



# THE WEEKLY WORD

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<http://www.lawrencesherrifschool.net/weekly-word>

First Word ... from Peter Kent, Headteacher

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Friday 18 January 2019

I was very touched and surprised by an assembly held last week to mark my 20 years as headteacher of LSS. I definitely had not seen the assembly coming and both my wife and I hugely appreciated the kind comments that were made.

Hitting my 20 years as headteacher has led me to reflect more and more on the extent to which the job has changed since I first took over on 1 January 1999. To some extent the differences are profound. Believe it or not, email was not really around when I was appointed and my first task each day was to plough through my in-tray of written correspondence. My office was in a different location (at the front of school where Mrs Scott is now based) and the school had a very different timetable, which included 80 minutes for lunch and us finishing the day at 3.45. The school was also smaller, with three forms of entry and a Sixth Form of around 200. There were fewer demands on my time beyond the boundaries of the school and for my first ten years as head, I was able to teach around a third of a timetable.

I could go on with a long list of what is different in 2019 compared with 1999, ranging from government education policy to management structures and everything else in-between. In the light of this, it may be rather surprising to hear that all of the changes have, in my view, not altered the essential nature of the job.

When I was deputy, my then boss Rex Pogson advised me that my key focus should always be on people and that advice still has considerable resonance 20 years on. Educational structures and organisation and assessment change at a dizzying speed. However, the need to remain focused upon the people who make up the organisation, whether it be pupils, staff, parents or former students, remains completely unaltered. In the end, education is not about data or targets or achieving all of the priorities in a development plan. Instead it has to be focused upon helping people to achieve their potential, whatever that might be.

Looking back through my archive of First Words, in one of my very first pieces I wrote about the importance of *intellectual freedom and the opportunity to pursue personal interests* and the need to foster *the joy and excitement and unpredictability that should be a part of education*. From the perspective of 2019 those comments still go to the heart of what Lawrence Sheriff is all about. My focus and that of the school continues to be helping each individual achieve all that they are capable of. Compared to this aim, everything else remains a less important detail. **Peter Kent**

# TWENTY YEARS ON

In the first week of the new school year, a special assembly celebrated the achievement of a statistical landmark: Dr Kent completed twenty years as Head of our school. Rather than do a 'This is Your Life' which would have taken some considerable time, I invited current members of staff to relate a simple memory or anecdote about Dr Kent. There were a wide range of sentiments expressed which were summed up very nicely by Mr Watson, on behalf of all the staff: *'he is not a bully, he doesn't micro-manage, he deals with the important things to leave staff free to teach and is always considerate of staff and pupils'*. We were pleased to be joined by Mrs Kent and some members of the Governing Body. Mr Howe, long standing member of the Governing Body, has sent in his reflections of Headship below. **Gwen Temple, Senior Deputy Headteacher**

Dr Kent joined the staff as Deputy Head in April 1997, and succeeded Dr Pogson as Head in 1999. Though he never seems hurried, he certainly got off to a flying start then. Since his appointment, he has never looked back. Well, actually, he has. Like all successful heads and deputies, he seems to be able to look in several directions at once. His predecessor, Mr Staveley, though very short-sighted, could spot a boy in coloured socks from fifty yards.

It is 140 years since the school first opened in 1878. In that time, we have had eleven heads; averaging just over twelve years per period of office. The record for the longest period is held by Cordy Wheeler (23 years). He was Head from 1922 to 1945. 'Cordy' was his first name, not, as I assumed for decades, a nickname. (Has Dr Kent a nickname by the way? If so, I have no idea what it is. 'Scouser' perhaps). The Staff Register, completed on Wheeler's appointment, summarised his 'principal duties' succinctly: 'H.M.'s duties'. So that's clear then.

As I read the story of 140 years of headship, I have tried to answer the question: are there any generalisations we can make to 'describe' the typical LSS Head? I can only think of one. They are all modest and self-effacing when it comes to writing and talking about themselves. Four had or have dogs. If only the dogs could talk.

Wheeler had just this to say as he signed off his (so far) unprecedented term of service: *'Looking back over these 23 years, I see many things which might have been done and many mistakes I have made. May these be forgiven and forgotten.'*

There have been citations for prizes on Awards Days that last longer than this brief note. The heads of the last 30 years or so have been similarly reticent, carefully deflecting invitations to boast. Celebrations and congratulations are all about the school, its staff and its pupils; never about the Head himself.

The Reverend S R Hart was the third longest-serving (1905-22). Like Dr Kent, he spent much of his precious leisure time preaching in churches and chapels around the country. On retirement, he became a vicar. I was thinking of him recently when Dr Kent, last November, spoke movingly at an open air service on the school playground for Armistice Day. The boys were silent, still and absorbed. There was hardly a movement anywhere. It occurred to me afterwards that Dr Kent must have spoken almost exactly from the point where, a hundred or so years earlier, Mr Hart would regularly drill the whole school. He would assert the importance of unquestioning obedience to orders. He would stand with his back to the school, step aside and give the order 'forward March'. As they set off, like all Heads, he could be distracted by a messenger. As he read the message and instructed the boy what reply he was to take back, the lines of boys would march chest forward up to and against the Hillmorton Road fence, crashing to the ground in giggling disarray. The saying is that 'boys will be boys', but many would become heroes. Heads have had to deal with the full range of emotions.

Hart was just one example of how difficult it could be to balance vital but competing priorities. He had been deeply affected by those killed in the war whom he had taught. As the war ended he lost in one year his mother who lived with him, his wife and his daughter (an only child). A teacher of the time, Mr Kings, described him as: *'near collapse, yet unable to let go of anything, to delegate any of his responsibilities.'*

We rarely know what sacrifices in family life Heads (and teachers) have had to make to manage the plethora of problems, even crises that can descend on the school without warning. And who is to be the one who says to the Head *'leave it and go home. You have done enough for one day.'* As a governor, should I have said that to Dr Kent? I am not sure, I would dare. After all, he's the Head. **David Howe, Governor and former pupil**

# **Year 13 Parent Consultation Evening**

The second parent consultation evening for Year 13 will take place on:

**Thursday 7th February 2019**

The booking system, on Insight, will be opened to parents on:

**Monday 21st January 2019**

and will be left open for one week.

The school will then book additional appointments if Mrs Halestrap or Subject Leaders want to speak to specific parents. The final schedule will be sent home by **Friday 1st February 2019**

If any parents require assistance logging into Insight please email:

**[Issinsight@lawrencesheriffschool.com](mailto:Issinsight@lawrencesheriffschool.com)**



**LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL**  
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## **PERSONNEL OFFICER**

**Scale 4 (Points 18 – 21, £18,870 FTE - £20,541 FTE) with possible progression to Scale 5 (Points 22 – 25, £21,074 - £23,111).**

**Starting salary circa £17,327.26 pro-rata per annum**

**Hours: 37 hours per week - Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm, 42 weeks per year (term-time and training days, plus an additional 3 weeks during the school holiday periods).**

**Required as soon as possible**

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The values on which all of the school's work is based are very clear. You believe that students should be happy at the school' (Ofsted, 2013).

Lawrence Sheriff School is a boys' grammar school of approximately 900 students, over 300 of whom are in the sixth form. We believe that much of our success - including our consistently high Ofsted grading and our high rankings in DFE performance tables - can be directly linked to our emphasis upon LSS being a happy place to work for both pupils and staff.

We are looking to recruit an efficient HR administrator to join our busy Personnel Department. You will be an experienced, effective administrator who can work under pressure to tight deadlines. As the first point of contact for all personnel matters you will provide a professional and friendly service to colleagues and visitors.

Your duties as part of a team will include: dealing with HR queries, processing all documentation in relation to personnel matters, ensuring all electronic and paper record systems are up to date, producing reports on staff data, co-ordinating the recruitment of staff and volunteers, assisting with induction of new staff and volunteers. Applicants must be able to deal sensitively with matters of confidence whilst following the School Child Protection policy, for which training will be given.

Lawrence Sheriff School is committed to the professional development of its entire staff through varied and interesting opportunities, to enhance their practice.

For the job description and application pack please visit the school website under 'Vacancies/Downloads'. To apply, please complete and return the job application and equality details forms by e-mail.

