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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



December 2018

Dear Parent

Letter from the Headmaster - December 2018

The long Autumn Term is an intense time for pupils as they embark on a new year's study which for many, will lead to external examinations in the summer. Over the last four months I have been impressed by the focus pupils have maintained in the classroom and in their independent study. They have certainly completed the groundwork they will need during the rest of the year as the exam season draws closer.

Pupils' efforts in the classroom have been matched in equal measure by the enthusiasm with which they participate in the co-curricular programme. There has been success on the sports field with many pupils participating in individual or team events during the course of the term.

A particular highlight was the block fixture against Gordon's School on 8th December. Gordon's School is the only other state boarding school in Surrey and there has always been a healthy rivalry between our two schools. Since the inauguration of the Sovereign's Cup in 2012 (the award for the winner of the First XV rugby match) the event has gone from strength to strength. This year the fixture was so big it took place at both schools simultaneously. The rugby matches took place here, where our new rugby pitches came into their own and we held nine matches at Gatton that morning. This meant teams from Year 7 to Year 13 were able to play their counterparts from Gordon's during the morning. The netball matches took place at Gordon's School and here again, we fielded teams from Year 7 to Year 13.



Our teams played well but narrowly missed out on the Patron's Cup (for the collective scores of the netball and rugby matches) and the Duchess of Gloucester Cup (our netball First Team lost 14-10 in a closely fought match). However, there was huge celebration when the Rugby First XV won the Sovereign's Cup with a score of 26-12 after a gripping match that was dominated by the home team.

I was delighted that so many parents could join us to cheer our teams on. The matches were played in good spirit and there was genuine warmth between the two schools at the lunch afterwards in the dining room. We have already started planning for next year's event so look out for the date when it is on the School calendar.

As well as visiting sports teams, we have had a number of other high profile visitors during the term.

This year we celebrated 260 years since the foundation of the School and this coincided with the reopening of Gatton Hall following its refurbishment. We were delighted when the Duchess of Gloucester accepted our invitation to join us to celebrate these two events. Despite the wet weather, she made time to greet junior pupils who were waiting to greet her on her arrival. Her Royal Highness met the members of staff who had been involved in the work in Gatton Hall and also met the families of some of our Foundation pupils.



Another visitor was the Sheriff of London who came to talk to Sixth Form pupils about the Corporation of the City of London. It was fascinating to hear about his role and his work with charities and business in the city.

In this last week of term a very visible display of art has appeared outside the school. Year 8 pupils have been celebrating the anniversary of the suffragette movement by creating banners and ceramic emblems reminiscent of those that were used to secure the vote for women 100 years ago. Pupils have clearly engaged well with this project and they have taken so much from it, beyond their artistic endeavour.



The Drama Department have also been busy. In addition to the Christmas production for the Junior School they have been working towards the next whole school musical 'Cabaret' which will be taking place next Autumn. Auditions occurred recently and I am thrilled to say that over sixty pupils took part. The cast will soon be in place ready to start rehearsals next term.



Throughout this term the Music Department has taken every opportunity to showcase the talents of our many musicians. There have been various performances including Music and Munch, (our regular Friday lunch-time concerts), one-off concerts, performances in Chapel including Remembrance and the Christmas highlight of the Carol Concert in St Katharine's Church. The standard of performance by our musicians has been extremely high and is a testament to the many hours of rehearsal they put before every event.

Looking towards next term, our Sixth Form students will be continuing the process of applying to universities. The current Upper Sixth has some very strong performers with six students being invited for interview at Oxford or Cambridge. This demonstrates the calibre of our Sixth Form and I would

like to wish them and all our students every success as they steer their way through the university admission process.

I would like to congratulate the following pupils and staff for receiving a Gatton Award. They are nominated by other pupils or staff for living up to one or more of the Gatton Aims. Hayley Marquis (yr 6), Robin Gurung (yr 8), George Wing (yr 9), Edward Andrews-Martin (yr 10), Millie Long (yr 11), Lizzie Fenton (yr 11), Vanessa Shing (yr11), Edward Leadbetter (yr 11), Maya Neama (yr 13), Deborah Yeboah (yr 13), Mrs Neath, Mrs Hyslop, and Mr Ernest

All pupils, and indeed the staff, have worked very hard this term and a great deal has been achieved in terms of academic progress, sporting success and in activities outside the classroom. It is time for a well-earned rest and I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

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

Mark Dixon
Headmaster