

December 2006

Dear Parents

As we approach the end of a busy term I am amazed by the buzz of activity we pack into the school day, let alone a whole term.

Since September, we have had outings, a visit to see 'Cinders' in the school theatre as well as visits to school from Postman Pat, Mr Viger, a storyteller, babies and Bailey the dog. In addition the brass ensemble, Father John, prefects and Mrs Robinson have visited us in assembly. As a whole school we collected money on Charity day for St Michael's Hospice and food for The Seaview project. Year 1 shared assemblies with parents and the rest of the school has been involved in Christmas plays. The classrooms have been vibrant with displays of art, weaving and samples of work and the term ended with a seasonal theme throughout the building. Father Christmas enjoyed his annual visit to the Pre-Prep and we had an exciting Christmas party, as well as a delicious Christmas lunch! Of course, throughout all this we did also fit in a phenomenal amount of work!

STAFF

We say goodbye to Mrs McGloin, who is off to pastures new and will be enjoying her retirement in France. In January 2007, Louise Plant, who has already spent time in the Pre-Prep, joins us as our new Year 2 teacher.

It has been a great benefit to the children to have teaching assistant support in class every morning. Mrs Linda Callard, who is a teaching assistant in Year1, will be leaving the Pre-Prep to concentrate on teaching English as an Additional Language in the Prep School. Mrs Karen Walker, who already works with the Year 1 team, will be increasing her hours and she will be working four mornings each week. Mrs Walker will be based with Mrs Aylott and Mrs Stenton will be based with Mrs Ford. Mrs Littlejohn will work between the two classes.

As usual, in January our existing Nursery and Kindergarten children increase the days they attend school and we also have a small intake of new children. We will employ extra staff for the Lent and Summer terms to ensure that our adult/child ratio remains high. Mrs Winn is starting her maternity leave from January and I am therefore delighted to announce that Mrs Elizabeth Rastelli and Mrs Jenny De Meza will be joining the team in the Nursery and Kindergarten from January 2007. Mrs Rastelli is a qualified teacher, who has been working in business since having her family. She now wishes to return to teaching and is looking forward to joining the Nursery and Kindergarten team. She is a caring, dynamic and organised person who brings energy and excellence to a team

Miss De Meza has worked at Vinehall as a games teacher and now wishes to broaden her expertise within the school. She will be working as a teaching assistant in Kindergarten for two mornings a week. She is committed to the school ethos, is well liked by her colleagues and has a wonderful approach with the children.

A final and important point on staffing: I am delighted to inform you that as of next term Tessa Richardson will officially be taking on the title of Deputy Head of Pre-Prep. She has fulfilled this role magnificently in recent years and it is always reassuring to know that there is someone to take the helm if I am away. Having taken on the role of Acting Head in my absence she is no stranger to the duties and demands of the role.

UNIFORM

The holidays are a good time to check that the children have the correct uniform and that they have not outgrown their trainers, shoes etc. I would like to remind you that the school requires children to wear navy blue coats. Should you need to buy one, they are available from the school shop. If you are unsure of the uniform requirements then Mrs De Havilland will be happy to give you an up to date uniform list.

Please could you ensure that all children have the correct PE kit? For the girls who wear tights it is important to have their white PE socks in school at all times.

All clothes, including underwear, shoes and socks should be named. It is very difficult for children to find their own shoes outside the sports hall when they are in a row with thirty other pairs.

All clothes should have loops attached. Please check that these are in good repair. We would like to help the children take responsibility for their belongings and these loops help them immensely.

Even though the weather gets colder this coming term we still want the children to enjoy playing outside. They may bring in hats and gloves but for safety reasons no scarves please.

SPARE CLOTHES

In the Pre-Prep we always have a stock of spare clothes in case of accidents or loss. However, our stock has now dwindled significantly. If your child is sent home in school clothes, please wash them and return them to us as soon as possible: they are always in demand. If you are able to donate any uniform or play clothes that your child has outgrown we should be very grateful. We are particularly in need of swimming towels.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

At the start of term you will receive the Pre-Prep calendar giving you details of all the relevant Pre-Prep events for the Lent term. This will also be available on the website. In addition your child's class teacher will write to you at the

start of term letting you know what they will be teaching and giving you information about any special events they have planned.

NITS

We have had the usual problem with nits this term. This is irritating for parents and children alike. Please could **all** children be checked and, if appropriate, treated. Regular combing disables the lice and goes a long way to eradicating the problem. If we all tackle the problem over the holidays then we could become a nit free zone by next term!

It is an important part of our school life for the children to be well behaved and take care of their surroundings. To this end we insist on respecting the school environment. We reinforce this throughout the day and the children know how to behave in school. However, when they are dismissed, and no longer our responsibility, we would ask you to help reinforce our expectations. The children should not run or shout in the corridors and we ask that they are considerate of others.

If your child already attends a club we assume that they will continue with their chosen club next term. However, if you would like your child to leave a club, please let us know in writing before the start of next term.

Amidst all the celebrations, these holidays can be a busy time for families and an exciting time for children. I hope that through the festivities the children have the opportunity to enjoy a much needed rest. It is easy to pack each day with activity and forget the importance of calm and quiet reflection.

Along with the staff I should like to thank you for your support and involvement this term and take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely

Jan Hannan
Head of Pre-Prep