

July 2010

Dear Parents

Once more it has been a very successful year at Merchants! We have had a busy schedule and no doubt the girls will be looking forward to a well-deserved rest over the summer break.

I would like to thank you for your responses to our Parents' Evening Questionnaires: the **Overall Satisfaction** rating of 89% in the 'excellent' and 'very satisfied' categories, with the **Quality of Teaching** and **Academic Progress** following closely at 88%, is recognition of the standard of provision that we are offering. Our development plans for next year will continue to work on the areas of concern identified. During the summer break there will be an upgrade in our website, whilst in the Autumn Term our Careers Education and Guidance provision will take a more prominent role with newsletters and information booklets from Y9 upwards.

We have, as usual at this time of year, some staffing changes. Firstly, I would like to thank the leaving staff for their hard work and dedication to the School and we wish them well in their new endeavours. Mrs Lewinska is retiring from teaching at the Girls' School and Mrs Dodds is resigning due to ill-health. Mrs Hart is retiring from her role as Head of Geography, but will continue to work in the school, part-time leading our Gifted & Talented provision. These staff have given many years of service to the school and numerous students will have benefited from their expertise, care and professionalism. I would also like to thank our supply cover staff: Mrs Lilian Simpson and Mrs Amanda Clayton for stepping in to help us over the last year; whilst welcoming back Mrs Houghton and Ms McWatt from maternity leave following the respective births of Hannah and Jake. Mrs Caroline Titterington has been supporting the Art Department over the last year in a voluntary capacity and we thank her for her support and contribution to the School. Mr Tim Short will be staying with us during the Autumn Term covering Mrs Dodds' lessons in the Religious Studies Department. Our internal appointments include Mrs Gill Vaughan as Head of the RS department and Mrs Cath Mason as Head of Geography.

As you may already be aware, our Bursar, Mr Philip Gaunt, is retiring after a service record of some 18 years. An ex-parent himself, we are sure he and his wife Anne are looking forward to the more relaxed life that retirement brings and we thank him for his hard work and dedication to the job. He is being replaced by Mrs Alison Pope, who joins us in mid-August.

Our new appointments who will be joining us in September are:

- Mrs Debbie Meziane-Joynson will be joining the Geography Department. She has previously been a Head of Department and has returned to England following a period abroad. She enjoys the arts, as well as walking, cycling, swimming and scuba diving.
- Ms Lyndsey Rimmer joins us as a Learning Disabilities & Difficulties

Co-ordinator from Hugh Baird College. In her spare time she enjoys walking, watching and playing sports.

- Ms Victoria Collings will be joining the Chemistry Department. As an extremely experienced teacher, she comes to us from Carmel College. She is a keen cook and enjoys baking.
- Dr Stella Hardy will be covering Mrs Syms's maternity leave, and we will be also welcoming Mr Neil Dalton who will be covering Mrs Heaton's maternity leave.

By September, you will see a dramatic difference on the Boys' School's site as the Joint Sports Hall build will have progressed significantly. You will shortly be receiving the Sporting Start booklet, which explains the Schools' 2 year campaign to launch a new period of fundraising for bursaries and capital development over the next ten years. The Sporting Start title refers to the opportunities that a Bursary Fund provides together with a theme for celebrations over the next 2 years.

During this holiday time we will also be undertaking some building work. Our Central Reprographics Department will be moving to a new office and the ICT Department will be re-housing new equipment in the current Reprographics room. For the second year running we will be hosting a Summer School Challenge for girls in Y6, Y7 and Y8 which will include activities to both stretch them and entertain! There are numerous Duke of Edinburgh trips occurring, together with the annual CCF camp, which this year is taking place at Warcop. Our music trip to Belgium departs on 11th July for a week and we wish them well. Our European connections are improving as we hosted three Y9 French girls and one Y10 student during our last few weeks of term. A group of Spanish students spent a day at the Boys' and Girls' Schools, and next term we are very lucky to have a German national as a teaching assistant. More information about this and many other School activities will be in our Summer Term newsletter, Merchants' Tales which will be with you shortly.

There are many exciting ventures to look forward to next term including the Classic Department's trip to Greece and a joint schools production of Jesus Christ Superstar which will take place from the 24th November.

Prize Giving is on Friday 5th November and a full Autumn Term Calendar will be issued early in September, with a copy on the website.

Finally, I am very proud to have been invited to become President Elect of the Girls' Schools Association in 2011, becoming President in 2012. This will place Merchant Taylors' Girls' School at the forefront of independent girls' education.

With kind regards for a peaceful and restful summer break.

L A Robinson
Headmistress