

Friday 27th March 2026

Dear Parents, Staff, Alumni and Friends of Heritage School,

Towards fullness of life

At the start of our Spring Concert on Wednesday evening ([see photos here](#)), I posed this question to the audience: what is the ultimate point of education? That may seem rather heavy for the start of such a cheerful event! But I make no apology for pausing to orientate and frame our work. We need to know what we're aiming at, and, I would add, it needs to be an idea big enough to hold everything we do. It also needs to be profound enough to *inspire*.

So what's the answer? The ultimate purpose of education, I said, is to set our children and young people as best we can on a path towards fullness of life. Fullness of life – that's the true goal of education; that's the north star. At Heritage, at least, everything we do finds its meaning in relation to that end.

I went on to say that one of the most important ways we try and achieve this is to help our pupils *enter into* all that is good, true and beautiful. I concluded by saying that, for me, celebrating our music makers and enjoying music together at our Spring Concert embodies these goals and brings them into focus.

In addition to celebrating music in our Spring Concert and our Recital Assemblies, Heritage has been a busy hive of all manner of life-giving activity this term. Here are a few highlights to draw your attention to:

Special assemblies

- ❖ Class assemblies by LP, Y2, Y3 and Y5
- ❖ A music recital assembly for Infants / Juniors
- ❖ A music recital assembly for Seniors
- ❖ Poetry recitation assemblies for Infants / Juniors and one for Seniors
- ❖ An Easter Service for Seniors at St Edward King and Martyr (this morning)

Special focus days

- ❖ [International Day \(more photos here\)](#) – celebrating the world's diverse countries, languages, cultures and traditions
- ❖ [World Book Day \(more photos here\)](#) – a range of activities throughout the day for Infants, Juniors and Seniors to celebrate the wonderful world of books
- ❖ [Careers Week](#) – including a carousel of presentations to Y7-Y10 pupils from parents about their area of work

Trips (some of many!)

- ❖ Ely (LP, UP, Y2) – to be 'monk for the day' at Ely Cathedral
- ❖ [Sedgwick Earth Sciences Museum](#) (LP)
- ❖ [The Museum of Classical Archaeology](#) (Y3)



- ❖ The National Gallery (Y6)
- ❖ The British Museum (Y8)
- ❖ [Geography field trip to Park Farm](#) (Y8)
- ❖ Geography field work in Eddington (Y10)
- ❖ Cambridge (Science) Festival talks (Y8)

Shakespeare

- ❖ Y6-Y10 enjoyed a production of *Comedy of Errors* at the ADC Theatre in Cambridge.
- ❖ Y7 performed [Julius Caesar](#).
- ❖ Y6 performed [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#).
- ❖ Three Heritage pupils were selected as finalists in the [ISA Shakespeare Monologue Competition](#).
- ❖ In addition, over 25 pupils did extremely well in their recent LAMDA exams.



Sport

Our pupils have participated in various matches or competitions this term, including:

- ❖ Y7-8 boys hockey v The Leys
- ❖ Y9-11 boys hockey v The Leys
- ❖ Y7-8 girls netball v The Leys
- ❖ Y9-11 girls netball v The Leys
- ❖ Anglia School cross-country race
- ❖ [ISA cross-country regionals](#) (Juniors and Seniors)
- ❖ ISA cross-country nationals (Seniors)



Other highlights

- ❖ Research fortnight – where pupils in Y7-Y9 take ownership for their own learning and explore a topic in depth, culminating in a presentation or essay
- ❖ [House Singing Competition](#) – Senior pupils, organised into their four houses, performed a song of their choice in an assembly before a very exacting judge!
- ❖ The Team Maths Challenge – four pupils represented Heritage at the all-day event hosted by The Leys

HCA events

- ❖ Burns Night – thank you to Helen Orr and the team for another fantastic ceilidh
- ❖ Coffee morning
- ❖ [Pub Quiz](#) – thank you to Katie Wright for a very enjoyable evening (notice who's on the winning team!)

I am grateful to our team of over 50 staff members, and the support of many parent volunteers too, who have made the work of this term possible.

Marketing Review Update

We are making good progress on a review of our marketing and communications activities. Our website will be updated over the coming months, and we will soon be seeking to appoint a new

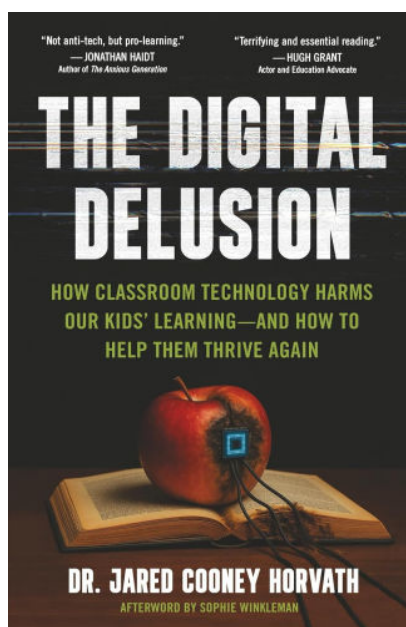
Marketing Officer. I want to express my appreciation to Catherine Kang for her generous support in this interim period.

