

Gravesend Grammar School for Girls

Newsletter Number 6

July 2003

Dear Parents

As we come to the end of a rather busy year (Ofsted and all that...), we have much to celebrate.

Ofsted

You should have by now received a copy of the School's Action Plan. If you have not, please check at the bottom of your daughter's school bag before requesting another copy from her Form Tutor.

Science College

I am very pleased to announce that we have exceeded our target of £50,000 to be raised through sponsorship. I recently heard that the Wolfson Foundation have agreed to award the School £40,000. In addition we have received £5,000 from the Ford Trust, Comma Oil have pledged £1,500, we have raised £6,500 through the Brick Sponsorship and donations from Old Girls and finally the Parents' Association will donate £10,000.

A grand total of £63,000 and the green light to apply to the DFES in October.

Thank you to the PA and to all of you who have made donations.

School Events

We recently celebrated the successes of our Year 8 in the UK Maths Challenge and are particularly pleased to announce that we were awarded 11 Gold Certificates, 31 Silver and 41 Bronze.

Well done to all but particularly to Gabrielle Lewis 8SM who gained Gold and the honour of the best performance in the school. Very well done!

On Friday 4th July Year 7 enjoyed a range of Maths challenges and puzzles, clearly good preparation for Year 8. Thank you to Miss Pulver for organising this.

Years 11, 12 and 13 completed their public examinations whilst Years 7, 8 and 10 "practised" with internal examinations.

Another Graduation Ball celebrated in style the end of an era for our Upper Sixth on Friday 30th June. Thank you Mr Cowan for your superb organisation. Girls and guests have been reminded of that special evening by the photographs on sale. We are always grateful to the Parents' Association for their hard work at the bar.

Gravesham One World Drama Festival

Over 200 pupils from 7 local schools participated in the festival on Wednesday 9th July in the Isaac Newton Building. Four primary schools: Chantry, Holy Trinity, Rosherville and Wrotham Road and three secondary schools: Northfleet School for Girls, Gravesend Grammar School and GGSG, performed a wide variety of prepared pieces ranging from Bangra Dancing to A Midsummer Night's Dream. A very high standard was achieved by all participants. The theme for this year's festival was Resolving Conflict, which the students had the opportunity to explore further through a one hour drama workshop. The day proved to be very successful.

Challenge of Management

Our Sixth Formers enjoy a number of other activities with the Boys' school. The Challenge of Management is always an excellent experience in working in a mixed team to address challenges, which are good practice for the future. We are always grateful to local businesses for their support.

Thank you to Mrs Curtis for another successful event!

Year 9 are fortunate in having a whole year activity week organised for them. I am sure they are all looking forward to the activities on offer after their SATs!

We are all looking forward to Junior Prizegiving on Friday 18th July although I suspect Years 7 & 8 are also thinking of their disco.

Sport

Trips

The department organised two trips to see tennis this half-term. The Year 10 GCSE and Lower Sixth AS groups enjoyed a day at the Eastbourne tennis Tournament, where they also filled in a statistical analysis sheet. A few school team players were lucky enough to go to Wimbledon on the second day to Court 2, where they saw David Nalbandian and Sebastien Grosjean.



District Athletics

On Tuesday 8th July 30 girls from Year 7-10 competed against 8 other schools in track and field athletics events. They did extremely well and won many of their events. We think we are the overall winners, but are waiting for the scores to be sent to us. We currently hold the cup and are therefore hoping to retain it. Congratulations to all those who took part and I would also like to point out how well behaved and organised they were. They were shining examples to the School.

Rounders



The Year 7 and Year 9 teams played in the district competitions in June. Year 7 came third in their section and Year 9 came fourth in theirs.

Tennis



The U13 and U15 tennis teams have been competing in the Bexley league again this term. Final results will be in the next newsletter.

Swimming



A full team was entered in the Borough and Schools Championships in July. Particularly notable performances were: Hannah Daley who was 1st in the 25m Freestyle and the Junior Relay

team who won their event, gaining a trophy and individual medals.

Individual Achievements

Rebecca Saunders in Year 10 won the Kent Schools Championships discus and went on to win a Gold medal in the English Schools Championships on the 11th and 12th July. She also broke her personal record with a throw of 41.76m and has been selected to represent English Schools in the SIAB Schools' Track and Field International to be held in Cardiff on the 19th July.

