

11th September 2009

Dear Parents

Welcome back to the start of the new academic year and a special warm welcome to all our new families and of course staff. Nineteen of the twenty-seven new starters in Junior School are in our Reception class and a further eleven have joined us in Senior School. Five new staff have also joined the team, they are:

Staff

Mr Adrian Tedcastle - JS classroom assistant and games

Mr Rene Bohan - SS English and Games, covering for Mrs Wells, who is on maternity leave

Ms Charlotte Smith - SS English

Ms Vicki Juett - SS Spanish and French

Mr David Duffy - Deputy Head of SS, English, ICT and Games

Westbourne Strives for Excellence

Westbourne's GCSE (A*-C) pass rate this year was 94% and was the best ever since we started our senior school ten years ago. It is an exceptional achievement especially since the school has an inclusive non-selective intake. Even more pleasing is that 91% of our entire Year 11 cohort passed five or more including Maths and English.

I believe our success is achieved by having maximum class sizes of sixteen in the core subjects. In KS4 these classes are much smaller in optional subjects. Our commitment to individualised learning is also at the centre of our success.

Our students can feel proud that they achieved seventy grade A/A* from a cohort of thirty-two pupils. Our commitment to setting is clearly stretching the more able pupils and we expect that this trend will continue to flourish in the future. Setting also helps support those who learn at a slightly slower rate.

This is evidenced as one pupil with dyslexia managed four grade As amongst his ten passes, an outstanding achievement.

All our Year 11 pupils followed an academic programme of GCSEs and this year all KS4 pupils will continue with modern foreign languages and ICT as part of a mandatory set of academic subjects.

Well done to pupils and staff for a superb achievement.

Further Congratulations to

Mrs Carol Longmire, (Senior School Learning Support), for recently passing an external qualification as a specialist dyslexic teacher

Miss Joanne Vickers and Mrs Deb Loane who ran the Yorkshire 10km last Sunday.

Miss Holly Nickson on her engagement to Tom and her other exciting news: seven 7 pupils took Grade 1 Music Theory in June and all seven pupils managed to get a distinction. Out of 100, the marks were as follows:

Luke Chakrabarti – 94

Sophie Kitchin – 92

Catherine Miller – 98

Zoe Stone – 90

Lucy da Costa – 90

Amy Martindale – 96

Bethany Smart – 94

Other budding musicians include:

Severin Gale – Grade 1 piano, merit

Rebecca Fowler – Grade 1 flute, distinction

Zoe Stone - Grade 3 flute distinction

Mrs Deborah Loasby, Miss Emma Rees, Mrs Deb Loane, Miss Holly Nickson, Mr Nigel Elvidge and Miss Laura Cowley. The summer school, for Year 2 – Year 8 pupils, was a huge success. Creative arts, music, sport, drama, a performance and a party all made up for an absorbing week.

Developments

Westbourne has been open and busy throughout the summer vacation as two summer schools and several works have been completed to enhance our facilities. We have also included a brand new set of computers for Ashdell House ICT suite along with another set of lap tops which can be used in any classroom.

Cognitive Attainment Tests (CATs)

Once again all pupils in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, along with all new pupils, will take these tests next week. They cannot be revised for as they are 'skills based'. They give staff data on verbal (literacy), non verbal (intelligence) and quantitative (mathematical) skills and therefore help us with setting and planning individual learning for our pupils. Setting is especially important in Year 7 where we always have several new pupils join us. We give all the pupils a few weeks trial period so that they may have the chance to prove themselves. Once the results of the CATs tests come back and we have all the teacher assessments in place, including last years exam results, then some movement may occur between teaching groups.

ASDAN

All the Year 7's and 8's are being introduced to ASDAN this term. ASDAN stands for The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network, for which we are now a registered centre. ASDAN offers flexible activity based programmes for young people and the Bronze Award is the first step towards enabling our pupils to understand themselves and to become more prepared for making the transition to adult life. They complete a series of challenges to gain six credits for the award which is externally moderated by other ASDAN centres. It is taught by Mrs Helen Burrows and Mrs Carole Longmire. Each form class has one lesson a week and this now takes place instead of PHSE.

Music

Welcome to our new peripatetic's, Laura Beavers (Flute), Heather Cropper (Oboe) and John Martindale (Brass). Instruments can be hired from school for £30. Anyone wanting lessons please email Miss Nickson: (hnickson@westbourneschool.co.uk).

Reminders

- Malta information evening on Monday 14th Sept at 7.00pm in Junior School Hall.
- Year 1 – Year 6 parents evening on Thursday, 17th September at 6pm.
- The Open morning will be held on Saturday, 10th October between 10.00am and 12.00 noon. Please invite your friends and families to come along.
- Year 3 – Year 11 have assessments to bring home on 23rd October 2009. Pupils going on the Malta sports trip will receive their assessments on return.
- The Christmas Fayre is on 21st Nov 11 am – 1 pm.

Please note:

All dates for school vacations are given in advance so that parents may plan holidays appropriately. Please check the calendar for details. Any requests for an authorised absence for a special family arrangement must be made in writing to the Headmaster. All other requests, eg. orthodontists/doctor's appointments/off games etc. should be made in writing to the form tutor. (All children are expected to be in school during term time.)

Website

Please check our web site for up to date information and details of any communications. You will find details of homework schedules, trips, calendar, sports events, school policies and a lot more.

Swine Flu

We have been advised by ISI to inform you that if there are any cases of swine flu the school will stay open, however please don't send your child to school with flu like symptoms and inform the school by 8-30 if your child is going to be absent.

Finally

As Westbourne was founded in 1885 it is with great anticipation that we celebrate our special 125th year in 2010 and we look forward to celebrations in the New Year. We propose to hold a whole school concert in the Cathedral on Friday 21st May which will be followed by the May ball on Saturday 22nd. Current parents, staff and of course Old Westbournians will be invited to make it a special weekend.

I look forward to seeing your children prosper over the next academic year and to meeting you once again at the many functions we are holding.

Yours sincerely