



August 2010

Beginning of Term Letter, Michaelmas 2010

Dear Parents and Children

Welcome back!

I do hope everyone has enjoyed their summer break and will return refreshed ready to start a new academic year. We look forward to the arrival of Richard Follett and his family, although he will not be in post until January, he will be a regular visitor over the Michaelmas term.

Staff and Pupils

Mrs Lynn Harding is to join our Reception team; we have built numbers sufficiently to return to two classes at this age range. The two classes will work very closely together and we will be planning for the two groups to join regularly during the week. Madame Florence Buet, a native French speaker, will become responsible for French in Pre-Prep and will introduce the language from Reception upwards. She has a young son of her own and is therefore very much in tune with children of pre prep age.

We have a number of new children joining us, partly due to the closure of Bodiam Manor School over the summer break. In order to accommodate these children and with a view to building our own numbers, there will be additional children in Nursery, Year R, Year 1 and Year 2. We have employed another teacher in order to maintain healthy social groups in KS1 while offering small group work at differentiated levels with a very generous adult: pupil ratio and do not feel that we need to split into two classes per year group at present.

Miss Emelia Stapley a newly, well qualified teacher who plays the piano to a very high level, has been employed to work mostly alongside Mrs Ford to deliver small group work in Year 1, while I will support Miss Plant in Year 2. I am sure Miss Stapley will bring enthusiasm and fresh ideas to our team and we will be able to support a young colleague as she starts out on her teaching career. Our teaching assistants have increased their hours; Mrs Walker will assist Miss Plant, Ms Sander will work with Mrs Ford, Mrs Ruddle will support Mrs Harding and Mrs Stenton will move to Mrs Hammond's class. In addition to Mrs Walker and Mrs Stenton gaining their NVQ Level 3 in Child Care, congratulations also go to Miss De Meza who has also passed.

I am inviting all our new children in to meet their teachers and to look around the classrooms just before beginning of term on Wednesday 8th September 2010 at 2 pm. If you are able to pop in, this would be a good time to drop off kit and introduce yourselves to our new families. Mrs Parry will be in touch with our class representatives shortly so that they can help to include our new families and help the children to make friends quickly.

On a sadder note, many of us attended the funeral of Annelous Igbokwe; it was a very special day for a very special little girl. If any of your children display any concerns about Annelous or her illness, please let us know so that we can deal with the situation sensitively and appropriately as it arises.

Whole School Events

As last year, we intend presenting a whole Pre-Prep Christmas performance to include all the children from the youngest in Nursery to the oldest in Year 2. The children's roles will be adapted to be appropriate for their age, with Year 2 taking the larger speaking parts. There will be two performances in the theatre, on Wednesday 1st December at 2 pm and at 9 am on Thursday 2nd December, which we will ask you to book seats for nearer the time.

Further Events

As usual, the class teachers will be sending out letters informing you of areas of study and class events leading up to Christmas. We hope to see many of you at these occasions, as well as at our Pre-Prep parents evening on Thursday 7th October. Another notable date this half term is our Grandparents' Day and Harvest Festival also on Thursday 7th October. Most of our events are listed alongside the Prep School ones in the Vinehall calendar for the Michaelmas term 2010 and can be found on our website.

Housekeeping

I won't further add to Mr Whitehead's very thorough letter, other than to say that all references to uniform and shoes, medical and illness, safety on the drive, child protection and welfare and hair cuts are relevant to Pre-Prep as well.

Developments

Each year we have areas for development; this academic year we are focusing on our phonics scheme which we hope will further aid the children's progress in reading and writing. We have invested in additional resources and Mrs Ford will be cascading her training to the whole staff. Our other focus for development is the outdoor area; both Reception classes now have a small section which is safely fenced off as an outdoor classroom. The Nursery and Kindergarten have set up zones for areas of learning which include areas to encourage imaginative and role play, investigation, gardening and gross motor skills. We have made a successful bid for additional outdoor resources from East Sussex County Council, subject to the relevant staff training.

I look forward to seeing you all at the start of term. Please contact the class teachers or myself if you have any further queries.

Best wishes

Tessa Richardson

Tessa Richardson
Head of Pre Prep