

It is said that our schooldays are the happiest days of our lives. I do not know who first said it, but it must have been an adult. Most children think that school is something to be endured, like chickenpox or parents, and if our schooldays are the happiest, what are our later days going to be like?

Personally, I generally like school, because I want to learn. I was very lucky to have my primary schooling at a school where the headmistress and the staff were very dedicated, and cared about standards of behaviour. They believed that the three 'R's were very important and considered it their duty to educate us in good manners, self-discipline and caring about other people. I try to remember to use these qualities, as I think they make me a happier person.

Having learned, at primary school, to read fluently, write clearly, spell correctly and be competent in simple mathematics, I am now fortunate to be at a good school, where the teaching standards are high and the discipline is firm and fair. A good education depends so much on the competency of the teachers and the right environment in which to learn.

George Bernard Shaw, the famous playwright, once wrote: "He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches." I do not believe this, because a good, dedicated teacher can make even history interesting, despite all the dates. The teaching profession is so often underrated.

Of course, I do not like every subject, but I would not want to spoil it for others, so I just do my best. Who knows, one day, if I keep trying, I might even enjoy hockey and P.E.!

I especially enjoy History. It is so interesting learning about civilisations, which existed hundreds of years ago, and I am sure that we could learn a lot from them. The Ancient Greeks had the right ideas about education. They studied literature and music, gymnastics, philosophy and started the study of mathematics and astronomy. They believed that education should aim at a healthy mind in a healthy body. There were itinerant teachers for remote regions, elementary schools for the young and advanced education for older children. Athens even had a kind of university!

I love mathematics and Latin as well, and find great satisfaction in using my brain to work out the problems they provide.

My music at school is encouraged. I love making music, as it gives me such pleasure to sing or play. I have been learning the piano since I was five years old, and I am now learning to play the clarinet. The clarinet can be made to make such beautiful mellow sounds, and I enjoy playing it in the school orchestra. The most exciting (and nerve-racking) time is when I play solo music in public, especially during morning assembly, as it is difficult to lead six hundred girls into a hymn, but so satisfying when it is achieved in unison.

I also enjoy needlework and cookery. These subjects are very important for the future. Most girls, when they grow up, eventually get married, and good cooking and 'stitches in time' help to keep families happy. There is nothing better than a happy family life. I get so much pleasure and comfort at home with my parents and brother, and it makes me unhappy to hear of boys and girls who are not as fortunate as myself.

I believe that the only fair system of education is one which encourages every boy and girl to learn, and helps the brighter and more industrious pupils to a higher level of education. But there will always be inequality; the inequality of ability, intelligence and diligence. Having said this, I still believe that there is more to education than academic achievement, and learning to face life is equally essential. Surely the old-fashioned ideas of good manners, self-discipline and caring for others are just as important.

We all have our own individual talents and it is up to us to use these to the full. I want to make the most of my school days, to enable me to use my talents to the full, so that I can eventually be useful, in some way, to other people. To this end, I need to work hard at school, read as much as I can and learn to converse with, and respect my elders.