

caring, vibrant and friendly

Thursday 3rd July 2008

Pre-Prep End of Year Letter 2008

Dear Pre-Prep Children and Parents

This year it was very easy to choose a theme for my end of year letter: **togetherness!** Now you may think this rather clichéd, but just looking at the exhibition of the children's literacy, artwork and photographs is evidence of the togetherness of our Pre-Prep. Also, we are fortunate indeed that we share the one building and thereby have a physical sense of community.

All our classes worked together to celebrate Vinehall's 70th Anniversary as a school. In order that the youngest children were involved they joined in the role play - have you seen the photographs showing them dressed up as Lord and Lady Ashton, their maids, nannies and other servants? One of my fondest moments of the year was standing back and watching all the children in their vintage clothing, following PT instructions and joining in traditional games. Many of you will have seen the nostalgic DVD that was produced of this event.

Assembly is a special time in Pre-Prep. Traditionally, as the children become ready to listen for prolonged periods of time, they all join us in the hall. Our youngest members have been particularly attentive this year and even try their best to join in the hymns and actions. A memorable assembly this year was when we thought about 'water around the world'. The atmosphere in the hall was wonderful and there was a real feeling of togetherness. The slide show provoked some carefully considered comments. Another memorable assembly was that led by Mrs Chaplin. I'm sure the children still remember her description of the outdoor pool, school meals and games after dark!

We are especially proud of our Year 2 children this year. We said at the beginning of the year that we would expect more from them and they haven't let us down. This year they have been given more responsibility and have enjoyed guiding the Nursery and Kindergarten children back to their classes. Year 2 has also been frequently involved in illustrating my storytelling during our whole Pre-Prep assemblies. They have become very reliable and confident; we always have more volunteers than roles to be filled. If you have been in Year 1 this year, it will be your turn in September!

The Pre-Prep children have come together for a number of enrichment activities this year. These have included our traditional events such as Book Week, our picnic and treasure hunt, the pancake races and the Easter Bunny visit, as well as our Arts Festival and the visit

from *Professor Bonkers*. We were very moved by the inaugural performance given by our Pre-Prep recorder ensemble. We enjoy frequent visits from the Prep School musicians, who certainly inspire the younger children. The Year 2 concert was rather longer than usual owing to the amount of children now having instrumental lessons! Well done to all those children involved.

Of course there have been outstanding individual achievements and wonderful year group performances. Finn Piper broke the longstanding Year 2 boys throwing record and William Bearcroft came tantalizingly close to the high jump record. There are a number of drama stars in the making, too numerous to mention individually, but we certainly look forward to seeing our Pre-Prep children perform on the Prep School stage (or even in the West End!) in the years to come.

I should like to thank all the staff for a busy year which has included our library development and a successful ISI inspection. By the end of inspection week we all wanted to see the inspectors again so that we could show them more of our good practice. Working in Pre-Prep is no ordinary job, we do it because we care and we aim to do it well. You may feel that sometimes we are 'worrying' you, but it is only because we really do want the best for your children and have their best interests at heart. One parent said to me just last week that she was very pleased with the care that her child received when she needed something extra and felt that it was beyond what she would find elsewhere. I really do hope that all parents feel likewise.

As a staff team, we certainly feel we know the children very well and are keen to work with you, our parents, and other professionals, to address any concerns that you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you feel the need to talk through anything regarding your children; we will not have all the answers, but we will certainly try to help. We have advised on tackling bedtime routines, fussy eaters and toilet training to name but a few!

While we hope you are able to enjoy the outdoors this summer, the latest version of our recommended websites for children, which may be useful for rainy days, is available on our website. We should also like to draw your attention to www.boysintobooks.co.uk which has some great ideas to keep boys, in particular, engaged with literature.

When we return in September, Miss Boorman will have become Mrs Pepper and Miss Sander will (almost) be a mummy herself. Mrs Ross will have married and be assisting the Prep School learning support department and Mrs Winn will have become an honorary Vine having completed 10 years at Vinehall. The Reception classes will have new interactive whiteboards and, with a little more funding, all our children can look forward to having a synthetic pitch to play on.

The Pre-Prep staff and I hope that you all enjoy a happy summer holiday and we look forward to welcoming some new families to our Pre-Prep in September.

Warmest regards

Tessa Richardson