



Oakhyrst Grange School

PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR BOYS & GIRLS

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HEADMASTER: MR. ALEX GEAR B.Ed

12th December 2018

Dear Parents

As I write this end of term letter I would like to begin by saying how very proud I am of the whole school community. There is no room for complacency but at this time, I genuinely believe that the children, staff and parents, are all working together in a very positive and productive way. Nothing emphasised this more to me than the wonderful spirit that we shared at yesterday's children's party. I have just come from final preparations for the carol service which we will hold tomorrow and again I walked away glowing with pride.

It is nice at the end of term to be reminded of the staff that have joined us and who have clearly settled in so well that we need reminding that they are new. In the kitchen, Mrs Staples' three assistants, Mrs Anita Manning, Mrs Graciele Pereria da Silva and Mrs Inez Snow, are already well known by the children and have helped enormously in maintaining our very high standards in the kitchen. Congratulations must go to our Chef, Mrs Debby Staples and her team who were awarded the Soil Association Food for Life Bronze Award. Miss Sarah Lancaster has been working in Kindergarten as a Support Assistant and is proving to be a great help. Miss Hayley Plant has had a brilliant first term as our new Year 6 Class Teacher. Parents and pupils alike, indeed as have the staff, have all commented upon her total commitment and enthusiasm. One of our assistant support teachers, Mrs Archana Pandya-Patel, is standing aside to have a new baby. I am very pleased to be able to inform you that Miss Rosie Hillyard, our Art Teacher visited us yesterday so that we could meet her new little daughter Dolly. Mrs Jacqui O'Sullivan is currently covering Miss Hillyard's maternity leave, I am pleased to say that our high standards of display and individual work are being happily maintained.

During the term we have had our usual round of trips and visits. Year 5 enjoyed the annual Bushcraft trip and my sincere thanks to Miss Dance and Mr Burke for putting themselves through the usual 'I'm a Celebrity Challenges' and for looking after the children so well. Needless to say the children simply loved it. Mrs Leyshon took her Year 4 class to the Bough Beech Reservoir and consequently they gave a very informative assembly all about it. In addition, Years 2 and 3 also gave their Form Assemblies during the term in front of suitably proud parents and the whole school. The Year 5 Class Concert was very well received and we had our usual round of sporting fixtures both home and away. My congratulations to Mrs Evans and our swimming team many of whom competed in the National Finals at the Olympic Pool in London this term. Four children received seven medals for the London South team, namely Joseph F, Aspen P, Christopher S and Samuel M. Next term we will be hosting the ISA London South Cross Country Championships.

We celebrated the Harvest Festival at St Mary's Church and a special thank you to Miss Cockbain for organising it, to the Reverend Frany Long for hosting it and to Mrs Carter and Mrs Deacon for arranging the collection of gifts and their distribution. Our now traditional walking train from the church is another one of those small details that makes our school that little bit special. Tomorrow we will be rehearsing at the church and having a walking train back to school before returning to the church by walking train for our annual Carol Service. The children behave immaculately.

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow

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The Remembrance Centenary celebrations began with a brilliant assembly performed by Years 5 and 6. Mr Gardner and James T, played the last post from the parapet and the school observed the 2 minute silence perfectly. Mr Burke and Mrs Oates organised poppy displays around the entire school and the placement of the silhouette unknown soldier figure above the sports field. Thank you to PFOG for this kind donation. Darcey B, Year 6 was honoured by having her poem published in a book of Remembrance Poems arranged by our local MP Mr Sam Gymiah. Mr Gymiah visited the school to present Darcey with her book and toured our Remembrance displays. He was suitably impressed.

The school nativity play was, as ever, a sensation. My thanks to Mrs Brown, Miss Cockbain and Mrs Stevens and their team for yet again delivering a smash hit.

I am sorry to have to continue to moan about parking, but sadly there have been one or two quite nasty incidents where our own parents have been verbally abused and where local residents have been greatly inconvenienced. Do please park appropriately and do not use Willey Lane either as a turning point or for parking. Please respect the yellow lines immediately outside the school and along the Stanstead Road. Please do not use the entry or exit to our drive for turning. Where people have been given permission to park in the school grounds for a very specific reason, can I please stress again that the pick-up should be made as promptly as possible to avoid congestion. On more than one occasion, our own minibus on returning from fixtures has not been able to get into the school grounds. A number of parents are very helpful in parking properly, but it would be even more helpful if they were to return to their cars and move away from the area of the school promptly and safely. I apologise that this paragraph remains a necessary part of my end of term letter, and I thank you for your understanding and support.

Miss Dance as my Deputy has continued to develop the significance and the role of the School Council. Congratulations to all those children who were elected as class representatives. A special congratulations to George K, President and Vice Presidents Darcey B, and Lana C. Initiatives from the school council include the introduction of both cooking and coding as extra-curricular clubs and activities. They are also promoting the funding of a school friendship bench. I will be speaking to the School Council next term about future charitable fund raising.

The PFOG Spooky Disco was very well attended by some very scary looking children. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs McCoy and the new PFOG team for carrying on seamlessly where their predecessors left off. The Santa Grotto and general school decorations were impeccable. The PFOG Christmas Fayre was successful and we are looking forward to many more events next term. The new Nutshell Editorial Team of Mrs Hollins, Ms Carter and Ms Barot are to be congratulated on an excellent first edition. I have had a sneaky peak and I have to say I am very impressed, Mrs Gear who works in another school will be very jealous.

I would like to end by thanking my Chair and the Board of Governors for giving me permission to visit Cambodia last week. I actually visited the school at Pong Tek that the ISA is funding. I also visited three other schools in the district. I would like very much for the ISA as a whole and for Oakhyrst Grange as an individual school to continue to support the work of the United World Schools organisation, please visit www.unitedworldschools.org for more information. A big thank you to the parents and family members who donated £88 to the charity from the retiring collection at the Nativity Play. The retiring collection from the Carol Service will be shared between the UWS charity and the Bamba Bees Project.

I pray that you will all have a very happy and safe family Christmas.

With season's best wishes and greetings.

Mr Alex Gear
Headmaster