



home-link

N E W S L E T T E R

SEPTEMBER 2009

Headteacher's Hello

Just four weeks have passed since the beginning of term and the students have settled in well and are enjoying the fabulous new dining facility. For the first time we are able to accommodate all students within the dining room at lunch and the lack of eating around the school has had a tremendous impact in reducing litter.

Thank you to parents for your attendance at the Information Evenings this term. The important materials in the presentations has been emailed to you via parent mail. It was lovely to see so many Year 7 parents at the cheese and wine last Friday.

We were very fortunate to have a sunny day for Speech Day. The occasion was a magnificent celebration of student success in all aspects of school life. The school orchestra's rendition of 633 Squadron (Ron Goodwin) was both rousing and uplifting.

An edited version of the Headteacher's Review for the Academic Year 2008-2009 is presented in this Homelink.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

Forthcoming Events

Open Evening – Monday 5 October 2009

Owing to the increasing numbers of prospective students and their families, this year's Open Evening will run from the earlier time of 3.30pm to 8.30pm.

The school will close at 12.30pm and the buses have been informed to collect students at this earlier time.

Students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will act as guides to the many visitors. Younger students will be asked to assist in the faculty areas.

INSET- Tuesday 6 October 2009

On this day the school will be closed to students in order that staff training can take place.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

Important Calendar Changes

There has been a change in the date of the end of the Spring Term. The end of term for students will now be Tuesday 30th March at 3:40 pm. However, on Wednesday 31st March the Year 11 GCSE Physical Education Moderation will require those year 11 taking GCSE PE to be in school.

Anchor Fund

Thank you very much to all parents who have already made donations, or arranged to contribute to the Anchor Fund by standing order this term. We are very grateful for all contributions, and all donations directly benefit all the students in the school.

All faculties have been able to provide extra resources for students as a result of parents' generosity. We are very proud of our excellent facilities at St Clement Danes School, but are constantly striving to raise more funds to maintain and further improve the quality of all our facilities.

We hope that all of our new Year 7, Sixth Form, and other new students joining all other years are settling into the school. If new parents would like to receive further information about the Anchor Fund, and are interested in contributing, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact our Finance Manager, Mrs Pat Heaps on 01923 284169 for further information. Donations, however large or small, are all very welcome.

As the term progresses further information will be sent to parents informing you of proposed projects that the Anchor Fund will be contributing towards. We would also be very grateful to hear from parents who may be able to assist with Anchor Fundraising, in any capacity. Your ideas are always very welcome!

Mrs J Hardy

Anchor Fund Administrator

IAG

Year 11 students will be given a copy of the booklet 'It's Your Choice' (How to choose your post-16 options). It is also available online at www.connexions-direct.com/itsyourchoice

Your Future Fair

REMINDER - Your Future Fair – 21st October 2009, 6pm-9pm

A large careers fair will be taking place at The Watford Colosseum on Wednesday 21st October, from 6pm-9pm. This event is aimed at students aged 14-19 and their parents. There will be a wide range of employers and Connexions Personal Advisers available to talk about careers and courses and various talks on the range of qualifications and courses available locally.

Congratulations to Charles Hope of Year 12 who has designed this year's Your Future Fair poster.

Mrs C Payne

CEIAG Coordinator

College Open Days

This information may be of interest to students considering post 16 study options.

- The information is as accurate as possible, but please check college websites for amendments/updates before travelling.
- Open days are across all campuses/sites unless otherwise stated.

