



## End of Term Letter December 2021

Dear Parent,

The end of a term always offers the unique opportunity for a period of reflection as well as to plan ahead for the next term. After my first full term as Interim Head at RAAS, I have indeed been reflecting on the wonderful achievements to celebrate in our school, as well as identifying the important work and activities still to do.

As I have expressed previously, since joining the school in September I have been impressed with the dedication and resilience of colleagues across the school, as well as our pupils, coping with the continued impact of the pandemic. The support of our parents and local partners in helping to adjust to our 'new normal' and ways of operating has been highly appreciated.

It has been heart-warming to see our children able to return to more normal events where they can showcase their talents and hard work. Our whole school drama production "The Crucible" was an amazing example of this, where the drama team and pupils put on a polished and professional performance that was inspiring to watch. Our Juniors were also able to celebrate and showcase their creativity with each class's Christmas Drama play performed this week. We do hope you can relive the event through the recording that will be sent to you today.

We have also celebrated many important dates and festivals this term. Our Remembrance Day "Act of Remembrance" led by our Chaplain, with the help of the History and Music departments, was a wonderful tribute to those who have fought for our country. Another great event was our wonderfully festive Diwali themed evening for our pupils and school colleagues to celebrate this festival of light with traditional dance and food. To bring you right up to date, this week we successfully hosted our annual Carol Service in St. Katharine's Church, Merstham, whilst on Wednesday the Senior Leadership Team served Christmas lunch for the whole school, elf hats and all!

We were delighted that we were able to hold a special concert to celebrate our partnership with Steinway & Sons and being the first state school in the country that is All-Steinway. It was great to have live music back on the school calendar and although numbers were limited due to Covid restrictions, the audience were treated to a number of fantastic performances from pupils, teachers and our special guest, professional pianist Caterina Grewe. It was so impressive to see our students performing so well after such a long time without being able to play to a live audience. Further piano and other instrument performances are planned for the new year to continue to showcase the quality of our music department and curriculum.

A complete fixture programme meant lots of success for our Rugby and Netball teams. We dominated the district competitions and last weekend retained the Patron's Cup played against our friendly rivals, Gordon's School.







Since our arrival in September, David Blow and I have reviewed the School Development Plan (including the curriculum offer and implementation) and worked with the Senior Leadership Team to identify areas across the school requiring action. Some of the projects are longer-term, but key achievements so far include:

- Introducing more consistent approaches to teaching and learning, and reviewing assessment and reporting as well as our curriculum offer for September 2022.
- Ensuring that new leadership of Personal Social Health and Economic education is in place so we can improve our provision across the school.
- Developing our 'behind the scenes' systems and structures to ensure that leaders can make evidence-based decisions to benefit our pupils.
- Developing our partnership work to fully benefit our community, for example, the visit of the High Sheriff of Surrey earlier this month.

As you will be aware we also had the matter of an Ofsted inspection on 16th and 17th November. I'd like to thank all colleagues and parents for their support during this inspection and for willingly sharing their views in the Ofsted surveys. It was especially encouraging to view the feedback of parents across the wide spectrum of topics raised in this survey with an extremely high percentage of parents feeling that their child was happy, safe and did well at the school, with a good range of subjects and participation in clubs and activities. The official report should be published in mid-January 2022, and we will share full details on this around that time.

I've tried not to cover too much of the 'covid stuff' here, given how well we've done despite its existence. It feels to me that over the last fortnight, with the emergence of the Omicron variant, the red list travel updates and some government 'own goals' too, we are possibly moving into a more uncertain phase of the pandemic. This may mean we have to be flexible in the New Year, as we seek to support our pupils and families with particular challenges. It could mean we will face some logistical challenges which we can work to solve whilst recognising that there could be some aspects that we, put simply, can't manage to fix. I thank you in advance for your support, patience and kind words as we manage this next phase and I'm hoping that we can continue to mitigate any potential disruption to learning and school life.

Evaluating what we have achieved as a school community over this last term is essential for knowing how we can develop in the New Year and into the Spring and Summer terms. While we have much to celebrate and be proud of, embracing a culture of continuous improvement means we need to reflect critically, continue the work we have begun, as well as identify new areas for development and advancement. So, there will be plenty for us to do in 2022 and there's lots to look forward to. However, before then, Christmas provides us all with the time for both reflection about this 'season of goodwill' and for quality time spent well with family and friends. I wish everyone connected with RAAS a wonderful Christmas and very happy New Year.

*James*

James Malley  
Interim Headteacher

Please click [HERE](#) to watch James' end of term video address