



Message from Kevin McKellar

Dear Parent/Carer,

The cherry blossom has come into bloom. It is the time of year when we have our Japanese visitors. This is such an important occasion for the school. We are thrilled at the fact that we have 22 Japanese students learning all about our curriculum at Hendon. The teachers are also having a fantastic time. Mr Eyi, the international links organiser works tirelessly to give all students the best possible time.

Sincere thanks to the parents and carers who are currently hosting our Japanese visitors. I hope that you find it as rewarding as an experience as I do.

I was talking to a group of Japanese students about the importance of cherry blossom within their culture. There is an official Japanese ceremony every year to celebrate life in full bloom. It is a gentle reminder of the importance of education, fulfilling your potential and enjoying life to the full. We learn so much from our Japanese partnership. The relationship continues to go from strength to strength and I am absolutely thrilled with the progress that our students are making, not only in Japanese but with all subjects across the school. Hendon is a very exciting place to be.

Working with Shine

We are pleased to announce that we will be working with an education charity called Shine. Sir Alex Ferguson the ex-manager of Manchester United talks quite powerfully about his favourite teacher. Please read his extract and please read my email to him and his education charity:-

Sir Alex Ferguson remembers his best teacher

Published in TES magazine on 28 February, 2014 | By: Tom Cullen

One of the most successful managers in the history of football reveals how his competitive instinct was fostered by a strict but dedicated teacher with a 'never give in' attitude

Elizabeth Thomson was an inspiration to me. That's the perfect word to describe her. The area of Glasgow I grew up in, Govan, had one of the highest truancy rates in the city. She came from a different world, really. She was from a middle-class, wealthy family, but she had a raw determination about her.

When she first got to Broomloan Road Primary, she went round to the house of every student who wasn't in her class that day and said, "If your kid isn't in school tomorrow, I'll be back at your door." That was the first thing she made clear: "If you get your kid into school, I'll make something of them. That's all you need to do - get them there. I'll do the rest."

She was a fierce woman with an incredible drive, and she commanded the utmost respect from students. I remember when she got married, I was 11, and six of us travelled across Glasgow - to the posh side - to be there for her. That was the kind of respect this woman had.

When I think about her now, I realise that it wasn't all about education. Mrs Thomson endeavoured to make you want to be the best you could be.

Did she help to form my character? Well, she had a gritty determination about her; a competitive nature. On a Friday afternoon, she'd always give us an hour of playing rounders. Once, I was batting and I tapped the ball, then did the bare minimum to get to first base. "Ferguson!" she roared. "You tap that ball again and I will have you." So I battered the next ball out of sight and ran like hell. She was good like that. She got you performing, you know? Yes, I think there's part of me that comes from her. That determination and that sense of drive. That "never give in" attitude she had about all her students.

One day, when I was playing for Rangers, I received a letter from her. I hadn't heard from her in years and years. In it, she wrote: "Are you the same Alex Ferguson who, when I asked the entire class what they wanted to be when they were older, was the only one to say footballer?" I wrote back to say yes and we were in contact again until she passed away. When I moved to Aberdeen, to manage, she came to spend the weekend with us. The same went for when I moved to Manchester.

When she died, I couldn't go to the funeral because Manchester United were playing abroad, but months later I received a parcel. She had bequeathed her belt to me. Her nephew sent it to me along with a letter that said: "You'll know more about this belt than anyone." It's in my study. My grandchildren are terrified of it. Six from that belt and you were in absolute agony. I used to try to draw my hand away. But that was the sort of punishment you had if you stepped out of line. In my case, it was usually for fighting in the playground.

She took an interest in the kids, though. If she was worried that they weren't eating much at home, she'd sure as hell make sure that they ate well at school.

Teaching is a vocation, isn't it? That's what teachers are born to do. And they take it on as a quest to be the very best. Elizabeth was from a good class of family and she came to Govan. Maybe 2,000 teachers turned the job down, turned down that sort of challenge, but she thrived on it. She improved everyone she touched. She actively sought out challenge.

The three ingredients to Elizabeth, when I think about it, were personality, determination and energy. Anyone who's in charge of someone else needs those three ingredients. It just won't work without them.

Sir Alex Ferguson was speaking to Tom Cullen. Sir Alex is a patron of education charity Shine, which runs Let Teachers Shine, a competition to fund innovative teacher-led ideas to raise attainment in the classroom. To apply for a grant of up to £15,000 before the closing date of 27 April, visit shinetrust.org.uk

Take a bow

Sir Alex Ferguson

Born: 31 December 1941, Govan, Glasgow, Scotland

Education: Broomloan Road Primary School and Govan High School

Career: Footballer and football manager. During his 26 years managing Manchester United, the team won 38 trophies, including 13 Premier League and two Uefa Champions League titles.



