

Address Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0TD
Headmaster Mark Dixon

Telephone 01737 649000
Fax 01737 649002
Website www.raa-school.co.uk

ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL

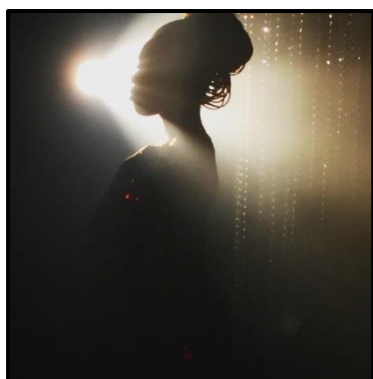


December 2019

Dear Parent

As the Headmaster of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, my role is to ensure your children receive an academic education. However, I believe my role goes much further than that. My aim is to support your child to achieve academic success, but also to give them confidence, resilience and aspiration.

The co-curriculum programme is a key part of delivering education beyond the classroom. In this term alone, we have had a number of new events that provide opportunities for pupils to stretch themselves. Earlier this month we hosted a Christmas Dinner in Gatton Hall for elderly people. This was arranged in partnership with Age Concern and the Co-Curricular Ambassadors arranged the event. This is part of our aim to develop closer links with the community, and follow on from the work we have been doing with homeless charities.



This term saw the magnificent performance of the West End favourite 'Cabaret'. A huge amount of preparation went in to this production, with auditions, choreography, set design, programmes and rehearsals starting months beforehand. The show was amazing, with unforgettable performances from pupils who had the main roles, and those who were in the ensemble. For the final performance there was a Gala Dinner and a charity auction which raised £2,320. This will be ploughed back in to Drama to enable them to stage more top-quality shows in the future.

In September we had a number of new appointments in the PE Department. Hannah McLaughlin started as Head of PE and she is supported by the PE team which now includes Heads of Sport for our main sports (Rugby, Netball, Football, Cricket and Swimming). This investment in sporting talent is already paying off with increased opportunity for fixtures and training. One of the highlights of the sporting calendar is the fixture against Gordons' School which took place on Saturday 7th December. This year we won the Patron's Cup for the first time ever (combined rugby/netball A teams Years 7-10). This was a fantastic result and all pupils were outstanding.

Remembrance Day was another important date in the School Calendar. Each year we remember those who gave their lives in conflict, including people who had been pupils at this school. This year Brigadier General Rowland gave the speech at the Remembrance Service. Brigadier Rowland, who some of you might know as Mrs Rowland the Physics Teacher, was a servicing officer in the Army and is now a part time member of the Army Reserves. She delivered a poignant speech about the significance of the poppy. I am always very impressed about how respectfully pupils behave during Remembrance commemorations and this year was no exception.



Each term we arrange a 'Partnership with Parents' meeting to give you an opportunity to give direct feedback to the School. This term the theme was communication. I was pleased that around 20 parents came to the meeting and we received some very good suggestions about how we can communicate better. I am working through these suggestions and will provide full feedback shortly. I know it is difficult for boarder parents to come to these meetings, but I try to include as much information as possible in the newsletter.

The Autumn Term is the longest term of the academic year. This means we cover the most ground in terms of the curriculum and I am pleased with the progress pupils have made with their studies this term. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom has been excellent and they have worked hard on their prep. The GCSE results last summer put us in the top 10 % of UK schools in terms of our Progress 8 score (the Government measure for value added) and this meant our pupils, on average, got a third of a grade higher than might have been expected per GCSE. Our A Level students also did well with many pupils securing places at top universities. We expect pupils to maintain their focus on academic studies to ensure they also achieve the grades to open doors to a place at their chosen university or employer.



In preparing pupils for life in the adult world we have worked hard to help pupils understand the connection between the General Election and how it will affect them. As a school we will be directly affected by Brexit, as it is likely to affect whether we can admit pupils from Europe. The outcome of the Election will affect us all in many different ways. To this end, we have been running our own election within School. First, we invited the candidates from the main parties to speak to pupils. Then our own students took on the mantle of different parties and gave a speech on behalf of their party, to all pupils. All pupils and staff voted in our School election on election day and the winner the Green Party.

It has been a busy few weeks with our election campaign running alongside the various Christmas celebrations. The PTA once again organised a hugely successful Christmas Fayre to raise money to give back to the School. I am immensely grateful to the members of the PTA for all their hard work and for the donations they make each year to projects that benefit pupils.



There have been Christmas dinners for all pupils and they dressed up for the occasion, making the most of the opportunity to let their hair down at the end of a long term. There have been Christmas play, carol concerts and many other events around the school to round off the festive season.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a relaxing Christmas break and I look forward to welcoming pupils back in January, ready and refreshed to make the most of the exciting opportunities that await them in the new year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dixon'.

Mark Dixon
Headmaster



HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM GATTON