

Founders' Day 2017

Dear Governors, dear Dr. Brown, dear Teachers, dear Parents, dear fellow Classmates, Ladies and Gentleman.

Today, we are here in memory of Lord Holme of Cheltenham. We remember him as one of the founding members of the English College in Prague.

I would like to start with these words written by Lord Holme. *"The importance of international understanding. Not just between the UK and the Czech Republic with ties of language, literature and learning but throughout the larger family of mankind when so many shared problems can only be solved by shared values and shared actions. We are educating responsible and aware citizens of an ever-smaller independent world."*

I believe that in this quote, Lord Holme summed up the biggest advantage that the ECP has over any Czech school. It is the reason why I decided to leave my old Czech school and transfer to the College. The reason and the advantage is internationalism. We have teachers from ten different countries and students from over thirty different countries. This gives us the opportunity to learn in a global classroom. We develop awareness and understanding of other cultures. We start appreciating different points of view. We start thinking critically.

All this happens in the classroom, but it is often said that the most learning is done outside of the class.

From personal experience, I must say that coming to the ECP changes that. I learned more English while hanging out with friends from ECP for a month than I did studying a textbook for four years at my previous school. After school I usually just went home and studied or played computer games. We were not offered any after school activities. Here at the College students can choose from more than 25 ECA or charity projects. People who enjoy sports can play football, people who enjoy drama can join theatre going, everyone can find something they are passionate about.

I believe that in order to experience true academic growth, it is important to take what one studies inside a school classroom and apply this knowledge. ECP helps with that as well; right now I and several other classmates are participating in a course at Charles University called "Projects in Applied Economics", which is in English and I was able to find it thanks to my Economics teacher, Mr. Wyllyams. All these things outside of the classroom prepare us for the real international world, where people have different abilities, cultures, languages, and lifestyles.

As humanity accelerates the speed of moving data and communication around the world, one skill emerges that is traditionally not taught: international understanding. It is the ability to understand and respect different points of view, to be sensitive to the needs of people from other cultures, religions and regions. We are taught to do this at the ECP, both in the classroom with so many different students and teachers as well as outside the classroom. All of this amounts to a greater mutual understanding of the world's people, and in the end, that will be the key to a stable, productive and peaceful global society where we can solve problems together.

Thank you.

Martin Vladyka, *ECP Student Council President*
19 October 2017