

Our ref: ML/AD/Parent Letter/July 2008

July 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians

As I write this letter, the end of term is nearly upon us. School staff sometimes naively hope that the end of the Summer Term may be a relatively restful time – in fact, it is always frantic. In the last few days, we have enjoyed the Icthus weekend away, *Shine!* performances at the Ashcroft Arts Centre, the Dance Festival, inter-tutor rounders, Area Athletics, the Crofton Debate and the Cluster Concert; the next couple of days will see the Summer Concerts, the MFL/Science visit to Futuroscope, Sports Day, the Year 6 Taster Day and Problem Solving Day, the Faculty Days and much more besides. It is an exhausting time, but a happy one – we all enjoy the change from the routine and the chance to see our students exercising their talents. There is much more information about these and other events in the latest edition of *The Crofton Crier*, which will be available via our website within the next couple of days.

Kirkland Rowell surveys

The results of these 2 surveys have at last arrived at school – we were a little disappointed about the delay in their return. They were carried out in March, just after our OFSTED inspection. The report is reasonably sophisticated – it is corrected for the size and context of the school and for the varied expectations that students and parents in different places have.

Student survey – 60.4% response (302 questionnaires returned from a sample of 500)

50% of students who had been here a year or more reported improvement over the previous year, while 24% reported deterioration. The report said: "The survey results reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities."

Students were asked to rate the school for "selected performance criteria". They responded as follows:

Exceptionally good – community spirit, social/health education

Very good – security, discipline, happiness, moral values, exam results, truancy control, bullying control, confidence, caring teachers, communication, computers, resources

Good – homework levels, teaching quality, developing potential, choice of subjects

Not so good – careers advice, school facilities

Students ranked the importance they attached to each of these criteria:

Top 5 – happiness, bullying, teaching quality, exam results, school security

Parent survey – 32.0% response (336 questionnaires returned from 1050 sent home)

15% of parents who had been associated with the school for more than a year reported improvement over the previous year, while 17% reported deterioration. The report said: "The survey results reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities."

Parents were asked to rate the school for "selected performance criteria". They responded as follows:

Very good – social/health education, student confidence, choice of subjects, happiness, moral values, community spirit, security, caring teachers, school facilities, communication

Good – exam results, resources, control of bullying, homework levels, truancy control, discipline, teaching quality, computers, developing potential

Not so good – careers advice

Parents ranked the importance of these criteria:

Top 5 – teaching quality, discipline, students' happiness, developing potential, control of bullying

Significantly more parents felt that their child was "not pushed hard enough" rather than "pushed too hard". The report added: "Many of the parent comments were very positive and many of the negative comments were qualified in light of the parents' overall satisfaction with the school."

Thank you to everyone who returned their questionnaires – they have provided us with invaluable evidence as we decide on priorities for next year. We have analysed the results carefully and are using them to prepare our Improvement Plan for 2008-9.

Staff

The end of the Summer Term can be a sad time in some ways. We have already said good bye to our Year 11 students; we must also say farewell to a number of staff.

Many congratulations are due to Mrs Frost, who has been promoted to be Assistant Headteacher of Swanmore School and to Mrs Wild, who has taken up a position as English Co-ordinator at City of Portsmouth Girls' School. Mr Rider and Miss Le Maitre have both obtained promoted posts too, Mr Rider at Test Valley School in Stockbridge and Miss Le Maitre at Amery Hill School. Mrs Robertson, Mrs Hyde and Mrs Wallace will be retiring after many years of loyal service to the school. We also say goodbye to Ms Orton, Mrs Jeffery, Miss Tiltman, Ms Bandal, Ms Chisholm and Miss Elvey. I am very grateful indeed to all these colleagues for their efforts on behalf of the school and its students – I am sure that you will join me in wishing them all the best for the future.

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Catering

The school has run its own dining facilities for some years. However, it has become increasingly difficult to do so economically. As such, we have decided to invite HC3S (Hampshire County Council's own caterers) to take over the management of our school catering.

HC3S have been working with us for about a month and I am pleased to say that students have been impressed by the quality and variety of food and drink on offer. The less good news is that some prices will need to rise in September. Part of the problem has been that we have not been covering our costs – this has meant that we are using money that might have been spent on educational resources or teaching staff to cover losses incurred in catering. The new arrangement should allow us to reduce this problem. Please see below examples of price changes:

1 Course Lunch: was £1.85 2 Course Lunch: now £1.90 Slice of Pizza: was 65p now 80p

The new menu can be found at: www.myschoollunch.co.uk/hampshire/movingup

Uniform

You may well be buying uniform during the school holidays. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the school's position on trousers – we are now happy for students to wear any shade of grey. However, our expectations on the style of trousers remain unchanged – trousers must be of a traditional style; 'hipsters' etc are not allowed. Similarly, there has been no change in the rules about shirts – fitted/fashion shirts are not allowed. If you are in any doubt at all, please check with the school before making a purchase.

Cycle safety

Cycle helmets will be compulsory from the start of next term. We really hope that students will choose to wear them for their own safety; however, they have been warned that we will confiscate their bicycles if they do not have helmets and ask parents to come in to collect them.

Ipods etc

Please remind your son/daughter that they should not bring personal stereos to school. Staff have been asked to confiscate headphones – these will normally be retained until the next day.

Important dates

End of term: Wednesday 23 July 2008

The school day will finish at lunchtime, with year groups dismissed as follows:
1150 – Year 10; 1200 – Year 7; 1205 – Year 8; 1210 – Year 9

Autumn Term

Start of term: Wednesday 3 September 2008

1100 – Year 7 students and Year 10 prefects arrive
1320 – Years 8 to 11 arrive

Half-term: 27 – 31 October 2008

End of term: 19 December 2008

Spring Term

5 January – 3 April 2009

Half-term: 16 – 20 February 2009

Summer Term

21 April – 22 July 2009

Half-Term: 25 – 29 May 2009

INSET days (2008-9)

10 October 2008, 3 November 2008, 29 and 30 January 2009, 20 April 2009

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first 2 terms as Headteacher and am very excited about the year ahead. I hope that your son/daughter has also enjoyed their year at school with us and that they (and you) will have a refreshing and relaxing holiday.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher