



### WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

#### *The Headmaster writes...*

It was an absolute pleasure last Friday morning to open our doors to prospective parents. We were delighted with the level of interest and were very fortunate to have such a beautiful day. The school looked terrific, the boys were an absolute credit and, in particular, the Year 8 boys who acted as tour guides, did a wonderful job. I had numerous words of praise for their relaxed confidence, their good manners and the pride they exhibited in their school. Ultimately, these parents choose the school not because we have a swimming pool or because we have playing fields, but because of the quality of the boys we produce.

As current parents I thought you would be interested to know what I said to the prospective parents. I will spare you the introductions but I did say that I feel the reputation of the school beyond the hedge rests on our excellent facilities, our strong academic performance and our sport. However, I sought to broaden that out. We are very fortunate to have well-equipped classrooms, a gymnasium, playgrounds and so forth and, indeed, we have extensive plans to improve even further. However, as a parent I certainly would not choose a school on facilities alone and nor would I expect anyone to choose Davenies for this reason. Of far greater importance are the people, as it is those who go to Davenies who make the school. No matter what his achievement, whether he becomes an imaginative artist, skilled musician or talented sportsman, my main ambition for each boy, when he is with us and when he leaves us, is that he is considerate, well-behaved and kind. The staff working at a school like this have a tremendous responsibility; children of this age are very impressionable. Of course we expect the staff to be role models and professional but I also look for staff who have a personality because it is only staff with personality who will enthuse and ignite a boy's passion in a subject.

I then spoke about our academic achievements. There are two paths through Davenies: those who take the Grammar school route, leaving for RGS, Dr Challoner's and John Hampden; and those who choose the Independent route. I was able to point out our boys sitting for Merchant Taylors', Berkhamsted, Harrow, St. Edward's and other schools. Our pass rate last year at 11+ was 85% and at Common Entrance, the exam to go to Independent schools, was 100%. Although we are very pleased with these end points, more interesting and important is the journey through the school the children take to this destination. Davenies takes forty boys, some of whom are very able, who are stretched accordingly and some of whom have weaknesses and need support and patience to develop. I am eager, also, that the school does not forget those many boys who fall in the middle and yet at some schools are overlooked. The teaching should be thorough and the education expansive. The question that prospective parents have to ask themselves is how does a school such as Davenies, which teaches far more subjects than a primary school, outperform the primary schools? Of course small classes and good teaching contribute immensely but so too does the fact that we have subject specialists in every subject. So, for example, we have four staff with Maths degrees and much of what they do is only teach Maths not just to Year 7 and 8 boys but lower down the school also.

At Davenies education doesn't stop at 4:00 pm with the end of the timetable. The array of extra-curricular classes begins – the sport, the fifty activities and so forth. Why do we offer this range of experience? Not only because we can but because we hope that these small boys will find things they are interested in, they enjoy and perhaps are even good at, so they grow in confidence. It is only with this level of confidence that the seeds of determination will grow and they will cultivate the necessary tenacity to tackle the areas where they are not as strong.

Sport is an important area of the school. Just before I came here the boys had been on a cricket tour to Grenada; last Summer the rugby squad went to South Africa. In between times there have been a couple of trips to Limerick and a football tour to Germany. The sport is good but what I mean by "good" is not only that the 1<sup>st</sup> XV has a competitive fixture list but that we hope each boy will find a level of enjoyment in his sport. Hence, already this term the boys in Year 3 have represented school. They will have their team photos and hopefully will have enjoyed themselves. And if the sport is good then the music, the art and the drama also have to be good. We have many boys who play guitar, drums, saxophone but also those who play flute, cello and violin. We have choirs, quartets, orchestras and, of course, rock bands. I talked about the Art Exhibition and the number of boys who, in the course of the year, have their moment on stage which, again, helps them to grow in confidence.

If the school's reputation does rest in these three areas, I really would like it to rest also on a fourth. I would like the school to be known for having excellent Pastoral Care as without this all other achievements are on unstable foundations. I concluded by saying that we are fortunate to have very healthy numbers in the school and very healthy numbers of boys down to join us next year, despite the economic situation. However, we do not take this for granted. We are ambitious for the boys, for what they achieve and the people they become.

### **Old Davenians**

Being selected for a West End production is a special occurrence: to have happened to two recent alumni is exceptional. Jordan Broatch and James Dexter, ODs of Summer 2009, will be appearing on stage in Oliver. Needless to say both boys are as excited at the prospect as their parents are proud. Rehearsals start at the end of October and they will start performing from mid-December through to the end of March 2010. In order to look the part, hair cuts are now banned on order of the production company!

Davenies is delighted for Jordan and James and looks forward to hearing further news of their triumphs as they follow in the footsteps of another OD, Harry Child, who took to the boards when he left us in the Summer of 2007.