Oaklands College - 01727 737080. www.oaklands.ac.uk

Tue 20 October Borehamwood Campus	5.30 – 8.30pm
Tue 20 October Welwyn Garden City Campus	5.30 – 8.30pm
Wed 21 October Alban Park Campus	5.30 – 8.30pm
Thu 22 October St Albans City Campus	5.30 – 8.30pm

West Herts College -01923 812345. www.westherts.ac.uk

Wed 4 November Dacorum Campus	6.00 – 8.30pm
Sat 7 November Kings Langley Campus	9.30 – 12.30pm
Mon 9 November Watford Campus (Art, Design, Photography)	6.00 – 8.30pm
Mon 16 November Watford Campus (Performing Arts, Music, Media)	6.00 – 8.30pm
Mon 23 November Cassio Campus	6.00 – 8.30pm

Amersham & Wycombe College - 0800 614 016.

www.amersham.ac.uk

Dates to be confirmed

Harrow College - 020 8909 6000. www.harrow.ac.uk

Sat 7 November Harrow Wild & Brookhill	10.00 – 12.00pm
Wed 11 November Harrow on the Hill, Lowlands	6.00 – 8.30pm

Aylesbury College - 01296 588588. www.aylesbury.ac.uk

Wed 12 November (Advice & Guidance only)	TBC
--	-----

Uxbridge College - 01895 853333. www.uxbridge.ac.uk

Wed 11 November Uxbridge Campus	3.00 – 8.00pm
Wed 10 March Uxbridge Campus	3.00 – 8.00pm
Wed 17 March Hayes Campus	3.00 – 8.00pm

Speech Day and Prize Giving 2008-2009

On Friday 18th September the Headteacher presented her review for the academic year 2008-2009 to an audience of students, parents, governors, Old Danes and guests.

At Junior Prize Giving Major Matthew Cansdale presented the prizes. Major Cansdale is an Old Dane and a member of the Parachute Regiment. He has seen active service in many war torn areas of the world and has recently received commendations for his bravery and leadership in Afghanistan. His address was both inspiring and thoughtful.

At Senior Prize Giving the prizes were awarded by Annmarie Byrne, a Trustee, activist and outreach volunteer for the UK charity Body and Soul, a charity that supports children and families affected by HIV. Annmarie spoke passionately about living with HIV and her thought-provoking speech resonated with the audience.

“ I have looked back over ten years of Speech day speeches and it is a privilege to reflect upon how the school has developed with improved facilities and buildings, increased size of the student body and staff numbers, and also in terms of the examination results. I have never before started my speech by launching into an overview of the results because as we know schools are so much more than examination statistics, but I do want to unpick the statistics and celebrate the individual achievements from the outset. To start with the examination results, this summer at every level - GCSE, AS and A are the best the school has ever attained. It is easy for us to perhaps become a little blasé about this because each year I report on the improving examination results. In order to realise how fantastic this achievement is, the improvement needs to be set in context. Firstly the students on entry to the school are no cleverer now than they were in previous years. Indeed we know this because we benchmark and test students each September in Year 7.

So what has changed? Well we are certainly better at monitoring students and using the data to personalise the curriculum in order to maximise each individual student's performance.

Also, the norm within our school culture is that students are expected to work hard. The teaching and support the students receive is second to none. We are not afraid to throw out processes and procedures if they are not working and intervene with radical changes that will ensure success. The teachers, support staff and members of the senior leadership team know you students very well. This is a fundamental feature and ethos of St Clement Danes that is often admired by those who visit our school. This year the GCSE results show that 92% of the students achieved 5 A*-C grades, 82% of them achieving 5 A*-C grades with English and Maths, and a record 37% of the grades were at A* and A grades. There are many individual student triumphs with 29 students achieving 8 or more A* and A grades. As well as this, there are students who, with the encouragement and support of their teachers and the learning support department, went on to gain 5, 6, 7 and 8 GCSEs grade C and above.

