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# ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



December 2017

Dear Parent

## Letter from the Headmaster - December 2017

We have come to the end of a long and busy but successful term for our staff and pupils, and the whole school community is looking forward to a well-earned rest.

This term we decided to recognise the achievement of pupils who consistently work hard and have the right attitude to learning. Each year group in the senior school had an assembly where the top 25 pupils were awarded a certificate to recognise their effort. It is easy to overlook the pupils who quietly get on with their work and don't cause a fuss and I wanted to make sure they did not go unnoticed.



In the Senior School this term, we have had a focus on Behaviour for Learning and I am really impressed with how the pupils, in general, have taken this on board. We continue to be proud of how our pupils, across the school, display our Gatton Aims. A few of these, who have been particularly highlighted by members of staff, or their peers, will receive Gatton Awards in assemblies over the last few days, however there are so many more that could be mentioned. This year we also had nominations by pupils of members of staff for Gatton Awards.

1. **Alexi Haslett** from year 6. Exemplifying **Contributing** to our community and society and Taking **Ownership** of our lives
2. **Kent Patel** from year 9. Exemplifying Taking **Ownership** of our lives, **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, and **Contributing** to our community and society.
3. **Dontay Graham** from year 10. Exemplifying **All the Gatton Aims**
4. **Manuela Perez Gomez** from year 11. Exemplifying **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, **Aspiring** and **Persevering**, being **Courageous** and **Honest**, and **Contributing** to our community and society
5. **Ikeola Alao** from year 11. Exemplifying **Aspiring** and **Persevering** and being **Courageous** and **Honest**
6. **Farah Chibwape-Matondo** from year 11. Exemplifying Taking **Ownership** of our lives

7. **Manuela Perez Gomez** from year 11. Exemplifying **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, **Aspiring** and **Persevering**, being **Courageous** and **Honest**, and **Contributing** to our community and society.
8. **Iain Clamp** from year 12. Exemplifying Taking **Ownership** of our lives, **Aspiring** and **Persevering**, and **Contributing** to our community and society.
9. **Rachel Aina** from year 13. Exemplifying **Aspiring** and **Persevering**, and **Contributing** to our community and society
10. **Kathryn Hogg Thomason** from year 13. Exemplifying **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, **Aspiring** and **Persevering**, and **Contributing** to our community and society.
11. **Mrs. West** for exemplifying **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, being **Courageous** and **Honest**, and **Contributing** to our community and society.
12. **Mrs Cribb** for exemplifying **Respecting** ourselves, others and the environment, being **Courageous** and **Honest**, and **Contributing** to our community and society.



Upper Sixth students have been working hard on their applications to university and I am pleased to say they are getting competitive offers, including some unconditional offers, from some of this country's top universities. A number of applications have been made to Oxbridge with one student has been invited for an interview at Oxford and another at Cambridge. Getting to interview stage is a huge achievement in itself, so these students should be proud of their achievement so far. Now the hard work really starts as they focus towards their final A level examinations in the Summer.

The weekly Sixth Form lecture programme this term has provided inspiration and information to our Year 12 and 13 students. They have heard from a broad spectrum of presenters on subjects ranging from mental health to immigration control at Gatwick. Students have been stretching their minds as well as their bodies with co-curricular activities such as Duke of Edinburgh Gold which had a practice expedition to Snowdonia and Model United Nations at Benenden School.

We have many very talented musicians in this school and they have performed in various venues through the term. Representatives from our Junior School joined hundreds of children from around the UK and overseas for the Scratch Messiah performed in the Royal Albert Hall in November. It was a spectacular evening and one they will never forget. There has been a series of concerts in St Andrew's Church and Gatton Hall and also the weekly Friday lunchtime 'Music and Munch' Concerts. These popular events provide an opportunity for pupils to experience performing in front of an audience and they have really risen to the

challenge. The staff and pupils who come to the Church and the Bothy for these events have been very impressed by the level of performance and the musical skills of all the performers.



The work for the Music Department has continued right to the end of this term as they support the Christmas productions in the Junior and Senior School, and carol singing in Redhill. I was delighted that the traditional Carol Service was re-introduced and this was held in St Katharine's Church in Merstham. It was a joyful celebration of Christmas led by our excellent choir and musicians, and accompanied by the audience of parents, staff and past pupils. My thanks for Dr Grigsby and Mr Edney for all their hard work to make all these musical celebrations such a success.

There has been success on the sports field too, with our Year 11 netball team winning the District Championships for the second year running. The annual Gordon's fixture took place just before the end of term. It was a well fought match in difficult conditions. Unfortunately we did not win but put up a very good fight and showed excellent sportsmanship. The pupils have done themselves and the School proud all season. Levels of participation in sport are high and our sports co-curricular clubs are very popular. Girl's rugby has really taken off and our teams have had a number of fixtures against other schools which have given them invaluable match practice. We have now got A and B teams for Rugby and Netball in most year groups and some even have C teams. Sport is also doing well in the Sixth Form where we now have A and B teams for Rugby and Netball.



There have been a number of theatre trips this term with pupils going to the West End to see 'Matilda' and the National Theatre to see 'Young Marx', and 'Jekyll and Hyde'. The Drama team have staged a number of productions including 'The Tempest' for Shakespeare in Schools at the Leatherhead Festival, and the hilarious 'Nativity Gone Wrong' at School.

Gatton Hall is surrounded by scaffolding as the renovation works continue. The project is going to plan and we aim to complete the work in time for the start of the Autumn Term next year.

I am pleased to announce that following the meeting of the Governing Body on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November, Mr David Clamp has been elected as Flexi-boarding Parent Governor and Mrs Judith Magee as Boarding Parent Governor. Our thanks go to both of them for being willing to serve the school in this way.

Christmas festivities are in full swing as I write this letter. Our huge Thanks go to the Friends of RAAS for all of their work putting on the Christmas Fair last week, it was a great success. Thank you also to all of you who donated items for the Fair. The Catering team have excelled themselves once again by providing excellent Christmas Dinners in the evenings in the last week of term. Pupils, dressed in their best party outfits were served their meal by the teaching and boarding staff, then completed the evening with a party in Gatton Hall. The boarding houses have been beautifully decorated with Christmas trees, fairy lights and even a festive fireplace!

All that remains is for me to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I hope you enjoy the holiday with your family.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dixon', written in a cursive style.

Mark Dixon  
Headmaster