*It is heartening to see significant developments recently with respect to smartphones, social media and healthy childhood development (see [Smartphone Free Childhood](#)). The other pressing issue is EdTech, and all the more with the rise of AI. In early January I had the privilege of speaking to a group of schools in the Netherlands about why we do not make use of EdTech in routine teaching. In January I spoke on these themes to our pupils in assemblies in January and wrote the following short article about AI in education for *The Independent Schools Christian Alliance (TISCA) Spring 2026* magazine.*

AI or RI?

It is just over three years since the latest technological revolution in the form of ChatGPT was unleashed upon humanity, firing the starting gun for the current frenetic scramble to get ahead, and stay ahead, in the AI race. Progress (read: “money”) beckons! No matter that many industry leaders have warned, literally, of an existential threat. No matter that we don’t know what we’re progressing towards. We cannot afford to pause. We must keep up or we’ll be left behind!

Caught, as we are, in yet another techno-frenzy, the unquestioned assumption seems to be that AI must be allowed to do its revolutionary work, including to the way we do education. We may prefer the way things used to be, but, when push comes to shove, we have no choice. Technology is the future! The question is not *whether* AI has a role to play in education – of course not. We just need to work out *how*.



But hold on a moment.

What if all that is hype? What if our casual assumptions are wrong? What if EdTech generally and AI in particular undermines RI – Real Intelligence?

I just finished reading a wonderful book, one many of us have been waiting for, called *The Digital Delusion* (2026) by Dr Jared Cooney Horvath, a neuroscientist. In it, Horvath makes precisely these arguments – that it’s all hype, that our assumptions are wrong, and that EdTech is harmful. He reviews the evidence from the international assessments like PISA and thousands of studies on EdTech and arrives at this damning conclusion: “Outside of a few narrow domains suited to adaptive repetition, *EdTech impairs learning.*” (p.43)

The reason for this, he says, is that, “Digital tools clash with the way human beings are built to learn.” (p.43) How so? The first and most important point we need to grasp is this: *long-term memory is “the central, dominant structure of human cognition”*. (p.113) Make sure you pause and re-read that. This is an immense idea and we really need to “get” it. Why is it so important? It tells us that if we want our pupils to develop RI, they need to keep building up a store of

knowledge in long-term memory. ““Stuff”,” as Horvath puts it, “is the foundation of all deep thought”. (p.113)

This brings us to the second critical point. In order for knowledge to get into long-term memory it must first pass through working memory. But here’s the problem: “*the lack of working memory is a fundamental bottleneck of human cognition.*” (Daniel Willingham, *Why Don’t Students Like School?* 2009, p.109). Willingham is telling us what we all know from experience: that we can only take in a thimble-full of new information at a time. Not only so, but if we are to take in even a thimble-full, the conditions need to be just right. “Real learning,” says Horvath, “requires... stillness, stability and sustained thought.” (p.52) Put these two facts about long-term and working memory together and the conclusion is clear: there are no shortcuts to developing RI.

The lie of AI, the ultimate cognitive offloading device, is that it promises precisely that. It’s one thing for an expert who already has a rich store of knowledge to use AI to do high level research; it’s quite another to use it in education ostensibly to support the cognitive development that AI is designed to short-circuit. Horvath summarises the issue: “Students who start with offloading never develop the necessary foundational knowledge.” (p.112)

The brain is a muscle and for muscles to get stronger they need a lot of exercise. Simple as that. Believing that using AI develops RI is like going to the gym and getting machines to lift the weights for you, and then walking away patting yourself on the back as if you just had a workout. What is needed, says Horvath, is a rejection of EdTech and a return to traditional learning methods – particularly reading on paper and writing by hand. These methods go with the grain of the way the brain works, and have proven themselves over centuries to be outstanding tools for cognitive development. “If we truly care about our children’s development, then we can no longer afford to be fooled by what merely looks like progress.” (p.20)

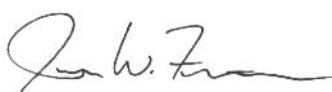
Bursaries

Finally, we are getting close to our goal of raising about £60,000 in support of bursaries. We now have £5,000 remaining in order to achieve this and make the most of £20,000 of match funding that was put forward by a generous donor.

We are eager to make a Heritage education accessible to as many families as possible. Would you consider a gift today in support of bursaries at Heritage? You can do so via the [support us page of our website](#).

I hope you have a happy and restful Easter break, and I look forward to welcoming pupils back soon for an always fast-paced summer term.

Best wishes,



J Fletcher
Headmaster