



Hinchingsbrooke School

Inspiring excellence Fulfilling potential

A DfE Academy with a Specialism in Sport

Our Ref: AEG/CAP

25 June 2013

Dear Parents,

As the academic year is now rapidly slipping away I am writing once again to update you on our progress in making preparations for next year and to highlight a few of the special moments and successes of the term.

I have just returned from a most amazing sight of 270 Year 6 pupils taking part in a sporting spectacular as part of their introduction to Hinchingsbrooke School. The HBK student media team were ensuring we get good 'coverage' of the event, which amongst other things, included our guest Mike Mullen (the BMX World masterclass champion) performing some stunts, the Sports Ambassadors playing a critical role in the organisation of the day and in making the Year 6 students welcome and Jason Turnbull proving he could have a very successful alternative career as a DJ on the microphone! In my introductory remarks I encouraged students to hold fast to the 'Spirit of the Games' encapsulated in the values of Determination, Passion, Respect, Self-belief, Teamwork and Honesty and I was particularly pleased to welcome Ally Brennan's mother and Pete Brennan, who very kindly provided some sponsorship for the event. It was a very colourful sight with all those students in brightly coloured tee shirts making new friends and clearly enjoying themselves. We are indebted to Pat Forster, Sue Ager and Helen Churchman whose administrative prowess even stretched as far as ensuring the sun shone!

Tomorrow I am looking forward to Buggy Malone which, if the set is anything to go by, will be another spectacular event in the busy life of the school, and one for which an enormous amount of hard work and planning has been undertaken by staff and students.

Staffing for next year is now virtually complete and we are planning an induction day for all new staff on 19 July.

Key Staff in Lower and Middle School are as follows:

| Lower School | | Middle School | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Head of School: Kate Tandy | | Head of School : Jackie Hodgson | | |
| Deputy Head of School: Ruby Rana | | Administrator: Julie Connor | | |
| Administrator: Nicola Darbyshire | | | | |
| Year 7 & 8 | | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 |
| Student Support Officers | Liz Erskine Debbie Ellis | HoY: Dan Milner SSO: Alison Meadows | HoY: Alistair Dewar SSO: Aimee Robinson | HoY: Chris Pape SSO: Alie Winter |

It was a privilege earlier this term to visit two exhibitions of students' work that were both of exceptionally high quality. The **Art work on display** from both GCSE and A level students was truly inspiring, whilst the **Design Technology exhibition** of artefacts from across all year groups reminded me just how imaginative and creative our students are. Exhibits ranged from a telescope, finely crafted out of brass, to a vegetable planter to assist any gardeners with a bad back, a conservatory roof cleaner and many other equally well conceived pieces. The quality of craftsmanship was remarkable. We were pleased as a school to take this opportunity to host our sponsors of the Formula1 competition that I wrote about in my last letter, and the 'Team Luminus' stand formed the centre piece of the exhibition. Parents may have seen the photographs on the school website?

On Saturday 22 June, we entered two dance exam groups into the annual '**Red Cross Make Your Move Dance Competition**' against many other local schools in the county. Not only did our students raise over £100 for the Red Cross, the 25 Year 10 students also held their own in this highly competitive and talented field.

Annie Smith, Devon Wallwein and Harry O'Driscoll, all from Year 8, were given the opportunity earlier this term to go to the brand new BBC Broadcasting Centre to meet Olympian Louis Smith for the **BBC School Report**. Although admitting to being somewhat star-struck and in awe of the location, they proved to be fine ambassadors for the school and were impressed that Louis showed genuine interest in Harry's fund raising by living in a tent for a year.

Other media stars from Hinchingsbrooke were the Sixth Form students who took part in the **Politics Show** earlier this year. The topic of debate was the European Union and whether we should be a part of it. As we might expect from our senior students they were erudite, well informed and not afraid to express their opinions.

Whilst turning our attention to the Sixth Form, one of the very special highlights of the term was when the team were announced as the regional winners of the Pearson Teaching Awards for '**Outstanding School Team of the Year**' for the East of England. The awards were founded by Lord Puttnam in 1999 and our team won from over 24,000 nominations. The celebrations include a tea at the House of Commons which will take place on Tuesday 2 July.