### ***Matron writes...***

#### **Barnados Cottage Boxes**

Barnados is the charity that Davenies have supported since (we believe) it was founded in 1960. We offer all boys' the opportunity to have a small 'Cottage Box' at home in which to collect any small change. This is by no means obligatory, and a boy will only be given a box with their parents' written permission. New boys will be given a leaflet from Barnados to take home, but if any other boy would like a box, please see Matron for a form.

The main collection date will be in June, but if anybody feels their “box is overflowing”, please bring it in for emptying next week; any day before Friday.

On behalf of Barnardos I would like to say a huge thank you to everybody who has collected any money, no matter how small, it all goes to an extremely worthy cause.

***Any parents who have any spare time next week between Tuesday and Friday from 8:30 – 10:30, I would really appreciate some help with counting the money. Please meet in the medical room where coffee and biscuits will of course be served!***

### **Mufti Day – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

A reminder that there will be a Mufti Day, in aid of Barnardos, on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October. Please ensure that your son brings in £1 for this worthy cause.

***Mrs Churchouse writes...***

### **Musical Soirée**

The Musical Soirée takes place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30. Thank you to those who have volunteered to take part. Our resident super Chef needs to know how many people to cater for, so please let me know on Monday if you would like to attend the event and how many people will be in your party.

### **Rock Band**

The boys in the band will be performing a short gig at 1:30pm on Tuesday in the PAC. All are welcome to attend.

### **Recorders**

May I please remind you that boys from Years 2 – 6 must have their own recorders at home on which to practise. We keep a full set in school for boys to use here, however they are regularly issued with music which they are expected to take home and work on. Recorders can be purchased from Rosehill Instruments in the Beaconsfield Old Town.

***Mrs Ellis (School Librarian) writes...***

Thank you to those of you who have been sending in Nestlé Box Tops For Books tokens: 240 will be sent to the organisers tomorrow. In contrast, I've only received 4 Times Free Books for Schools tokens! Do look on the Intranet to see the free books added to the library via the Times scheme last year. It would be great to take advantage of the scheme again this year. Thank you.

## **PRE-PREP NOTICES**

***Mrs Rush writes...***

We are looking forward to seeing you next week at the Pre-Prep Parents' Evenings.

A reminder that our mini Open Afternoon on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October starts at 2:30 pm. This is a unique opportunity for the boys to show you their classroom displays as well as work in the other classrooms in the Pre-Prep. Once you have seen the displays, you may go home to enjoy your half-term break.

Please may I ask you to be vigilant at the Sainsbury's Gate at the end of our school day and keep a good eye on your children. There is a tendency for boys to run around the area in front of the Year 3 and 4 playground or hide in the bushes. Unfortunately one Pre-Prep boy broke his ankle last week running in this area.

I will be out of school on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October doing an Early Years inspection. If you have any concerns, Mrs McIntosh will be looking after the Pre-Prep.

## PREP SCHOOL NOTICES

*Mr Gibson writes...*

### House Points

Cook	82.19
Scott	85.25
Drake	88.24
Shackleton	91.08

### Open Days

The **Oratory School** has rescheduled its Open Morning to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October, from 09:30 – 12:00. For more information, or to confirm attendance, please phone: 01491 683500.

### Ski Trip

There is still a chance for your son to join the Davenies Ski Team on the sun-kissed snow-capped slopes of the beautiful Ziller Valley at Easter. This trip is open to any boy from Years 6 – 8 regardless of experience. First time skiers are very welcome as would seasoned professionals be! For more information, please e-mail me: [pgibson@davenies.co.uk](mailto:pgibson@davenies.co.uk)

*Mr Scriven writes...*

### Geography Expedition to Iceland: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Flight details were received yesterday, so a letter with final details will be sent out early next week! Also, owing to an administrative error, all parents accompanying the trip appear to have been undercharged. Sadly, that situation cannot remain to be the case! A ParentMail explaining the situation has been sent out today!

### National Geographic Magazine for Kids: Years 3 – 7

A letter offering a greatly reduced subscription to this magazine, aimed at children aged between 6 and 14, will be sent out imminently. Parents wishing to subscribe should complete and return the slip at the bottom of the letter to Mr Scriven by **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October**.

*Mr Thomas writes...*

**Swimming @ York House**

Davenies kicked off its Panagraphics swimming campaign in fine style on Thursday night with an emphatic win across all three age groups against York House, St. Martin's and St. Anthony's. The Year 4 swimmers notched up an impressive 7 wins from 8 races. The Year 5 squad achieved 5 wins and 5 seconds, whilst the Year 6 swimmers claimed 8 wins from 11 races. This is a fantastic start, highlighting some bright talent and swimmers who impressed spectators with their concentration, teamwork and technical know-how. Well done to all! Our next Panagraphics Gala is on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Berkhamsted. Before then we take on High March on the 9<sup>th</sup> November. In the words of William Rose, "Bring it on!"