

SPEECH COMMON HALL

2 OCTOBER 2019

One of my earliest memories of school is a conversation I had with a girl from another class. I stupidly made some rather derogatory remarks about the headmistress.....something about her being a right dragon..... or it could have been something ruder.

Anyway, I remember the girl asking whether I knew who she was.

No, I said, but as I said so I remember having this feeling that something bad was about to happen.

Well, she said, I'm the headmistress's daughter...

Oh! I said..... do you know who I am?

No, she replied.

THANK GOD FOR THAT! I said.

Joking aside, today you are going to hear about the City Corporation's commitment to education and, as a very special treat, you're going to hear from someone who was supported through most of her education by a livery company.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" So said Nelson Mandela.

He saw education as a tremendous tool for freedom and the mechanism through which young people can equip themselves to make this world a better place.

I would imagine that so many, if not all, of the companies represented here today would subscribe to those principles. Certainly, the City Corporation does.

Like the Livery, a commitment to preparing people for our rapidly changing world, giving them the skills to develop as well as enabling social mobility, is rightly at the centre of what we do.

Take for example, the City and Guilds of London Institute which is an educational organisation founded in 1878 by the City of London and 16 Livery Companies to develop a national system of technical education.

Together with its partners, the Institute continues to this day to provide a broad range of products and services that help people achieve their potential through work-based learning.

As a major provider of education, the City Corporation has a clear objective to provide world class learning opportunities and it works hard to develop ways in which potential today can be converted into success tomorrow.

In its capacity as a local authority, the City Corporation has one voluntary aided school, Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School. It is the only state-maintained school within the City, and it forms part of a family of City Schools.

The City has three thriving independent schools, the City of London School which was founded in 15th Century and the City of London Girls School and Freemen School both of which were established in the 19th Century.

In more recent times, our family of schools has grown with the opportunities offered through the introduction of Academies. I know that this is an area where Livery Companies are also active, through sponsorship and governance.

The City co-sponsors two secondary school academies; one in Hackney co-sponsored with KPMG and the other in Islington, co-sponsored with City University.

Since opening in 2009 The City Academy, Hackney has received two ‘Outstanding’ grades from Ofsted. And, on one of those occasions. it was judged to be ‘Outstanding’ in every category. And likewise, earlier this year, Islington Academy, was also judged to be ‘Outstanding’

Then there is the City’s Multi Academy Trust - which has responsibility for eight academies – this includes four secondary schools, three primary schools and a sixth form college in Newham.

Our close involvement with those Academies, has enabled the City to extend and broaden its educational support.

Collectively, the academies and schools all work in close partnership with each other, sharing best practice and expertise and, of course, new opportunities for pupils.

Each school is a unique entity yet together they share one common purpose - to provide world class learning.

Bursary support is an important part of the City’s educational strategy. They are available for pupils at our independent schools and also to pupils at King Edward’s School, Whitley and Christ’s Hospital School in Sussex, both of which we have historic links with.

We are going to hear a little more about Christ’s Hospital shortly.

The City Corporation also has the right to nominate governors to several other Schools and educational bodies. For example, Treloars, a special education school in Alton.

Treloars was established by the Lord Mayor in 1907. It still has strong connections with the City of London which bring the school tremendous benefits in terms of profile and fundraising. Each Lord Mayor automatically becomes a trustee of its Trust.

And no resume of the City’s educational support would be complete without a mention of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, a leading conservatoire and drama school.

The livery is also justifiably proud of its many and varied contributions to all forms and levels of education - be that the schools you run or support, your apprenticeship schemes or the Livery Schools Link.

The bursaries you provide are well established and extremely generous.

Which leads me to introduce to you another speaker – someone who can tell you first-hand what it means to benefit from support by the livery.

Onyinye Udokporo was supported throughout her education at Christ's Hospital by the Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers. Onyinye is an apprentice of that Company and she is clearly going places as you are about to hear.

Please welcome Onyinye.

HAND OVER TO Onyinye Udokporo

Closing words

Listening to Onyinye demonstrates what support through education can mean for a young person and how it will shape someone's life.

Onyinye has spoken previously about her experience but it takes exceptional spirit and guts to get up in front of an audience of this size and in these very formal circumstances and surroundings. It just shows the confidence that Onyinye has.

There is so much more I could say about the City's and the Livery's educational activities, how it has evolved over the years and the good that it does.

For the City, there are clear benefits of having both independent and state schools, together with specialist and general provisions at all levels of education. There is a wealth of experience and practice across the family of schools and of course, there is huge potential in further developing partnership working.

That said, as with all things, there will always be room for improvement, and I am sure that the City Corporation and the Livery will continue to advance in the field of education.