Dear Sir Alex and Tom,

My name is Kevin Thomas McKellar and I am the Headteacher of Hendon School in North London. I was very inspired by the article published in the TES magazine on 28th February 2014. I come from the East End of Glasgow and I am sure that you will be aware of the fact that it is a very deprived part of Britain. My education consisted of watching local gangs fight on a daily basis. Truancy and glue sniffing was a way of life for so many young people. I even remember local celebrities coming to get the members of my community to surrender their knives, and other offensive weapons. All I can remember is the violence and lack of respect for education.

I taught myself how to read and write after saving up all of my mother's cigarette coupons. I ordered a set of 'fancy' books from the Embassy cigarette catalogue. I hardly ever attended primary school. Learning how to read and write was incredibly difficult. I understand how young people can be so easily alienated by language. I always teach with this in mind. I use humour to break down barriers and I continually encourage the children to be 'wildly intellectual' and great explorers in education.

I became obsessed with becoming a teacher after all of the 'put downs' from my teachers. I do have one teacher who believed in me and was enough to ignite my passion for education. Like Sir Alex, I was so used to getting 'the belt' from her on a regular basis. I also remember her crying because she knew that it was not leading to any form of improvement, it just made me more stubborn, and more angry at the education system. She tried other forms of discipline - on one particular occasion, she got me to copy poetry out of a book. I distinctly remember being completely inspired by The Shakespeare Sonnets and his thoughts on love. I decided there and then that I wanted to become an English teacher.

I was also touched by the article because Sir Alex talks about living in Govan. I thought that Govan was quite posh! I have attached a photograph of me abseiling, without a safety harness, down one of the high rise blocks in Govan. My first job was a steeplejack and I remember looking over to the Glasgow and Strathclyde university with a sense of passionate determination to get the best education possible.

My mother was from Aberdeen. She is a distant relative of Dennis Law and she would regularly talk to me about the power of practice and being devoted to purposeful practice. She used to tell me a lovely story about Dennis and his glasses and his 'bandy' legs and how he received many put downs. Within her family, there is the total admiration for his efforts to become a footballer. Apparently, he devoted every second of every minute of every hour of every day to his football. His goal was to extend his mind and body, to push himself beyond his capabilities. He engaged so deeply in his sport that he completely transformed himself.

As a Headteacher, I am continually talking to the staff and students about this. I am also passionate about challenging 'mental truancy'. I continually remind our students that there are 57 million children who don't have the right to education today. I do all that I can to make education at Hendon fun and exciting and rigorously challenging. Hendon School used to be in Special Measures 7 ½ years ago. It is now one of the highest achieving comprehensive schools nationally and Ofsted have deemed us to be Outstanding. But, you are only ever as good as your last game. I am continually talking to staff and students about being devoted to purposeful practice and achievement.

I would therefore love to be a part of the education charity 'Shine'. I was one of the first Advanced Skills Teachers in the country and I am more than happy to share my ideas, teaching techniques etc if it will help in any way. I also have the privilege of working alongside some of the most talented teachers in Britain, one of them is a teacher called Jill Hickman who has worked at the school for 37 years and is my version of Elizabeth Thomson. She is an inspiration to me. We call her 'Mrs Hendon'. She would also like to be involved with your charity work. I have told Jill that she may be leaving Hendon to retire, but the world of education still needs her genius. We promise that we will work tirelessly for your charity.

We would love to hear from you.

Kind regards,

Kevin McKellar

HOPE for Children

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had a student leadership group supporting the local Charity 'HOPE for Children' in school for over 5 years now. This group raises money to fund projects in this country and abroad that support homeless, orphaned, poor and exploited children. We are currently raising money specifically for a school in the Philippines. This school is situated next to a rubbish tip and a shanty town which works on the rubbish tip. Life expectancy in this town is 36 years. Children as young as 3 are often seen picking rubbish to help afford their family enough food for the day. The school takes children out of this environment, pays the parents a bag of rice per day for sending their children to school, provides health care, a dentist, social workers and other support workers to deal with the large social needs of these children, and provides a free education including food. I have been privileged to visit this institution and it is inspirational in the true sense of the word. For more information please visit the following web sites: <http://www.p-c-f.org/> and www.hope-for-children.org.

We currently have two school initiatives to support this school, one is collecting ring-pulls from the tops of drink cans; these are turned into jewellery by parents of the school children and then sold to raise money for them and the school. The other is a sponsored swim. This swim will take place at Copthall Pool from 2.00 to 3.50pm on Tuesday the 25th of March. We are looking for up to 80 students to get sponsorship and take part. Students will travel by minibus from school to the pool, swim and then return by minibus. I will be advertising this to all students and giving those who would like to take part a letter to take home with permission slip which will need signing and returning along with the sponsor form. Please remember that numbers are limited due to pool regulations and the time and amount of lanes allocated to us. I am looking forward to your child taking part.

Tom Mann - Assistant Headteacher

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