

Gartree High School

Ridgeway, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5TQ



31st March 2017

Dear parents/carers,

Well done and thank you to all parents and students who helped to raise £1,687.58 on Red Nose Day. This is a significant contribution to a very worthy cause.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of school life is recognising and celebrating the outstanding work of our students. This week I have had the pleasure of signing certificates for effort and achievement across all curriculum areas. These certificates will be awarded at our Celebration Assemblies next week. Year 7 and 8 students will receive their spring grade reports today, and I am in the process of writing to the parents of those students who have been given a Grade A for effort from all of their subject teachers. This is to congratulate them on their exemplary attitude displayed in school each and every day.

Teachers often nominate a student for a Headteacher's merit. Sometimes the student is sent to see me during the day to show me their work and talk about their learning. Yesterday, I saw Libby in Year 8 with her Year 8 'concept chair' from DT and Xander in Year 6 with his maths SATs paper. Both wonderful achievements and deserving of recognition and both students thriving in school and enjoying their learning.

Ensuring our students enjoy learning is so important. Teachers constantly seek to plan and prepare learning experiences that present a challenge that is accessible. The level of challenge needs to be difficult enough to take sufficient effort, that once met gives a sense of achievement. Finding the exact level of difficulty for activities is not easy, but if you have ever tried a Sudoku or a crossword you will appreciate exactly what I mean. Too easy and we are switched off, too difficult and we will give up. Exposing students to a level of challenge is vital in engaging and motivating them. As Daniel T Willingham says in his book *Why don't students like school?* - *"We find successful thinking pleasurable. We like solving problems, understanding new ideas and so forth. Thus, we seek out opportunities to think, but we are selective in doing so; we choose problems that pose some challenge but that seem likely to be solvable because these are the problems that lead to feelings of pleasure and satisfaction."* As an advocate of life-long learning, the problems we solve throughout life give us great satisfaction and can make us feel happy. So if you are sitting with a cross word or helping your son/daughter with their maths homework, I hope the level of challenge is right and I wish you an enjoyable weekend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'S. Singleton'.

Sonia Singleton
Headteacher

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