**Please do not submit CVs, as only the job application form will be considered.**

**Closing date for applications: 09:00 on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019**

**Contact: Michaela Pazderkova**  
**Tel: 01788 542074, Fax: 01788 567962, Email: [recruitment@lawrencesherrifschool.com](mailto:recruitment@lawrencesherrifschool.com)**  
**School Website: [www.lawrencesherrifschool.net](http://www.lawrencesherrifschool.net)**  
**Lawrence Sheriff School, Clifton Road, Rugby, CV21 3AG**



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## **SEN TEACHING ASSISTANT – NVQ Level 2**

**Required for February 2019**  
**Fixed Term contract**

**Salary Scale:** Grade TA2 (Points 14-20): £9,167.71 – £10,276.30 pro-rata, (£17,681 - £19,819 FTE).  
**Hours of working:** Monday to Friday 8.30am – 1.00pm, 22.5 hours per week, term-time plus training days.

Lawrence Sheriff School is an outstanding boys' grammar school of approximately 900 students, over 300 of whom are in the co-educational sixth form.

In 2013 Ofsted stated 'the school is a harmonious community where students with different needs can thrive, achieve highly in their academic work and enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities.' In January 2011 the school was placed top of DfE performance tables for GCSE (having first achieved this distinction in 2008). We are proud that our students have very positive attitudes to learning.

We are looking to appoint an experienced Level 2 Teaching Assistant to support a specific student with ASD, in order to facilitate their access to the curriculum and maximise their independence. The position will be directly linked to the Student's EHCP and as such will be a fixed term contract, initially until 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

The successful applicant must have the ability to establish effective relationships with children, young people and teaching staff. Being an effective communicator is critical due to the needs of ASD and therefore excellent written and spoken English is essential. You must be highly organised, with good time management skills and be IT literate. A knowledge and understanding of ASD and its impact on students' learning is essential.

**To download an application pack please visit our website: [www.lawrencesheriffschool.net](http://www.lawrencesheriffschool.net)**

To apply please complete and return the job application and equality details forms to Michaela Pazderkova at [recruitment@lawrencesheriffschool.com](mailto:recruitment@lawrencesheriffschool.com), along with a letter of application.

**Closing date: 9.00am on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Contact:** Michaela Pazderkova (Personnel)

Tel: 01788 542074

Fax: 01788 567962

Email: [recruitment@lawrencesheriffschool.com](mailto:recruitment@lawrencesheriffschool.com)

School Website: [www.lawrencesheriffschool.com](http://www.lawrencesheriffschool.com)

Lawrence Sheriff School, Clifton Road, Rugby, CV21 3AG

*Lawrence Sheriff School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check.*

*For further information on 'keeping children safe in education' please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>*

## Admissions Consultation

In accordance with the School Admissions Code (2014), the Governors of Lawrence Sheriff School are consulting on their draft Admissions Policy for the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

The consultation period runs from:

**midday on Tuesday 18 December 2018 to midday on Tuesday 29 January 2019**

Anyone wishing to comment on the draft document should write to:

Mrs Beardshaw,  
Clerk to the Governors,  
Lawrence Sheriff School,  
Clifton Road,  
Rugby,  
CV21 3AG

or by email to:

[gillian.beardshaw@lawrencesherrifschool.com](mailto:gillian.beardshaw@lawrencesherrifschool.com)

by the deadline of: **midday on 29 January 2019.**

A copy of the consultation document will be available on the school website during the consultation period at:

**[www.lawrencesherrifschool.com](http://www.lawrencesherrifschool.com)** under Parents and Students/Key Information/School Policies

or a hard copy can be supplied on request to: Mrs Beardshaw, Clerk to the Governors

Thank you.



## TABLE TENNIS



### Lunchtime Sessions:

Wednesday: year seven club members only (Lawrence Sheriff School)  
Friday: club and school team members only (Lawrence Sheriff School)

### Club Sessions:

Wednesday 6.30 pm—9.00 pm (Lawrence Sheriff School)  
Sunday 10.00 am - 12.00 pm (Hill Street Community Centre)

**Try them out - first two are free!**  
**See the website for more info:**

[www.RugbyTableTennisClub.NET](http://www.RugbyTableTennisClub.NET)

## Emergency School Closures

In the event of an emergency school closure (e.g. due to severe weather conditions) the school will operate a text messaging service via Warwickshire County Council in order to notify parents.

All parents and carers are strongly recommended to sign up to this system, details of which are at:

**[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures)**

If you have children at other Warwickshire schools you may be able to sign up for those schools as well if they have chosen to use this system.

Thank you.

## Shopping online?

Access your favourite retailer via:

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/lawrencesherrifschoolpta>

and the school gets a commission!

