

March 2008

Dear Parents

The early date on which Easter falls this year makes the many achievements of the Spring Term all the more remarkable. In both Senior and Junior Schools we have had much to celebrate, and several notable individual and team successes. Final assemblies provided the opportunity to acknowledge and applaud many endeavours. Our students performed well in Maths Challenges, in French Language Week organised by the British Council, and in a new competition -based on University Challenge – for Sixth Formers to name but a few.

In Speech and Drama we had outstanding success, with every single Polam Hall candidate, Junior and Senior, 48 girls in total, achieving Merit or Distinction in their examinations. This included three Upper Five students who gained these high awards at the Bronze Medal stage. Well done indeed Sophie Bainbridge, Suzie Millar and Sophie Pearson! The high standards of the vocal arts were evident too at the Darlington Festival where several girls won their sections and over 60 Polam Hall School students took part.

The production of ‘Mack the Knife’ was an ambitious and challenging undertaking. The letters and cards received from governors and guests show how well the performance was received. The teamwork in evidence was superb, and the cast were very professional, both on and behind the scenes. Many, despite the demands of three evening performances, helped with the bag pack for Sports Relief at Sainsbury’s on Saturday 15th March. Over £1000 was raised; to add to the £400 plus collected in school on our sports-themed mufti day on Friday. The energy, creativity and commitment devoted to fundraising remains a marked feature and strength of our school community.

Sporting successes also featured prominently in our Celebration Reading. The recent press coverage of our pupils who play at Town, County and National level is a well-deserved reflection of the high quality of sport at Polam Hall. I was particularly thrilled to see this acknowledged in Mrs Pearson’s final year. Earlier this month we appointed our new Head of PE, Miss Kate Fraser, who will be joining us from Newcastle Church High School in September. We are very much looking forward to welcoming her.

The election of new school officers is a key event in the second half of the Spring Term. I would like to thank our retiring leadership teams – in Houses, Boarding and School – for their outstanding work in the past year. The new team have much to live up to, but they are keen to get started! Congratulations and best wishes to our new teams:

Head Student	Polly Enevoldson
Deputy Head Students	Lydia Burnside-Hughes, Lucy Downes
Games Captain	Catherine Hannigan
Vice Games Captain	Dominique Forrest
Head Boarder	Karen Wong
Deputy Head Boarders	Kayleigh France, Joyce Wong
Boarding Houses Heads	Hoi-Ting Wong (Peace), Ivy Yeung (Harmony) Assistants: Amy Liang, Kayleigh France
Kent Captain	Dominique Forrest
Kent Vice Captain	Rachel Leatherbarrow
Kent Committee	Sacha Bellas, Jessica Crawford Lucy Downes, Karen Wong

Skerne Captain	Abby Glass
Skerne Vice Captain	Rachel Carver
Skerne Committee	Suzanna Millar, Olivia Richardson Kate Sayer, Victoria Wilson
Swale Captain	Gemma Harvey
Swale Vice Captains	Krystal Forster-George, Leila Shroufi
Swale Committee	Kayleigh France, Shani Everson
Tees Captain	Jennifer Fuller
Tees Vice Captains	Rebecca Harrison, Sophie Villiers
Tees Committee	Beth Cunningham, Sneha Sivakumar Tiffany Stainthorpe

Parents of Upper Sixth students will find Tracking reports enclosed with this mailing. Copies of next year's term dates and provisional dates for 2009/10 are enclosed for all. May I repeat my plea to parents to **check these dates carefully before booking holidays or flights**. Beginnings and ends of terms are important in different ways and students can never wholly replace what they have missed. Details of Study Leave arrangements for Upper Five, Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth will be sent out early next term.

I would like to thank all parents for their support in helping us maintain the high standards of appearance of our students. In assemblies we continue to remind pupils that they are ambassadors of the school at all times, and to encourage them to take pride in their reputation. With increasingly fewer exceptions, the Sixth Form have adopted the spirit of our Dress Code admirably. Details of what is expected will be sent to Year 11 students with their written reports next half term. **Parents of girls entering Middle Five or Upper Five next September should note that the changes to uniform include:**

- the option to wear a **PLAIN** black coat and use a **PLAIN** black bag– no logos or trims please
- the Sports Jackets available to girls at this stage are **NOT** a substitute for a black coat or blazer. The girls may wear the sports jackets to and from school, but not in assembly, and in lessons only at the discretion of staff

In the new term the School Council (Senior) will be invited to discuss mobile phone use. We are conscious that this technology, along with Internet and email, is part of twenty-first century life, and we need to educate our young people in its use. However, the increasing sophistication of mobile phones means that they can do much more than provide the convenient contact valued by students and parents. The distraction-value is considerable, and we will be looking at ways to address this. **Parents please note that i-pods are NOT allowed in school.**

Mrs Craggs and I leave for the Far East on Wednesday 26th March and will return on April 8th, ready for the new term. I hope to see many of you at the May Ball on Friday 16th May. In the Summer Term we will be using our new minibus which so many of you have helped us provide. Upper Sixth parents please put Friday 27th June in your diaries. This is the date of the Leavers' Dinner for which formal invitations will go out next term.

My sincere thanks for all your support, and specially good wishes to all those of you living with GCSE and A level candidates. I hope our public examinees will use the holiday to prepare effectively for the challenges ahead.

I wish you all a relaxing family holiday and a very happy Easter.

Best wishes.

Marie Green

M Green (Miss)
Head