



GRACE DIEU MANOR SCHOOL

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Dear Parents,

I hope that you have all had a very enjoyable Christmas holiday, whether you were at home or on your travels.

As has now become customary, you will receive this letter via email and the latest Blazer Magazine will be given out on the first day of term (Thursday 5th January); likewise the new term diary. Please note that the diary will also be posted on the school website as soon as possible, for your convenience.

As I write, work on the new **ventilation system for the swimming pool** is nearly complete and this will make a big difference to the quality of the air and general environment in there. My thanks to Mrs Bivins and her team for their great work on yet another project.

It was good to see the **new music teaching rooms** in action last term and, although they are not quite so easily accessible to parents, the rooms themselves are infinitely better as teaching areas. Another area of vital improvement of the school.

Last Term

Your **Parents' Association** continues to make an amazing contribution to the life of the school, not just in financial terms but also through arranging great social events for everyone. The **Christmas Fayre** was a huge success in every way and the sum of over £4,000 was raised – a record amount for this event and it was a great occasion! How good, too, to see so many former parents and pupils returning to keep alive their contacts with the school.

Our lively and broad list of after-school activities continues to enhance the lives of the pupils and it has been lovely to see new activities constantly emerging, notably, in recent times, **Zumba Dance Club**, courtesy of Mrs Seymour and our **new Debating Society** for the older pupils, led by Mrs Tallett. My thanks to them both.

Linguistic interest has also been greatly invigorated by the efforts of Mme Tatton, not only through her energetic teaching but also as a result of the wonderful **European Day of Languages** and also the **day trip to Boulogne**, arranged for the pupils in Years 7 and 8.

Parents will also appreciate the lovely photo in the magazine that recorded **Grace Dieu's visit to Leicester Tigers** towards the end of term. That was a great occasion and my thanks go to all those staff and parents who made this exciting venture possible.

Quite rightly, the second half of the Autumn Term focuses upon the season of Advent and the imminent celebration of Christmas. With many nativity plays, concerts, “carols around the tree”, carol services and Christingles, a great deal of work is required and I do thank very warmly the staff and parents who helped in any way to make our celebrations fun, thoughtful and of the highest standards. On the liturgical side, the commitment of **Fr Denis, Mrs Kewell and Mrs Burrough** has been key and I am so appreciative of all their unstinting efforts.

Staffing Matters

Quite understandably, many of you have been wondering what the situation is regarding **Mrs Burrough** and the post of **Director of Music**. I can now tell you that Mrs Burrough will be with us until the end of this academic year and that is wonderful news for us! May I also record that this was not part of Mrs Burrough’s initial plan for the year, but she has been kind enough to generously extend her time with us, and I am most grateful to her.

In September, **Miss Tracy Tierney**, her successor, will join us and I know that she is already excited at the prospect. Miss Tierney currently leads the music with great success at Avenue Primary School in Leicester. Miss Tierney studied Music at Cardiff University (BS Hons) and gained her PGCE teaching qualification at Leeds University. She is an experienced singer, conductor and is also very interested in composition.

Academic Reviews & Other Academic Matters

The staff took immense trouble in writing a review of last term’s academic effort and achievement for each pupil. These are important communications and our hope is that parents will have found these very helpful. Please do come back to **Mrs Potter** or your child’s Form Tutor if you have any queries at all. Feedback is always useful and a vital part of the key area of parent/school communication. My own view is that the quality of the staff reports is excellent and I am aware from parental comments that this is much appreciated.

Year 8 pupils, preparing for their entry tests in the new year, will have been working steadily over the holiday period and their time of waiting will soon be past – “keep going!” is my only message to them. A number of Year 8 pupils have already been offered places at Repton and all will be revealed in due course when I can publish our list of “Year 8 destinations.”

If your child is in **Year 6**, then please be aware that the Key Stage 2 “mock” examinations take place in Week 5 of the term (week beginning Monday 30th January). Unless some steady revision has taken place in advance, these “mock” tests are a waste of time and neither you nor the staff receive the feedback that is needed to guide the next stage of preparation.

Study Cards will appear this term for Years 3-8 at the end of Week 6 and these will give you a clear indication as to how your child’s work has progressed since the start of this term. Parents know that they can contact us at any time regarding academic matters or indeed anything else.

Year 8 Pupil Appointments

I am very pleased to publicise the following appointments for the forthcoming Spring Term:

Captain of Football: Thomas Nevill
Captain of Netball: Rebecca Hughes
Heads of Orchestra: Rebecca Hughes & Francesca Massarella
Heads of Chapel Choir: Lucia Faulkner & Francesca Massarella
Heads of Senior Choir: Joshua Brown & Savannah Parker

House Captains:
Bishops: Clover Jelley & George Palmer
De Lisle: Henry Lallo & Francesca Massarella
Gentili: Hollie Pulman & Jamie Lee
Verdun: Findlay Butterworth, Paul Newton & Emma Taylor-Clark
Senior Sacristans & Altar Servers: Henry Lallo & Conor McKay
Librarians: Joshua Brown, Luke Combellack, Guy Hagon, Thomas Hopkins, Francesca Massarella & Savannah Parker

Looking Ahead

It is very important that parents look carefully at **courses/activities** that **Activate Sport** is putting on at Grace Dieu in 2012. The website is, as always, the best place to look, and do not delay in registering your child(ren) for some exciting opportunities. www.activatesport.co.uk or call **Toby Mitchell on 07814 902218**

Please note that our **Prize Day will take place in 2012 on Sunday 17th June**, and I am delighted to announce that Mr Gareth Lloyd, Headmaster of Ratcliffe College, will be our Guest of Honour this year. It will give us much pleasure to welcome him and his family to Grace Dieu.

Please note in your diaries that it is highly likely that the **GDPA Summer Ball will take place on Saturday 23rd June 2012. Date to be confirmed!**

The Start of Term

Vital dates for the start of the new term include:

Friday 6th January

Mothers' Prayer Group, 9am

Friday 13th January:

*Start of Term Mass, 9am – Thanks to the kind support of Abbot Joseph, our Main Celebrant will be **Fr Denis Geoghegan**, one of the monks from Mount Saint Bernard Abbey.*

Tuesday 17th January

Year 5 Parents' Information Evening, 6.30pm

Monday 23rd January

Year 8 Art Exhibition and Social, 6.30pm

Sunday 29th January

Family Mass, 5.30pm

Kind regards to you and your families, and may I take the opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy New Year! We shall be looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday 5th January.



Charles Foulds
Headmaster