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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



13th December 2018

Dear Parents

As the Autumn Term comes to an end, I wanted to share my thoughts on the term just passed and to wish you all very Happy Christmas.

I feel fortunate to have joined such a warm, vibrant and forward thinking School. My family and I have enjoyed the challenge of being new and settling in. We have found kindness, new friends and opportunities. Life feels very worthwhile at RAAS and I am proud to serve such a well-grounded school community.

As Head of the Junior School the term has flown by. I have enjoyed teaching Year 3 to 6 PSHE, discussing important topics and hearing some wonderfully mature and wise thoughts from the children.

One moment I felt I should share with you was watching the children's reactions when delivering an assembly on resilience. The assembly ended with a clip of a baby bear, struggling to make it to the top of a mountain.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM0pDz8ZahU>

The baby bear did not give up, rather looked for a different way until it made it to the top. The children demonstrated a range of instinctive emotions during this assembly; however, the empathy and excitement at the end of the clip was pure and genuine.

I share this because the power of *never giving up* is significant, it underlines the importance of perseverance and being resilient. This is accomplished through the need for continued hard work and effort. It also emphasises the importance of a growth mind-set, which is essential to learning. I am keen to ensure all children develop a growth mind-set. We can all do things better and I would like to help all children feel inspired to learn and keep learning! I believe this comes from a discussion and willingness to look at mistakes and how one can do things even better. Addressing the challenge of inspiring a love of learning for life is truly exciting.

I am grateful to Mr John Stafford, Mrs Mac and the wonderful team of staff in Rank Weston. The house continues to provide a quality of care and a unique balance of warmth and fun for all our children. Being new this term, I feel reassured whenever walking into Rank Weston. Without fail, I am greeted with happy smiling faces and the feeling that our junior community is flourishing.

Looking back over my first term at RAAS, it has been full of achievements and participation from many children in a number of different events. The Year 3 & 4 boys and girls took part in separate football tournaments. The Year 5 & 6 children enjoyed some great results in their Netball and Football fixtures against St Johns Primary and Salfords Primary. A number of our boys and girls took part in the District Sports Hall Athletics event and were exemplary in their effort and behaviour. The sense of teamwork and strength of character which our swimming team displayed during our recent swimming gala against Walton-on-the-Hill Primary was tremendous. I would like to extend my thanks to the staff who organised and coached these teams with such commitment and expertise.

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The children enjoyed a wonderfully productive term on the musical front. We were delighted to take fifteen Year 6 pupils to London to perform a piece alongside 500 other children, with a professional orchestra, conductor and soloists. It has been tremendous to see the success of the new Junior Choristers group which was formed at the beginning of the Autumn Term. It comprises of 23 pupils across all year groups. This group performed beautifully at Remember Reflect and at the Carol Service in St. Katharine's Church, Merstham. I feel there is fabulous potential and talent in the musical abilities of our children and I look forward to seeing this continue to flourish in the remaining two terms.

Remembrance Day services were held on Friday 9th November. The junior children joined together with Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils in a special service held in chapel, followed by the laying of wreaths by the flag pole. It was a truly moving moment for all staff and children to pay their respects silently, remembering the 44 Gattonians and many other men and women who gave their lives in service for their country.

The Junior Christmas Production was outstanding and a testament to the teamwork, considerable talent and hard work on the part of the children. To perform and sing with such clarity and passion for two performances and hold our attention was truly wonderful. I would like to thank Mr Cooper as Director, for producing such an inclusive and special play for us all to enjoy.

Academically, we have been delighted with the enthusiasm the children have displayed in their classwork. The new initiatives introduced this term, Times Tables Rock Stars challenge, Usborne Sponsored Read and the introduction of the RAAS Top 50 Reading books have been a hit. It's wonderful to see so many children being awarded certificates for completing the various phases of these challenges. The enthusiasm and learning taking place across all year groups has been excellent.

I would like to thank the PTA and Friends for their invaluable work in the smooth running of the Christmas Fair. It was the first time the Junior School had organised and run stalls. I was very impressed and proud of the children's energy, creativity and sales skills to sell all items on their stalls by 12.00pm. I would encourage any parents who can spare a little time, to join the PTA/Friends of RAAS; it is a vital part of our school community and I know they would welcome any new members to the team.

I would like to thank your children's teachers, boarding staff and all members of the school community for all their hard work, ensuring the children have all been well cared for and enjoyed themselves.

I look forward to welcoming pupils back after the Christmas Break, refreshed and ready to go for a sensational Spring Term.

With my best wishes for a Merry Christmas.



Head of Junior School