

**Remembering Sarah** – words written and spoken by our current Head of Learning Enrichment, Ms Ruth Andrews

Last July I was standing up in front of my colleagues, saying goodbye to Sarah as she retired from the Harrodian, feeling devastated to be losing not only a colleague and mentor but also a friend. However, we had great fun at the time putting together a video of colleagues, pupils and family who helped to celebrate and applaud her many achievements at the Harrodian.

We were struck at the time, by how many people wanted to contribute to the video, a measure of the warmth people felt for Sarah. Who knew then - that I would be standing here today, to say another goodbye to her.

Over the past 2 months there have been many conversations, tears and smiles as we remember Sarah. When talking to staff and pupils about her time at the Harrodian everyone agreed on one thing – Sarah had a unique gift and that was “she understood people”. No matter who you were – pupil, parent, colleague, Sarah would listen and just be there – offering advice and support when needed, she would calmly reassure and encourage, or provide help when problems needed to be solved.

She was known and loved for her personal touches such as sending cards to pupils and colleagues with her supportive messages or her thoughtful Christmas gifts and it was these little touches that made us all feel special.

Sarah had many different roles - Head of Department, Upper Prep and Senior SENCo, Exam concessions officer and Safeguarding lead - which meant she was incredibly busy but she always found time to listen whether it be about school issues or home life.

This meant that she was great at multi-tasking and one of my many memories of Sarah is when we used to pop into her office to ask a question. Sarah would be typing away and then she would turn her head to listen and chat - yet throughout the conversation she would continue to type and finish what she was doing - which was always word perfect! Sarah hated to waste paper and would write all her notes on different pieces of scrap paper – sometimes trying to find the piece of paper with the relevant information on, proved to be quite a challenge for her!

As colleagues we feel incredibly lucky to have worked with her and her humour and thoughtfulness was second to none. We would daily seek her advice regarding how best to support our pupils and her insight and understanding of their needs was unparalleled. Her knowledge of her subject area was immense and Sarah was always thinking of different ways to share and educate others so they could understand the needs of our neurodiverse pupils.

More than this, it was her extraordinary commitment and dedication to the Harrodian school and our Learning Support pupils that will always remain with us.

Sarah cared, and she cared deeply about everyone. Even when she had a broken shoulder, and was in a lot of pain, she still came into school every day.

The pupils always came first, no matter what –she would see their potential and always ensure they were supported and championed in school, even if it meant occasionally ruffling a few feathers on the way.

Her empathy, kindness and support are missed every day yet I know that for everyone who was lucky enough to be taught by, work with or just meet Sarah, they will never forget her.