

HEADTEACHER BULLETIN

Aiming High, Celebrating Success



Number 1

31st January 2018

A new means of communication

Hello one and all and welcome to the first HCJS Headteacher bulletin. With the launch of our new school app at the start of this term, I have decided to take a slightly different approach to my written communication from now on. General news and notices will now be shared in the app and longer articles via this bulletin - hopefully with a slightly more editorial and 'reflective' feel. Thankyou for those of you that have got in touch to share your thoughts regarding the new app; I have to say that the feedback has been very positive and most of you seem happy with the new approach.

Headteacher Bulletin will be published on or around the first Friday of each month.

Secondary focus

It will not be news to many of you that the situation with secondary school places for Haddenham children has become a little more complicated in recent times. The growth of Thame, coupled with an increase in out of catchment siblings being offered places last year meant that on the first round of allocation a significant minority of our pupils were not offered their first choice of Lord Williams's school for September 2018. Ultimately, all of these pupils were offered places in a later round of allocations as a result of admissions appeal - they did so however by successfully arguing that the definition of 'partnership' school was misleading. This is a 'loophole' that has subsequently been closed down. When viewing the Lord Williams's School website one comes across the following sentence on the 'Thame Partnership page'.....

We also work closely with the following schools, **which are not feeder schools** for the purpose of admissions (emphasis added):

HCJS is listed alongside a number of other local schools. This comes hot on the heels of a grumpy email I received recently from Oxfordshire school admissions asking me to make clear to you that HCJS is NOT in the Lord Williams's catchment and NEITHER is it a 'FEEDER' school. I do so here- knowing full well that it will cause a level of anxiety in certain quarters.

Put simply - parents living in Haddenham can no longer assume (if indeed they ever did!) of a secondary school place at Lord Williams's school Thame. I have said this many times in public, not least at the annual secondary transfer meeting - but now I commit those words to paper!

With that in mind I have embarked upon a 'grand tour of local secondary school' last week I visited Princes Risborough and Aylesbury Grammar School.

What did I find on those visits.....?

To be honest, I was very impressed on both occasions - I was met by passionate and committed school leaders who have both have a clear vision for their respective organisations. I met friendly and welcoming staff and polite and well behaved pupils. I would happily send my own boys to either school (different as they are from one another).

Due to the mixed destination pattern of our year 6 pupils onward school journey, I am very committed to working closely with not just these two schools, but with any others that receive HCJS pupils. We are actively looking to strengthen our links with both schools, but I particularly hope to put our 'partnership' with Princes Risborough on a similar footing to that which we enjoy with Lord Williams's particularly given that as Oxfordshire county Council helpfully pointed out to me in their email unlike the later, the former is a link

with our 'catchment'



school.

Our initial links with Risborough are likely to be sporting ones ; look out for details in the near future.

PTA news

Last night at its annual AGM , Julie Coombes stepped down as chair of the PTA. Julie started in the role shortly after I became Headteacher at HCJS, so we have worked together for just over two years. I know Julie won't mind me saying that it has , at times been a challenging task in the face of low volunteer numbers and general apathy. Despite that the PTA has raised approximately £10,000 during her tenure; a remarkable feat for which we are all grateful. Julie's legacy will be our fantastic new library - something I know she is very proud of! Thanks again Julie - it has been fun working with you.

I am delighted to say that we have new co-chairs of the PTA , they are not taking over fully until September so I will save the introductions for another time - but some interim arrangements are in place and so 'Your' PTA will continue to be active in the meantime.

Sports news

I am always proud of our pupils, but this week I had particular cause to be so:

I've just received the final results of the Bucks Cross Country competition held at Stowe on Wednesday - In the Team category our girls came Third! (out of 13 schools) and our boys 4th (out of 19!)...An incredible result against tough field on a very challenging course! This impressive performance capped another brilliant sporting week for HCJS - in both Hockey and Badminton, year 4 teams represented our school with distinction; the hockey team narrowly losing out in their **Final** to Bedgrove Junior School. Thanks to all parents and carers who came along to support our pupils at a sporting event this week.

And Finally.....

There will be a parent governor election in the second half of term. If you have time and energy to give HCJS, please consider whether you feel you would like to join our governing board - Please contact me (via the school office) for a no obligation , confidential discussion.

Don't forget to stay up to date with all school news, please download our fabulous new App. *we would advise you to do so as soon as possible. We would hate you to miss out on any correspondence. Duplicate emails will cease on Friday 15th February.*

Have a great month and enjoy the half term break when it arrives.

DELETE PAGE IF NOT NEEDED

Learners of the week

Key Dates for your Diary

Friday 9th November	Dress up as an Edwardian for the day to celebrate 100 years since the end of WW1 PTA Quiz night—details attached
Friday 16th November	Children in Need. Mufti Day. Wear something bright for £1. We will also be selling Children in Need Merchandise at Break / Lunchtime
Tuesday 20th November	Parent Consultation Meetings 3.30—8pm
Wednesday 21st November	Year 5 / 6 Young Shakespeare Company visit Parent Consultation Meetings 3.30—8pm
Wednesday 5th December	Year 5 Shakespeare Showcase
Friday 7th December	PTA Jolly Jumper Day PTA Festive Fayre 6—8pm
Tuesday 11th 1.45—2.45pm & Wednesday 12th December 6.30—7.30 pm	Year 3 Music & Mince Pies Concert
Wednesday 19th December	Pantomime trip & last day of term