

18th December 2009

Dear Parents

It was a great pleasure to see so many of you at the events which mark our end of term. 'Whoops-a-daisy-Angel' performed by our Foundation Stage children, 'The Wizard of Oz' involving every single girl in the Junior School, the entertainment at the Boarders' Candlelight evening and the singing of Senior School choir in St Cuthbert's – all were truly excellent. These occasions are memorable for the children involved and really do show how talented our young people are – and how successfully the Polam Hall staff bring out those talents.

We had much to celebrate at the end of a busy term: a large number of pupils did well in Associated Board examinations and Maths Challenges. Individual successes included Tessa Pelham Year 6, winning national recognition and an award for her entry in 'I'm a Councillor – Get Me Out of Here' and Nicola Race of Lower Six who received a Young Citizen of the Year award from Darlington Rotary Club. Senior School's Celebration Reading was enhanced by some wonderful music from the Wind Ensemble, and ended with a stunning break dance routine from the Sixth Form Boarders, who found time to rehearse despite two of them taking time out for Cambridge interviews. Four of our students are awaiting the results of Oxbridge interviews over the Christmas break and, of course, we wish them well.

Our innovative changes and new curriculum at Foundation Stage and throughout the Junior School, have led us to a clear decision to extend the boys' experience of Polam Hall to the end of Year 2. This is a natural transition point and a logical step for us given the new structure at the youngest end of school. We hope that parents of boys currently enjoying the Foundation Stage will welcome the news.

Another exciting development for the New Year has developed from a Senior staff initiative now ready to be implemented. The Spring Term will see the formation of a Scholars' Club (M5 – U6) and Junior Scholars' Club (L4 – L5). Scholarship holders and Attainment prize winners will be invited to special events aimed to stretch, stimulate and inspire our many able pupils. The first such event will focus on 'Gunpowder and Revolution' and will form the inaugural meeting in the New Year. Once again I thank staff for the enthusiasm and energy which makes such new ventures possible.

As always, I take this opportunity to provide a few routine reminders for parents. Please note our eco-friendly decision to rely almost wholly on electronic communications from January. **Do please sign up for the e-newsletter if you have not yet done so.** A small number of copies of Buttercup News and Senior Focus will be available in the school offices.

Next may I urge parents to ensure that we have up-to-date contact details – including mobile phones and email addresses. You can email registrar@polamhall.com with any changes, or just to check we have the correct details.

Reports should have arrived for students in Lower Four, Lower Five, Middle Five and Upper Sixth. Lower Sixth Tracking sheets and Upper Five statements of results are enclosed with this mailing. Girls in Upper Four and Upper Five receive reports in the first half of next term. This mailing also includes details of Scholarship processes for parents of pupils in Year 6, Lower Five and Upper Five.

Finally, I hope that many of our Junior School parents will come and visit Senior School on the January 19th Open Evening. This year you can observe sample lessons, be shown around by Senior staff and see pupils engaged in a range of academic and extra-curricular activities. It is an ideal opportunity for Junior parents to see for themselves what life in Senior School is really like - please do come and join us.

Thank you for the beautiful cards and generous gifts and, above all, for your continuous support for the school. My very best wishes for a joyful family Christmas, and for health and happiness in 2010.

Season's Greetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'M'.

M Green (Miss)
Head