

Change

Fellow Trustees, Dr Barsham, Leaders, Staff, students and parents – good evening and thanks for coming along to share in the success of the wonderful students of Hollygirt.

Dr Costley, our Chair of Trustees sends her best wishes, congratulations to the prize winners and apologises that she is not able to be able to join you this evening. In her absence, as Vice Chair of Trustees, I've been invited to speak on behalf of the Trustees of Hollygirt and I thought that it might be helpful at the start of the new academic year to reflect on the subject of change.

Sometimes we get a bit worried (or very worried) about thinking about things being different and changing – certainly, too much change can be absolutely exhausting whilst too little change is very boring. Even if you try not to change, things around you will change and you will have to adapt and change in response.

As Trustees of Hollygirt, we think long and hard about change – particularly about positive changes (those changes that are made to make things better, they might not always be easy). Some of these changes you will notice, some you may not.

When Dr Barsham joined us two years ago, some in our school community were really worried about the change in headteacher. Mrs Hutley had been a popular headteacher for so many years, how could we possibly replace her? Change brought worries and anxieties for some - *would the new headteacher be as good, would she be too different? Would there be too many changes, would our Hollygirt still be our Hollygirt?*

Dr Barsham and her leadership team have led much change and yet she's taken you with her on the journey of change and, yes, Hollygirt is still Hollygirt (and the girls are allowed to wear trousers now, there's a sparkling new minibus to you to get to sporting fixtures and go on visits, and you've got a sixth form).

Students, when you returned to school after the holidays – wasn't it lovely to be back? Back to the school you know and love. Did you spot the changes? Mr Bowker and his team have led lots building work; there's been considerable investment and upgrading of facilities, together with the launch of our new and exciting Sixth Form led by our relatively new colleague, Mrs Alison Brown. We have also been delighted to welcome our new Food & Nutrition teacher Laura Hill whilst some teachers have new leadership responsibilities – the work led by Mr Chollerton with PSHE is looking really different and interesting. Change is something that great teachers are used to and adapt positively to – I apologise that there isn't time to name check all the colleagues who have adapted their responsibilities in the past year.

Less noticeable, but equally important, has been some of the mechanics to support the running of a great school to include the communications with parents, the way teachers assess and report student achievement, and how we use what students say to reflect on what we do well and where we can bring positive change?

So, next time you're worried about things changing and not being the same, it's helpful to think about the positive things in change to enable new opportunities.

Change can support our personal growth. We grow and learn new things every time something changes. We discover new ways of looking at things and learn lessons (even from changes that led us to end up in the wrong place).

As we grow, change can develop your flexible attitude and it's less daunting to adapt to new situations, new environments, and new people. As a result, we're less likely freak out when something unexpectedly alters.

We all have things in our lives we'd like to improve—whether it's more money, more friends, an iPhone 15 pro or a Nimbus 2000, and parents might think about better jobs, houses, holidays, children, etc. Surely, nothing will improve by itself. We have to do things differently to make bring about change, so, without change, nothing can get better.

Clearly, not all change is great and sometimes things happen that we wouldn't want to happen – we don't live in a fairy tale and sad things happen too. Being resilient in tough times makes us stronger.

These challenges can help us to progress – or they make things around us adapt and move forward. It's how we respond that's really important because we never know what opportunities and good things may happen as a result of change.

Every change can be the start of a new beginning. So, whilst Hollygirt continues to adapt and change and thrive – is there anything that you could change that would help you to achieve your ambitions?

We live in a world of change and I hope that reflecting on the importance and value of change has been time well spent for you. I hope it gives you confidence to make steps for positive change and the resilience to respond to change when comes your way and you can't control it.

The Trustees will be working hard to provide support and guidance to make sure that decisions made to support changes are the right ones, of course Dr Barsham will continue to lead, nurture and challenge when she needs to. Your teachers will continue to give their all to give you the very best education and the back-of-house team, those staff who don't teach but who support, repair, guide and nurture will also continue to give their all to give you the best.

Most of all, I and my fellow trustees, wish you a very happy and enjoyable new academic year and congratulate all those students who have won awards this evening. Perhaps you might like to think about the changes you made to achieve your success?

Thank you, we hope you enjoy the evening.