

Newsletter

October 2001

28 October 2001

Dear Friends

The world of education and schools at times seems to be a never ending series of new initiatives and change. New subjects, new technology and new methods of teaching have made schools unrecognisable in many ways to those of us whose days as a pupil were more than even ten years ago. How did teachers manage before the television, computer and photocopier? What did pupils learn before they had CD Roms, laptop computer or the wap phone?

I would argue that, despite the climate of constant change, the fundamentals of education have remained unchanged since we were pupils. Education is not vocational training and the value of learning is not judged by the "marketability" of subject knowledge. Part of the Harris legacy is that we view education as the preparation of the young person to participate fully as a citizen of the world.

When considering the terrible events of the past month one of my recurring thoughts has been that the people who have committed these acts of mass murder were pupils at schools sometime in their past. Teachers had the opportunity to have some impact on their life at an early stage. As you all well know, we in Harris educate our pupils in the context of a clearly stated and robust set of values. We believe it is vital in producing the citizens of tomorrow that young people learn the importance of having beliefs and opinions and have the ability to express them freely. Of even greater significance in being a citizen in a democracy is the ability to accept that others may have views which are at odds with our own and they also have an equal right of expression.

The world at present might appear a depressing and sad place. It is, I feel, important that schools such as Harris take the lead in promoting their long held values of tolerance and valuing others, in the belief and confidence that the citizens of tomorrow will be able to overcome the intolerance and brutality of today.

Yours faithfully

Mr J Thewliss

Head Teacher