

Our Ref: MLG/ADL/Parent Letter/January 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians

Happy New Year! I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and somewhat refreshed by the Christmas holiday. It has been delightful to welcome all our students back and to be looking forward to a busy and enjoyable term. After a full year at the school I remain tremendously excited about the start of the new term and about the work which lies ahead of everyone at the school. It really is a great privilege to be responsible for such a wonderful group of students and staff.

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resourced Provision**

You may remember that governors met on Wednesday 26 November 2008 to decide formally whether to proceed with this development. I am pleased to report that they decided to do so and therefore a formal consultation began on

8 January 2009. You can find more details on our website, [www.croftonschool.co.uk](http://www.croftonschool.co.uk); assuming that the consultation goes well, we hope that construction will start in the summer and that our first students will join us in September 2010. We are eagerly looking forward to the start of this project and the benefits it will bring, both for those students who will be based within the provision and for the wider school community.

### **Certificate Evening**

It was delightful to see so many of our former students and their families at our annual Certificate Evening before Christmas. This happy event gives us one last opportunity to celebrate their achievements and to send them on their way with our best wishes. I hope that the fact that so many of our students choose to come back for the evening demonstrates their affection for the school and the value they place on the friendships they have made here.

### **Christmas Concerts**

We also enjoyed 2 wonderful Christmas concerts at Holy Rood Church. More than 120 students of all ages took part under the expert direction of Miss Ambler and Mr Oliver and the audience was left deeply moved by the quality of the performances they enjoyed. Kind volunteers from the Crofton School Association (CSA) provided refreshments and a good time was had by all. It was particularly pleasing to welcome some of our older neighbours from Baytree Court to the concert – we had invited them so that they could see our students at their very best and they were not disappointed. Do consider coming next year.

### **Year 7 Parents' Social and Pantomime**

The term finished with 2 new events. The CSA kindly organised a social evening for parents and tutors of our newest students – it was very enjoyable to meet informally and we hope to run similar events later in the year.

On the last day of term, a group of very brave students and staff under the direction of Ms May and Ms Knight performed a splendid Christmas panto, featuring a bewildering range of characters and a highly convincing cow. It was a lovely way to finish the term and I think the 2 audiences of students thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

### **Mock exams**

Year 11 students have now received the results of most of their mock exams. We hope that these results will have reassured the unconfident and challenged the complacent in equal measure! Following the publication of the results (which will come home on Friday 16 January), parents will be invited to school to discuss them. There will be a general Parent Consultation on Thursday 22 January; there will also be 2 targeted support evenings (for parents of students who may be disappointed by their results) on Tuesday 27 January and on Monday 2 February. More details of these events will be sent home shortly.

### **Prefects**

As you may know, we currently have a small team of prefects in Year 11. They have done excellent work this year, mainly with our youngest students as they move from Year 6 into Year 7, but they are rapidly approaching retirement age and so we are recruiting. I would like to have a larger team of Year 10

students this time and have recently explained what is involved to them in assembly. If you have a son or daughter in Year 10 do, please, discuss the idea of becoming a prefect with them. They will need to complete an application form by Tuesday 13 January.

### **Charities Week**

A last word on Charities Week 2008 – it turned out to be a record-breaking year with more than £7,000 being raised by Mr Milliken and his team. We were able to hand over cheques to the nominated charities at the end of last term. This unprecedented total really does represent an impressive achievement – well done to everyone who took part.

### **The Paris Marathon**

In what I hope will be an exciting development, a group of 6 teachers will be representing the school in the 2009 Paris Marathon. Mr Anderson, Miss Burr, Mr Hillier, Miss Noble, Mr O'Dowda and myself form Team Crofton and, as you can imagine, are already training as hard as the weather will allow. We would like to raise additional money for the charities the students chose for Charities Week, being MacMillan Cancer (a well-known national charity which supports both research work and individual cancer sufferers), Chernobyl Support (a local group who invite children from Ukraine to come to England for a break) and Playpumps (an international charity working to provide clean water to families in Africa). We would be very grateful for any donations you care to make! Cheques should be made payable to 'Crofton School' and sent to the finance office in an envelope marked 'Paris Marathon'.

### **Website**

We are gradually upgrading our website ([www.croftonschool.co.uk](http://www.croftonschool.co.uk)) to include more news about the school and more information for parents. If you have not looked at it recently, do please take time to do so.

A new feature that we hoped would now be available is online reporting. We intend to provide every parent with a secure link to information about their child's attendance and progress and to online versions of their school reports. Sadly, a sequence of technical problems has delayed the launch of this facility but I hope it will be available soon.

### **Year 9 Assessment**

Parents of Year 9 students may be curious about arrangements to replace the national SATs tests. We are still finalising the details, but we intend to run a series of formal internal assessments in May/June. These assessments will provide teachers with information about progress to help them plan their teaching and to inform setting decisions for Year 10; they will provide students with invaluable experience of formal exams as they begin their GCSE courses. More details will be provided nearer the time.

### **Arrival Time**

It may be the cold weather encouraging them to walk faster, but increasing numbers of students have been arriving at school significantly earlier than 8.40am. As you know, we are not able to provide extensive supervision before this time so students are not allowed inside buildings; please encourage your daughter/son to arrive at school promptly, but not too early!

### **Calling the school**

My colleagues in reception have asked me to remind parents that we have an automated telephone system. Parents are asked to press '1' when prompted to do so if they want to report an absence; they should press '3' to speak to a receptionist.

### **Lost property**

Our collection of lost property continues to grow, with many valuable items of clothing left with us, un-named. Do, please, make sure that all school uniform items clearly show your son/daughter's name. Unclaimed items are disposed of after 2 weeks.

### **Important forthcoming events**

20 January – Year 8 Science Information Evening – from 4pm  
22 January – Year 11 Parent Consultation – from 3.30pm  
29 and 30 January – INSET days – school closed for students  
3 February – Year 9 Parent Consultation – from 3.30pm  
12 February – Year 9 Upper School Courses Evening  
26 February – Year 7 Science Information Evening – from 4pm

### **Spring Term**

5 January – 3 April  
Half-term: 16 – 20 February

**Summer Term**

21 April – 22 July  
Half-term: 25 – 29 May

**INSET Days, 2008-9**

29 and 30 January, 20 April

I am looking forward to seeing you at our various school events.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming  
Headteacher