At AS and A Level the results are our best ever. It is no mean feat to improve on last year's record breaking results. Information regarding value added data on the 2008 A Level results only came into school in the summer term. It takes the DCSF some time to analyse the national and individual school's results in terms of these value added scores. They do this to determine how far the students have improved since GCSE and how well they have been taught. We know the 2008 results were fabulous in terms of attainment and I reported this at last year's Speech Day, but what we were overjoyed to hear is that the school's 2008 A level results were in the top 50 in the country and the value added for AS, i.e. the results obtained by this year's Year 13 leavers showed the highest value added when compared with all schools in England – in other words they were number One. This is an amazing value added achievement within the context of the high

A level grades attained. It is truly outstanding when you realise that this year's results are even at this stage better than the magnificent A level outcomes of 2008.

Congratulations to the Year 13 leavers, not only for your superb A level results this year, but also your outstanding AS success in 2008. It was pure joy to see so many happy faces on results day from students, parents and teachers.

Students leaving St Clement Danes are well prepared for the next stage. They have a wealth of experiences that allow them to develop personally and this together with examination results gives them the ideal platform to launch forward into the future.

The winning formula for success here at St Clement Danes is a simple one – firstly the students are fortunate to be taught by outstanding teachers, the mentoring and support they receive is second to none, and secondly the students benefit from a “can do” culture where ambition is encouraged. In short, if students are prepared to work hard, to the best of their ability, we at St Clement Danes will guarantee success. I heartedly congratulate all students who took their public examinations this year. It takes a great deal of commitment and bravery on their part not to give up, but to continue to strive to achieve these sorts of goals.

The winning formula of our school's sustained success has been nationally recognised. In May this year the National College for School Leadership assessed St Clement Danes as a National Support School and myself as a National Leader in Education. The school is only one of 100 secondary schools nationally to be bestowed with this honour and it is one of the first in Hertfordshire. The national support school programme is the opposite of previous government initiatives where so called ‘superheads’ were parachuted into struggling schools for a short period of time with the expectation of a quick fix. The National Leader and National Support School programme uses the expertise of the whole school to support and develop other schools facing challenging circumstances and who are failing. It is a great honour that St Clement Danes was judged to be one of the few schools in the country that has the capacity to carry out this important work, which will hopefully bring about improvements across other educational establishments.

The start of academic year sees the expanded school numbers of 208 in each year group from years 7 to 11, and the school is the largest it has ever been with 1330 students, including nearly 300 in the sixth form. To us, the views of the students have always been important and this year the school council has grown in strength and influence. Previously students had expressed the view that they wanted a larger and better dining hall. Fortunately the school was able to respond and we applied for and were successful in obtaining a £440k building grant from the DCSF with which we were able to carry out the work. Throughout the summer holiday the work undertaken has produced a dining facility nearly double its original area. It is a bright airy space and there are amenities such as a coffee area, wireless connection for sixth form laptops and shortly to arrive a large wall mounted TV - a kind donation by the Parents' Association.

This year you will be aware that the school budget has faced challenges with regard to funding from the DCSF. Most schools, us included, have to cope with a planned reduction in funds and in these economic times it is something public institutions have to be ready for. However, I would challenge any organisation to absorb a £60k cut to sixth form funding with just 24 hours to go before the start of the next financial year. It transpired the government had totally underestimated the number of students who would want to stay on in sixth forms, and as a consequence imposed a blanket cap of funds on all schools as late as the 31st March. The cut back was imposed regardless of the school status and took no account of expanding student numbers or new courses such as our sixth form Engineering Diploma. Thanks to the

focussed lobbying by governors, our local MP and parents, the money was reinstated in June this year. A further challenge to the school's finances has been the savage cuts to special educational needs. The budget this year has been reduced by 33%. The logic is that because we are a successful school we do not need as much funding for special educational needs. What the powers that be in Hertfordshire do not realise is that funding is needed to maintain success in an all ability school such as ours. We will, as always, prioritise our funding through careful planning and hopefully continue to offer a quality service.

This year, as in previous years, I am delighted to commend the students for their generosity in raising funds for their chosen charities; such as Comic Relief, a number of cancer charities, Jeans for Genes and the bonanza that defines the sixth form Christmas charities event. The latter raised over £4000 in just 21/2 days at the end of the Autumn term for the three nominated charities – the MS Society, Cystic Fibrosis Research and Eagle Wings.

