



Monday 12th September 2022 - Community Assembly



(Text of Mr Lawlor's assembly, Friday 9th September 2022)

Good morning and welcome to this special assembly.

It is right and proper for us to gather this morning, as a school community, as a mark of respect on this momentous occasion.

First and foremost, this is a moment of profound sadness for a family.

It is also, of course, a significant moment for our country and in our history as the second Elizabethan Age comes to an end.

On the occasion of her 21st birthday, in April 1947, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II delivered a speech in which she said:

“I declare before you all, that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service...”

And what a long life, and what an extraordinary life of service.

On 5th April 2020, the Queen addressed the nation, as the country, and indeed the world, entered the Covid pandemic.

I think the words and themes that were expressed by the Queen then, resonate now.

So, I will read some of the words spoken by the Queen on that day:

“I am speaking to you at what I know is an increasingly challenging time.

A time of disruption in the life of our country: a disruption that has brought grief to some... and enormous changes to the daily lives of us all.

I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge.

And those who come after us will say the Britons of this generation were as strong as any.

That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet good-humoured resolve and of fellow-feeling, still characterise this country.

The pride in who we are is not a part of our past, it defines our present and our future.

The moments when the United Kingdom has come together to applaud its essential workers will be remembered as an expression of our national spirit; and its symbol will be the rainbows drawn by children.

And though self-isolating may at times be hard, many people of all faiths and of none are discovering that it presents an opportunity to slow down, pause, and reflect in prayer or meditation.

We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return.

But for now, I send my thanks and warmest good wishes to you all.”

You will have noticed that we are flying the Union flag at half-mast at the front of our school as our collective mark of respect.

As a country, we are now in a state of national mourning.

As a state school, we will be observing all that is expected of us.

Starting today, we will host a special banner on our website homepage.

We will also display a series of photographs of the Queen and her family on the digital screens around our school.

But most importantly, we will do what the Queen herself exemplified – we will continue to do our work and to move forward.

I ask you all to now bow your heads for a moment of silent reflection.

I share an opinion with you: I hope that politics can pause for a while. Whether you are a monarchist or a republican, and wherever you sit on the political spectrum, I hope we can all come together to respect an individual of genuine significance to our national life and to our national history. Hopefully, politics can quieten so we can all pay our rightful respects.

Thank you for your time and attention this morning.