Turning 80

In the very first photos of the front of our school, there are three palm trees. I doubt there is anyone who has experienced their full growth, but the evidence is clear that they embody more sights, smells and sounds than any person that has walked the grounds! On first days of school, they witnessed the anxious goodbyes of new parents, the excitement of new learners, and the warm hearts of eager teachers. They have watched trends come and go, from yoyos to stickers to marbles, stickies and Pokemons; they have endured bad weather, bad fights and bad hair styles; they have known many friendships, many laughs and many tears.

In the hustle and bustle of activity and gossip, stories and lessons, these trees have grown to magnificent heights in secret and silence. Only through photos do we see their strides and growth. Yes, they would make wonderful learners! They have watched the coming and going of dedicated families, young educators build their careers until retirement, ground staff working the land, and four principals leave their mark.

On their journey to maturity, they have had a chance to peek into the classrooms that they guard, they have watched records being broken on the sports field, they have heard the splashes and cheers from every swimming gala. When I look up on these trees I am instantly taken back to my days at Leicester as a learner. I would use them as a back rest while reading a story for a comprehension, or sit under them while waiting excitedly for a bus to take us on an excursion. Being taken for granted by the very learners they embrace has never stopped them from reaching new heights or sprouting new leaves – they understand what it takes!

As they gaze over our precious school, we need to remember, too, that they are old! They groan and creek (especially on windy days) and they occasionally loose some branches. The wisdom, secrets and pride that they hold though, are worth more than any stretch of the imagination! They are a symbol of Leicester Road School as they identify us, guard us and are a constant reminder of all those who have experiences of LRS. The next time you are cooled by their shade, or hear their leaves whisper old secrets, take the time to look up and remember that the values and standards that we live by is what has brought us here – 80 years later. With endless persistence, by enduring the hard times and celebrating the good, like these trees, we can say that we did Strive for the Best!