

21<sup>st</sup> May 2010

Dear Parents

Since I last wrote to you, I have been mightily impressed by the sporting, musical and dramatic talent of our girls. Their daily lives are so full yet they rise to every challenge and achieve highly. I am so proud of all that we do.

We have had 12 new additions to Gateways! 12 chicks have been hatched in Littlegates. One of the chicks was bigger than the others with a tendency to be bossy and the children have named her 'Yvonne'!

It was good to see so many of you at High School Sports Day last Friday – another first for me at Gateways! Although a little cold, the weather remained dry, the sport impressed and it was a very successful occasion. Congratulations to the winning house, Beningborough, and to Pippa Webster who won the Victrix Ludorum for the best overall performance on the day. Pippa also broke the school triple jump record with an impressive 9.5m!

In last Friday's assembly we expressed our best wishes to Upper 5 and Lower 6 students as they began their study leave in readiness for their imminent public exams. It hardly seems possible that we are fully into 'exam season' already! Careful revision and preparation should bring just rewards; the website [mydaughter.co.uk](http://mydaughter.co.uk) contains some very useful exam tips!

The Summer concert on the 12<sup>th</sup> May was an evening of impressive and entertaining music. As the audience gathered informally with friends and family to enjoy their picnics, the girls (and grownups) performed a varied repertoire. We were impressed by the 'Base Clef Babes', in awe of the Baroque Ensemble and the individual talent of Ruth Fitton and 'Vintage Brandy' brought a smile to us all.

Last week the school launched 'Cambodia 2012'; this three week expedition will be open to Upper 5 to Upper 6 students in the summer of 2012 and will undoubtedly provide a life changing experience. The girls will contribute to a community project and also discover some of this beautiful country's hidden treasures. If interested, please speak with Mr Box.

I have had the opportunity, once again, to venture into classrooms to experience lessons from the pupils' perspective. It is the best way to get to know the school and a thoroughly enjoyable experience for me. I joined Upper 5 for a drama lesson where I watched their last minute rehearsals for their GCSE examination, followed by a Lower 5 mathematics lesson where I learned to use Standard Form. Finally, in an art lesson with Lower 4, I was impressed by their design and construction of a shoe.

Last week the AS and GCSE Theatre Studies and Drama students presented the practical performances for their public examination to very appreciative audiences. Both performances were

of a very high standard and I was 'wowed' by the girls' confidence, talent and professional approach. The AS and A2 Media students have also presented their examination short films. The 12 were original, thought provoking, funny and a little bit scary, too. I thoroughly enjoyed being invited to judge and then present the award.

Once again the Gateways LEAP teams have swept the board in the area competition against local independent and maintained sector schools. For the fourth year running they have achieved an outstanding array of awards with 11 first places, 12 second place and 6 third places. 'Kandles With Kisses' were judged to be the best overall company for 2010 with best marketing, best presentation, best company report, best green credentials and best administered company. 'Cocoa & Co' were awarded best display stand, 'Forget Me Not' won best trade stand and presentation and 'Picture This' were awarded the 'Spirit of Enterprise'. I am extremely proud of their achievements.

Next week is Prep Residential Week. Upper I travel to Marsett in the Yorkshire Dales on Monday whilst Lower II and Upper II will set off on Wednesday to Cumbria and Cranedale. I am sure that they will return with many stories and be ready for their half term break. Have a great time everyone!

Prep will be in the presence of many kings and queens on Wednesday. Upper and Lower Reception are holding their Royal Concert in the PAC on Wednesday at 2pm and I am honoured to have received an invitation and am looking forward to sharing this grand occasion.

Pupils in Upper 3 to Upper 4 are currently working on their entries for the Frances Thomason Short Story competition. This award was set up in memory of Mrs Thomason who was an inspirational English teacher and founding member of the Old Gatewegians. It is run annually and the winner is announced on Exhibition Day. The deadline for entries is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May and the theme is 'Forever Gateways'.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents and students who will be members of the Sixth Form from September about the regulation dress code. As you will remember from the Sixth Form Information evening and from my discussions with girls during the Upper 5 meetings, all Sixth Form students will be required to wear tailored suits with collared blouses and appropriate footwear. Suits may be either trouser suits or skirt suits but the length of skirts shall be just above the knee. Our girls are first rate students and this will ensure that the appearance of our students reflects this.

We have been evaluating whether to keep school ties and collared blouses, or opt for open necked blouses to find an option that best suits the needs of the pupils and the School. So far we have consulted with the Pastoral Teams and the pupils through the School Council and I would very much welcome your views. Please would you email any comments you may have to [gateways@gatewayschool.co.uk](mailto:gateways@gatewayschool.co.uk)

The FOG 'Black and White' Ball promises to be a huge success in the new venue of the Harewood House marquee. The FOG committee has asked that anyone wishing to attend forward their ticket request and payment to the school office as soon as possible. There is a tighter deadline this year as Harewood require a deposit and the Ball is earlier than in previous years.

Earlier this week, I attended the annual conference of the Forum of Independent Day Schools. The education landscape under a new coalition government is going to be interesting to see. I have no doubt, however, that Gateways will continue to contribute significantly to this and I am always happy to be able to place our school on the map!

We are looking forward to the third in the series of Green Gateways Business Club meetings on the 27<sup>th</sup> May. This has been an exciting initiative as we have engaged with the local business community and green issues.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Y Wilkinson  
Headmistress