Not in any way to upstage this prestigious invitation, our very own Mr Andy Bennett has secured himself, on behalf of Hinchingsbrooke School, **an invitation to Buckingham Palace!** One of the many things in Mr Bennett's portfolio of responsibilities is the school's business links and as such he has been a member of the governmental task force '**Education and Employers**'. He will thus be attending the 'Coronation Festival Royal Warrant Holders Preview' at Buckingham Palace both on behalf of the school and for the Eastern Region. Needless to say this is an extremely limited, closed to the public, invitation only event, to showcase the companies and businesses within the Commonwealth (and in particular the UK) who have a 'royal warrant'. There are c. 800 such companies, and over 200 will be at this event.

Links with the world of work are important for so many reasons in school and that is why we place great emphasis on our **work experience programme** in Year 10. Alison Tanton-Smith who is the member of Mr Bennett's team tasked with co-ordinating this programme, has once again surpassed all expectations. Whilst many schools only manage one week, thanks to our good links with local companies and much good will from so many people, we are able to offer a two week experience. Parents of the Year 10s must be so proud of their children, as we have received many attestations of their commitment, reliability and mature approach to this experience. With comments such as, "he seems like a different person and full of confidence" and "she uses initiative, acts professionally and has become more proactive as time has progressed", there can be no doubt that, however onerous the organisational task may be, it is patently worthwhile. Thank you to all involved including the parents, without whose support this would be even more difficult.

Work experience is of course part of preparation for life, as is preparing to take examinations. I am very pleased to see the level of commitment to supporting students with this, the most critical of lessons as students get older. There have been numerous **Master classes and revision sessions** from across the departments and staff have given freely and willingly of their time beyond the timetabled lessons. With the support and encouragement of parents that is the best recipe for success and I wish 'good luck' to all the students taking examinations.

Turning to a selection of other successes now:

The school was extremely proud of Nathan Jackson, a Year 11 student, who became the **Cambridgeshire Schools' Boys Scratch Golfing Champion**, by being the only player to break 80 in some very difficult conditions. Other participants included Adam Morley and Ryan Edwards in the Sixth Form, Jack Edwards, Jared Sharp, Lewis Gabb and Nathan Brown from Year 10 and Chloe Drewery in Year 8. Anthony Graves said, "They all played extremely well and their behaviour was a credit to the School."

Molly Hall in Year 9 has an extraordinary talent for ballet and was the **winner of The Mabel Ryan Award**, part of the annual Cecchetti Classical Ballet Awards held at the Lilian Baylis Theatre, Sadlers Wells, London, last November. She is to be congratulated in being awarded a place with the **Royal Ballet Senior Associates programme**. Molly has studied Cecchetti Ballet with Carolyn Parker's Classical Ballet School in Brampton since the age of 6, and auditioned in January for her place with other young dancers from the UK and from around the world.

The term started with a significant event in the Performing Arts, when Hinchingsbrooke hosted for the first time, an **Anglo-Dutch Drama Festival** involving two other English schools and three from Holland. Over two days, 112 Year 9 students created pieces of theatre ably supported by teachers from these six schools, based on the theme of cultural connections and using the stimulus of Akram Khan's Dance production 'Desh' meaning 'home' in Bengali. The performances were both imaginative and experiential and the discipline of working together in teams with an international dimension added to the learning and creativity.

We hosted a visit from some Italian teachers thanks to a link from Emily Wagstaffe and there are a number of other exciting projects and visits being proposed with an international flavour, for example the RE trip to India. As we will have to say goodbye to **Jane Driver**, our international co-ordinator at the end of the year as she takes up a new promoted post in St Neots, we will take the opportunity to review the whole programme next year.

We wish all the staff well who are leaving us and, as well as Jane securing a senior leadership position, I would also like to offer our particular congratulations to **Giles Fullard** as he moves on to a senior post as Head of Sixth Form in Peterborough. He has, as many parents will know, been a stalwart supporter of all things Hinchingsbrooke since he joined the school in 1999. As Head of History he has developed one of our most successful departments, an achievement that has been recognised by the Local Authority and The Princes Teaching Institute.

With summer in the air we are now looking forward with anticipation to our annual **Picnic at the House** on Tuesday 16 July. As is customary at this event we also have a rota of individual performers and small ensembles that play in various venues around Hinchingsbrooke House. We have **celebration assemblies** in the pipeline and the annual **Sports Awards** evening to look forward to, so the final weeks of term will remain busy.

I am sure parents will have heard of the planned moves of a number of departments in order to support the new academic structure, referred to as the 'Big Migration'. Much of the work associated with this in terms of packing up and clearing out has in fact now been achieved. Skips and packing boxes have been in school for a number of weeks already and there is no truth in the rumour that students are going to be used as 'slaves' by their teachers in the final days of term! They will, I am sure, be expected to clear their lockers and help with the general tidying up of form rooms as they always do.

