organizers of the Festival. The day was a great success – [click here for further details](#).

The first sporting fixture after the break was the USSP Cross Country event at the Friends' School where all the Dame B's runners performed excellently despite the miserable conditions. Special congratulations go to Robbie and Imogen of Year 4 who received silver and bronze medals respectively, and to the Year 4 boys who won the team event in style.

Year 5 have been busy with final preparations and rehearsals for their special adaptation of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' which they will perform at the Mumford Theatre in Cambridge next week as part of the Shakespeare Schools' Festival. Everyone is very excited about the performance and we wish them every success with it.

The hectic first week back ended on a quieter note as Mr Jones led a moving Remembrance Assembly. The children, all wearing poppies, had the opportunity to remember those who have fought for their country ahead of this Sunday's Remembrance Day.

Senior School and 6th Form

This week saw the first major concert of the year with the Autumn Concert. Performers from every year of the Senior School and Sixth Form took part – to read more about this and other upcoming music events [click here](#).

Two trips took place over the October half term that included year 11 students as well as sixth formers.

There was a Classics and Italian trip to Sicily, and a combined History, Visual Arts and Design trip to Berlin.

To read more about both these trips please go to the news pages on our stephenperse.com website by clicking [here for the Sicily trip](#) and [here for the Berlin trip](#).



More photos from both trips can also be found on our [Flickr pages here](#).