Music this year has created many memorable moments from Speech Day, the Commemoration service in London, Christmas and Easter concerts, as well as the Battle of the Bands competition and the orchestra and jazz band tour to Prague in the Summer

Yet again this year the students have benefitted from a rich, diverse and extensive programme of extra curricular activities. Education visits have been as full as ever with the aforementioned orchestra tour, football tour to Maine USA, Politics trip to Washington, Drama tour to New York, Art trip to Barcelona as well as the wealth of trips within the UK. It is a privilege to escort students on such trips – they are invariably polite, well-behaved and a joy to be with.

The dedication of the sports staff has encouraged many students to take part in school team events as well as multi sport activities and the annual gym and dance display. Success in competitions is too numerous to mention, but I will highlight just three. Firstly the Year 7 rugby team became county champions last season. A fantastic achievement and one that seems hardly possible when you consider this is a new sport for St Clement Danes and we were only in our second year of county competitions.

Secondly, for the first time in the school's history, all four of the athletics teams (boys and girls) in years 8 and 10 competed in the county league finals. Something no other school has done.

And finally, trampolining with the Under 13, Under 15 and Under 19 boys' teams becoming regional champions. I particularly wish to mention the Under 19 team of Rob Yexley, Louis Tagliaferro, Sam Austen and James McConway. These students have competed year on year for the school with outstanding success since arriving here seven years ago. They have been tremendous ambassadors for the school and also the sports of trampolining and gymnastics. Congratulations also to Oliver Smith who whilst in Year 9 became British National Champion. His photograph will be displayed in the entrance to the school alongside the 30 other students past and present who have gained national and international honours.

Congratulations also to students who took part and have been successful in the school's drama productions, art competitions, maths challenges, science competitions and public speaking competitions. We are fortunate to work amidst such talent and the individual student success has been trumpeted on a regular basis in our monthly Homelink Newsletters.

None of what I describe would be possible without the dedication of the hard working and inspiring staff. This year I am delighted to announce that the number of designated Excellent Teachers within school has grown to 6, with Mrs Quinton achieving national recognition. This group of staff spearhead the innovative teaching and learning practice within school which creates the opportunities for ongoing reflection and improvement of our own practice. The Excellent Teachers'

timely research and intervention has significantly impacted upon our improving practice. This year 15 new teachers and 3 support staff join the school and I am pleased also to welcome a new member to the Senior Leadership Team, Mr Gwynn, who takes up the post as the school's first Business Manager. It is a strength of the school that we can combine the enthusiasm and energy of new entrants to the profession with those existing staff who have and continue to show enormous dedication and loyalty to the school.

In the Spring Term, Mrs Spalton retired after 21 years teaching at St Clement Danes. And for the first time this year, the governors officially recognised loyalty to the school with long service awards given to Mr Brown for 31 years service, Mr Evans 29 years, Mrs Monk 31 years and Mrs Payne 21 years. A combined total of 112 years service to St Clement Danes.

Schools are more than the students and staff of whom I have spoken a great deal this morning. They are also communities of parents, governors, Business Mentors, volunteer invigilators, Old Danes and our neighbours in the Chorleywood community. Without the support of you the parents, our job in school would be impossible. I would like to thank the governors on your behalf for their incredible work behind the scenes that ensures the school moves forward smoothly. The wider Chorleywood community is represented here by a local resident who, every Friday without fail, brings into school a homemade cake for the staff. The Business Mentors who have so effectively worked one-to-one with students to help improve performance, and finally the volunteer invigilators who between them have overseen 4590 entries for written exams and 870 students who sat one or more exams during this summer.