The new academic structure from September, referred to in a previous letter to parents, is outlined below:

| Directorate of Enterprise & Enquiry | Directorate of Global Communications | Directorate of Global Society | Directorate of Performance & Creativity |
|---|--|--|--|
| Director of Learning: Lee Walker (VP) | Director of Learning: Anna Nightingale (VP) | Director of Learning: Di Beddow (VP) | Director of Learning: Simon Cooke (VP) |
| Administrator: Laura Davison | Administrator: Jackie Moore | Administrator: Fionna Lowe | Administrator: Nicki Cartwright |
| Subjects: Mathematics ICT & Computing Science Economics & Business Studies Information Advice & Guidance (Careers) | Subjects: English Media Studies Film Studies Modern Foreign Languages & Latin PSHE (Personal, social & Health education) & Citizenship | Subjects: History Geography RS & Philosophy Global perspectives Social sciences: Psychology Sociology Politics Law Health & Social care | Subjects: Art Music Dance Drama PE Design Technology Food & Textiles |

A very successful evening was held for parents on 13 June, which highlighted the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities on offer at Hinchingsbrooke. Thank you to those who attended. The extra-curricular programme is an essential part of our approach to educating the whole child and provides many opportunities for students to develop skills as well as to have fun! Please continue to encourage your son or daughter to make the most of the opportunities on offer.

For those of you with children who cycle to school, I am sure that the vast majority do so safely and sensibly. However we did receive notification a little while ago about some students from Hinchbrook causing a nuisance to pedestrians, particularly the elderly and young children. Anything you can do to reinforce the need to be considerate to others and to cycle safely and sensibly, would be much appreciated.

Not all events this term have been a cause for celebration and our community was shocked recently by the sudden death of one of our most popular students in Year 9, **Ellie Keeling**, as a result of an asthma attack. The students' response, whilst being completely devastated by the news, has been remarkable. Following assemblies and meetings they have arranged a number of tributes and put forward many ideas for supporting the family and each other. The impromptu tribute that grew around a particular tree where she often sat was very moving. The family and very close friends gathered there on Friday afternoon to remember Ellie and support each other in our loss. This terrible unforeseen event serves to remind us all of the need to be ever vigilant about carrying medication and the seriousness of some quite common complaints such as asthma. Despite having her medication with her the circumstances of that fateful evening worked against Ellie and resulted in this, the most terrible of events. Our hearts and prayers go out to her family and friends and we remember too, others who have suffered such unbearable losses.

I realise that I started this letter a few days ago and I have now had the pleasure of the performance of Bugsy Malone that I said I was looking forward to at the start of the letter. It really was very professionally done and a thorough delight. I attended on the last night and would like to pay a particular tribute to those students who knew Ellie, and yet were able to continue with their performance even despite their loss and grief. The performance was dedicated to her memory and I know her Mum felt very proud of them too.

As I complete the letter I have just received a fantastic photographic record of the **Year 7 trip to Caythorpe** which, if the photographs are anything to go by, was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all concerned.

And so, looking forward briefly to next year, I am hoping that, as a result of our new structure and the fact that there will be more administrative staff available, we will improve our communications. There is a revised home-school agreement, a revised behaviour and attendance policy, a new approach to mobile technology and a determination to work closely with parents. I would like to set up some parents forums next year so please look out for those. Students in Year 10 (soon to be Year 11) are planning some optional changes to the uniform which, if popular, may well lead to the changes being negotiated across a wider front next year.

Please note that due to the availability of a keynote speaker we are having to change the INSET day scheduled for Friday 25 October to Monday 4 November.

Looking even further forward we are planning our 450th anniversary celebrations for 2015. The small committee is being headed up by Caroline Sheffield, our Chairman of Governors, and there will be plenty of ways in which parents can get involved. Of the many ideas under discussion, the refurbishing of the Library in the House is probably the furthest advanced in terms of planning together with the OHA's commissioning of a new history of the school. Please look out for further details next year.

Finally, may I wish you all a peaceful, restful and safe summer break. My first year has simply flown by and it has been a pleasure and a privilege to become a part of this wonderful community. Thank you for your support and welcome.

We return with renewed vigour on Wednesday 4 September for the new Year 7 and Year 12 students and Thursday 5 September for the rest.

Very best wishes,



Andrew Goulding
Principal