

July 2008

Dear Parents

The year past has been busy, exciting and thoroughly rewarding. Our pupils, of all ages, have enjoyed new challenges and many successes, reflected in our excellent press coverage, our newsletters and the end-of-year individual reports which were a pleasure to read.

The successes which bring particular delight are those which see the pupils working creatively together for the benefit of the school or the wider community. The Junior School has led the way on Eco-School initiatives, gaining national recognition for their efforts. The ICT skills of our Junior pupils was again recognised with success in two competitions. In Senior School members of the Interact Club were selected from over 1600 nominations as regional winners of a Community and Heritage Award. They will discover on July 16th whether they are to be the North East representatives in the national finals. Our Middle Five and Lower Six Business Studies teams recently beat off the competition to win the inaugural Bannatyne's Bright Sparks Event and the prestigious Ogden Trust Business Competition respectively.

I write my last letter of the school year on the day 20 students and staff have departed for Tanzania where their efforts, and the funds they have worked tirelessly to raise, will benefit the residents of Kilimatinde, and genuinely help to change lives. These are just a few of the recent highlights. I hope you will enjoy reading more about the rich experience and remarkable talents of all our students in the School Magazine distributed at the end of term. This summer we will be working with the professionals involved on our new website and prospectus. We hope you will enjoy the finished products!

The end of term is always marked by expressing our thanks to those staff who are moving on. This year we bade farewell to our ICT technician Mr Ron Gowling who has given generously of his considerable expertise for the past two years. We have appointed Mr Steve Chamberlain as Network Manager, a new post to meet the demands of our ever-growing ICT provision. Mrs Edwina Bryant has been a versatile and valued member of staff, teaching modern languages and music to all age groups from 3 to 18. We have very much appreciated Mrs Bryant's contributions over the past eight years and are pleased that she will be remaining at Polam Hall on our peripatetic staff team. In September Mrs Linda Hampson will join the MFL Department as a part-time teacher. She brings a wealth of experience and is a French specialist. Miss Laura Bland moves on to fulfil her long-held goal of teaching younger pupils. Polam Hall is the richer for Laura's five year stay with us, and we all wish her ongoing success and fulfilment. Her post has been taken by Mr David Mountain whose vast experience will benefit us all.

This summer Mrs Gail Slater retires after a commitment to Polam Hall spanning more than half a century. Old Scholar, PHOSA Trustee, parent and, for the past 15 years, stalwart member of staff, Mrs Slater will be greatly missed. She has provided expert and unfailingly patient support to the Art and Food Technology Departments and given of her time and talents in countless other ways. Equally missed will be Mrs Cynthia Pearson who retires as Head of PE. The warmth of the pupils'

tributes and those of her colleagues on the staff reflect the high regard in which Mrs Pearson is held and how much the pupils she has taught are indebted to her. Her successor is Mrs Kate Martin whom we look forward to welcoming in September. I wish both of our retirees every happiness and good luck at the next stage of life.

The parents of students in Middle Five to Upper Six in 2008 are reminded that results will be available at the times specified on the enclosed letters. Everyone involved is warmly invited to school on the mornings of results days so that we may share the celebrations or offer advice as appropriate. Parents of students entering Lower Sixth or moving to Upper Sixth all have the opportunity, either at our request or theirs and before term begins, to talk through the next steps with senior members of staff. I wish all our public examination candidates the success for which they have worked so hard.

As always, looking forward to the year ahead, I have included with this mailing an important document for all parents: this is a reminder of key school regulations on

- mobile phones and Internet use
- uniform and dress code
- drop-off and collection and extended day arrangements

Finally, there are two key dates from next term's calendar that I wish to draw to your attention. First, Awards Evening on Thursday 23rd October is a compulsory event for all students in Middle Five to Upper Six. Pupils will all be entitled to two tickets. Extra tickets will be allocated on request and subject to availability with priority going to performers and prizewinners. Details will be sent out in the Autumn Term. Secondly, please note that our Open Morning is on Saturday October 11th and all Senior School pupils are expected to attend.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back in September and thank all parents for your much valued support. I wish everyone a happy, relaxing summer break.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Green".

M Green (Miss)  
Head