And as always, I am delighted to see that we have amongst us Old Danes. The oldest of Old Danes is Mr Tosland, who came back to the school for the first time at our Remembrance Service last year. Mr Tosland was in Temple House from 1929 to 1933. He was a member of the school in the first year it relocated from Houghton Street, in London, to Hammersmith.

So you can see that our school is a complex, vibrant, exciting community which is my privilege to lead.

As I conclude my review for 2008/9 I would like to reflect upon the courage of the people within this hall. The courage of Major Cansdale in leading his company during dangerous and frightening times of conflict; the courage of Annmarie Byrne who is an ambassador of hope for those who suffer or who are affected by HIV and AIDS; the courage of the staff who make changes, push boundaries and fight to ensure students are given life chances, and finally to the courage of you the students who have worked hard to gain your exam results, who have fought against nerves, and insecurities and have pushed yourselves to achieve such astonishing and life changing results ”

The Poppleton Prize for outstanding service to the school was awarded to last year's Headgirl, Charlotte Garner. She was a very popular winner and an exceptional student. She leaves school to go on to study Chemistry at Imperial College, London.

Both Headgirl, Vicky Jeff, and Headboy, Josh Willet, gave entertaining and intelligent vote of thanks to our guest speakers.

The day concluded with afternoon tea for the prize winners and their families in the new extended Dining Hall.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

A Level Photography

The Art department have recently launched the A level Photography course as from September 2009 and because we are teaching with film - SLR cameras (analogue) as well as digital cameras we would greatly appreciate any analogue photographic equipment you may be able to spare if you have purchased digital equipment.

The main equipment we are needing multiple quantities of are: spotlights, light meters, back drops, any 'working' SLR cameras, kentmere film negative files, Paterson test frames, film processing tanks.

The uptake of this A level has been great thus the demands are wider for the equipment we need to supply to our students.

All donations are as always, greatly appreciated.

Mrs D Reid

Head of Art

Commemoration Choir

A warm welcome awaits all parents and staff members who would like to sing in the Commemoration Choir this year. The service will take place on Friday 27th November in St Clement Danes Church in the Strand. Rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings from 6.30 to 7.30 pm in the Purple Room. The first rehearsal will be on Monday 12th October. If you are interested please ask your son or daughter to pick up a letter containing further information from the Music department or e-mail Ann Roxon for details on roxona670@stclementdanes.herts.sch.uk

Correction to Year 11 Revision Guides

There is a correction (in bold) to the Year 11 Science Revision Guides ParentMail that went out recently:

Sets 2, 3 & 4 - AQA Science GCSE Additional Science Revision Guide
ISBN-13: 978-0748783113

Set 5 - AQA Science GCSE Additional Applied Science Revision Guide
ISBN-13: 978-0748783212

St Clement Danes School & Parents Association Proudly Present

St Clement Danes Autumn Ball

on

Saturday 17th October 2009



Drinks reception to Spectacular Entertainment

Silver Service Dinner • Dancing to a Live Band • Licensed Bar

Black Tie/Evening Dress

Drinks Reception starts at 7.30 pm • Carriages at 1 am

£45 per head



To be held in the Barbirolli Hall (as you have never seen it before!)

Please send your completed form into the student reception at school in an envelope marked 'Autumn Ball'. A confirmation e-mail will be sent to you.

If you prefer a phone call please include your telephone number.

If you have any questions or queries

please contact us at scott_picphotos@yahoo.com or on 07860 848254

I wish to book tickets for the St Clement Danes Autumn Ball.

Name _____

Telephone number _____

e-mail address _____

Please write in the box how many tickets you need

We will be making up tables of 12. Please let us know by email or phone if you have names of guests you wish seated together. I enclose cheque/s made payable to St Clement Danes Parents Association.

No tickets will be sent out but a confirmation e-mail or telephone call will be made to you. By this you will know that your son or daughter actually dropped the envelope into reception, and it's not still in their pocket!

There are a limited number of tickets, please ensure your place by booking early.