

January 2010

Dear Parents,

Headmaster's Newsletter January 2010

Happy New Year. Fortunately the snow of early January didn't disrupt our start of term and I am pleased to report that 2010 has begun well and we have had a very productive first few weeks.

Staff

At the beginning of term we welcomed two student teachers from Exeter University, Tim Taylor for Physics and Shirley Anderson for History who will be working with us this term. Also Peter Evans began his role as Events Manager. Peter is based in the new Queen's College Conference Centre.

We also welcomed our two new GAP students Freddie Austin and Matt Defina both from Melbourne, Australia. I hope they enjoy their year with us.

Pupils

We welcomed four new pupils this term. Zoe Saunders and Michael Kwok into Year 9, Ben Wylie in Year 10 and we also extended a warm welcome back to Lauren Amirmadhi who has joined the Lower Sixth.

Buildings

Peter Evans is currently overseeing the refurbishment of the Queen's College Conference Centre which is beginning to look very smart. We intend to open it officially in March. The facility will be available to the school and also to outside agencies for conferences and social functions. Further details will follow.

The indoor bowling green which we also purchased on the Civil Service site is being converted into a Drama classroom, costume store and a base for D of E and outdoor pursuits as well as a new location for the School Shop. This will release space for classrooms and other functions in the main part of the school.

Academic

Many congratulations to James Sandow who has been offered a place to read Natural Sciences at Robinson College, Cambridge. Congratulations also to Zoe Arkinstall, James Baker, Faraz Taraq, Ed Garvey, Eleanor Mason and Rosie Dunkely who have all achieved 5 green commendations and have received book tokens from me.

Warm congratulations to Hannah McLeod who gained the highest mark in the whole of the UK in her Grade 5 LAMDA examination which is an outstanding achievement.

During the first week of term Year 11s had their trial GCSE exams. These exams and external modules in other subjects were the main subject of discussion at last Thursday's parents evening. Pupils should now be aware of their work schedules between now and the summer exams. I look forward to seeing them and their parents again this coming Friday at the Sixth Form Open Evening and Options Meeting. I will give a presentation on the Sixth Form at Queen's. Pupils and parents will then have the opportunity to discuss A Level options with Heads of Departments and other staff and students as well as gaining a flavour of life in the Sixth Form. The evening will conclude with drinks and nibbles in the Sixth Form Centre.

The first three weeks of term has also been an exam season for Sixth Formers taking A2 modules- I hope their efforts are rewarded with good grades which will take the pressure off them in the summer.

Headmaster's Question Time

I was very pleased to welcome over 40 parents to Headmaster's Question Time on the topic of the Sixth Form experience at Queen's. We received lots of positive feedback, thank you. If any parents were unable to attend and would like a copy of my power point presentation emailed to you please contact my PA Cathy. I looked at our A Level provision as well as new qualifications we are offering to stretch the

most able and enhance university applications including the Extended Project Qualification, the AQA Baccalaureate and Open University courses as well as our own Recognition of Achievement Award which recognises achievement in all aspects of the students' education at Queen's. In addition I answered questions on university applications.

Music

Congratulations to Tom Harris who took part in the final of the Taunton Young Musician of the Year Competition held in the Queen's Hall last Sunday. Although he didn't win he played some very challenging pieces superbly and earned much deserved praise from the adjudicators.

Trips

The Year 11, 12 and 13 artists visited Tate Britain and Tate Modern in London last week. I hope the experience will provide them with plenty of useful exam inspiration. The Sixth Form Psychology students also attended a study day which was very productive.

Year 11 certainly enjoyed their high ropes day at the conclusion of their trial exams.

9X attended a Gifted and Talented day at Yeovil which proved to be appropriately challenging and demanding. Thank you to Mr Bates the Senior Tutor for organising the trip.

Chapel

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to our Haiti earthquake appeal. We raised well over £1000 in Senior School which combined with the Junior School contribution has enabled us to send 4 Rotary Shelter boxes to the earthquake victims. Thank you to the Chaplain for the very moving service on Holocaust Memorial Day when we welcomed the Minister of Temple Methodist Church, Bruce Thompson to share his experiences of visiting Amsterdam and the house where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis during the war.

Part of the Methodist Art Collection is coming to Taunton under the title of PassionArt. The collection includes work by many renowned artists. The main body of the work will be available for viewing at The Temple Methodist Church from Saturday 20th

February to Saturday 3rd April with smaller collections in the Queen's Hall foyer and at Somerset College of Art and Technology.

Crossfire

We welcomed the former Chaplain of Queen's Ed Standhaft to last week's Crossfire meeting at which we debated whether religion was a good or bad thing.

Art

There is an excellent exhibition of pupil's portraits in the Queen's Hall foyer. Congratulations to all concerned – please do pay it a visit.

The adult art classes are proving very popular. Details and timings are in the calendar, all are welcome.

D of E

There have been successful open boating and kayaking trips on weekends when the rivers have been very full and testing. A good time has been had by all.

Boarders

The boarders enjoyed their outing to the Bristol v Plymouth Albion rugby match on Sunday. They enjoyed watching Mr Sprangle play.

Sport

Congratulations to the Captain of Hockey Alex Greenhalgh and the Captain of Netball Hattie Shergold. Hockey and netball results and reports are posted on the school web site.

Our teams have made an encouraging start to the season. The 1st and 2nd Netball teams are unbeaten and they were particularly pleased with their wins over Kings during the first game of the season.

All our hockey teams have experienced success. The 1st XI had a good victory at West Buckland but lost narrowly to Taunton and Kings. All the Year 7 girls have now represented the school at hockey and netball.

Cross Country: In the area championships 12 of our boys qualified to represent Taunton area at the County Championships this coming weekend. Blair Brown won his race and there were top ten finishes for Dom Alcock, Ollie Livingston, Dan Handford, Ali Floyd, Sam Harris and Lewis Kenworthy.

Indoor Hockey: The U16 drew 3-3 with Taunton School. Against Wellington the U18 squad lost 5-4 and the U16 won 1-0.

Rugby 7s: In the Wellington tournament the U16 lost in the final of the plate. They beat Bryanston, 14-7 in the semi-finals losing to Exeter School 12-7 in the final. This was a very strong squad performance which bodes well for the rest of the season.

Communication with school

May I respectfully remind parents that concerns about effort or attainment grades or other routine matters should initially be addressed to the tutor rather than the subject teacher. The tutor will correspond with you and speak to the teachers concerned. They will arrange a meeting for you if necessary.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Headmaster