SEATON HOUSE NEWSLETTER

In Memory of Valerie Richards

22nd January 2024

A communication from Steve Richards

"I wanted to share some rather sad news with you. Following a short illness, my Mum Valerie Richards died on 30th December 2023. Mum was the Headteacher at Seaton House between 1998 - 2008 before retiring and moving to Rugby with my Dad.

I know Mum really enjoyed her time at Seaton House and had many happy memories of her time there. "

"We had some sad news last week, as we were informed of the passing of Valerie Richards, Seaton House Headteacher 1998-2008. Some of our community have fond memories of her and we share these below. However, I wanted to add a few words to recognise the significant impact she had on the school. On joining Seaton House, I was struck by the fantastic behaviour and achievements the girls exhibited and being in the privileged position that I presently occupy, I recognise that I am able to benefit from the incredible work carried out by my predecessors, with Valerie being one of those. It is very much a case of standing on the shoulders of giants. All I can hope is that my legacy is as meaningful as hers. In her memory, we dedicated today's assembly to her and discussed what legacy means. Rest in Peace Mrs. Richards, from all of us here at Seaton House."
Carl Bates - Headteacher.

"This is very sad news. Val was my daughter's second Head, with Val joining as Lauren moved up to Kindergarten as it was then. Val employed me from Jan 2003 and I remember her office being the front office now, with there being a huge stuffed Winnie-The-Pooh sitting on one of the chairs! He remained there for quite a while!
Val was all about the girls and what was best for them. She loved our school, would be here by 7am, and would still be here long after everyone else had left. She came across as 'stern' but once you got to know her, she was incredibly kind and caring with both girls and staff. She was very supportive of staff in both their work and personal lives. She loved Paddington and thoroughly enjoyed his visits during our teddy Bear's picnic days. Paddington turned 50 the year Val retired and we managed to get her an anniversary copy signed by Michael Bond. My thoughts and condolences to her family".
Lisa Mason

"Very sad to hear the news, she employed me in 1998, a couple of weeks after starting as head.
She was often down in the Nursery & so very kind to the little ones, she really seemed to understand them. As a head, I found Val to be very fair, approachable, friendly and always had a smile on her face.
Condolences to her family".
Clare Oldroyd

"So sad to hear the news.

I worked alongside Val when I started teaching at Seaton House in 2007. As well as her Head teacher role, she also taught Maths in Senior House, so we were very were close as we taught many lessons together until she retired.

I will always be grateful to Val for employing me and giving me the opportunity to be part of the Seaton House family.

A lovely lady who will be sorely missed".
Shella Hossenbux

Ah such sad news. Mrs Richard's was the head when my two girls were at Seaton House. I always found her to be a very fair and approachable head teacher who always had time for us as parents.

"One memory I have of her was when she went to Machu Picchu for her 50th birthday and she hosted an evening for all her sponsors, me included, showing us slides of her trip and vowing never to do such a walk again as it was so challenging. She also brought back every single child in the school a hand knitted finger puppet as a memento of her trip. My thoughts and prayers are with her family",
Amie Kah

"I met Valerie Richards in 1999 when visiting the school with my daughter Jasmine, aged 4. We sat in her office (now the school office) alongside an enormous Winnie-the-Pooh and plenty of school related resources around. Mrs Richards interviewed us both and luckily, Jasmine was offered a place to start in Kindergarten. Mrs Richards was a strong Headteacher who loved maths and Paddington Bear - She was not afraid to show her softer side but remained firm on her expectations for the girls.

At the end of her time with Seaton House School, Valerie Richards was ready to take up new opportunities in her move to Rugby. I know she welcomed the chance to spend more time with her own family. Alongside Fintan O'Toole as Chair, I was a new Governor and remember Valerie being very supportive whilst we conducted the interview process for a new Head - how strange for her - after ten years, to be meeting the person who would eventually succeed her for the following six years...(Virginia Rickus)

Valerie and I kept in touch for many years with Christmas cards and news of the school. It is good to know her move to Rugby was a happy one.

Thank you for the years of service you gave to our school Val. Rest peacefully".
Judith Evans

"As Chair of Governors when Mrs Richards was Headmistress, I was privileged to work alongside one of Seaton House's greats. She led the school at a time when there were challenges in attracting new pupils as the demographic at the time meant fewer girls were looking for private school places in and around Sutton. She built an excellent team of teachers and support staff and introduced marketing initiatives with them that returned the school to healthy numbers. I recall excellent results with high standards expected from girls and parents too!"
Fintan O'Toole