Sports Day

We managed to complete all the field events on the scheduled day, 3rd July but had to postpone the track events until 11th July due to the rain. The successful conclusion saw the following forms win:

7SBR

8KB

9JG & 9KJ tied

10LA

a most enjoyable afternoon was had by all and it was only the second time in 22 years that we have had to postpone the day.

Schools Army Challenge

This took place on Friday 4th July when 14 girls from Year 11 spent the day in Folkestone competing in 9 physically strenuous and mentally challenging tasks. In each they were timed and scores were added throughout the day. These girls were chosen to represent the School because of their effort and extra-curricular commitment throughout Years 7-11. They competed against 39 other schools, some mixed, some all boys and yet they managed to break 3 records for the fastest times and came 2nd overall, winning silver medals. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all, very rewarding for the girls and totally free!

Toplink Festival

On Wednesday 9th July 14 girls from L6 (CSLA group) ran their sports festival for 3 local primary schools, Wrotham Road, Ifield School and Cecil Road. Altogether approximately 50 pupils spent the afternoon here at GCSG taking part in a variety of sporting challenges which all had a pirate theme. Both the primary pupils and CSLA students enjoyed the day and the entire day was organised by the girls; a day of which they should feel extremely proud.

Try Angle Awards

We are proud that a number of our girls received awards again this year, this time at the Woodville Halls

- For Personal Achievement in Sport or Outdoor Activity: Stephanie Forbes and Suzannah Flynn (Year 11)
- For Service to the Community: Rachel Turner (Upper Sixth)
- For Personal Achievement in Music: Caroline Townsend (Year 10)
- For Service to the Community as a Guide Leader: Helen Yallop (Year 11)
- For Citizenship as a member of the Gravesham Youth Forum: Amanda Crane (Upper Sixth)

We were particularly pleased that Stephanie Forbes received the overall winner of the Personal Achievement in Sport.

Music

Congratulations go to Hannah Parker who has passed Grade 3 Jazz Piano with merit – well done! We are awaiting the results of the other girls who took Music examinations this term.

We have recently held the Junior Informal Concert in which we heard excellent solo performances from Melanie Nurdin (Year 7), Sally Lynch, Georgia Chuter (Year 8) and Laura Hopperton (Year 9), as well as the Training Orchestra, Wind Band and both Choirs. Well done to all who participated.

Awards

We are particularly proud this year to have received another 3 awards.

We were awarded the **Artsmark Silver** for excellent work in Music, Art and Drama. Miss Sayers, Charlotte Williams and Felicity Pilcher came with me to collect the award.

No doubt you will have read in the local press that we received the **School Achievement Award** again this year for our GCSE results and the value added they show.

As a school we are highly committed to developing the team of staff, teaching and support, who help make the school what it is. The **Investor in People** award is a fine recognition of our work. Thank you to Mrs Bell, who is responsible for staff development, for guiding us through the benchmarking process which led us to our successful assessment.

VSU

The VSU programme is flourishing in school with 6th formers now taking part in Summer Schools for younger children, which is being held at Cascades Leisure Centre.

Work Experience

From June 30th to July 4th Year 11 students were successfully involved in Work Experience. Our thanks go to all the local firms, schools, businesses and companies in London who had our students with them for the week. Thank you also to the North West Kent Education Partnership for all their efforts on our behalf.

Harry Potter

Six of our Year 7 proudly donned capes, hats and black rimmed glasses over their school uniform when they were the only school involved in the launch of “The Order of the Phoenix” on the 21st June at WH Smith at Bluewater. They had won a competition requiring them to write an essay explaining why they should represent the School!

Uniform

We continue to be very pleased with the smartened appearance of our students. Please be reminded that **all** girls in Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 will be expected to wear the kilt from September.

I have discussed the quality of the kilts with the supplier who has advised me to remind you that the kilts wash well and should be drip dried (not tumble dried) to ensure the pleats stay neat without the need to iron.

As I warned you last year, some girls’ kilts have not allowed “growing room” and will need to be replaced. I urge you to buy a sensible length in order to avoid unnecessary additional costs.

The height of heels affects the appearance and safety of our girls. Please make sure your daughter wears shoes of a sensible type and height.

Next year we have decided to introduce for Years 10 and 11, the privilege of wearing flesh-coloured tights as part of the summer uniform.

Mobile Phone Policy

Governors' Student Affairs Committee have reviewed the policy which is attached. Please note that we have banned all video/photographic phones.

Request for Absence

Please note that Governors can only authorise absence for exceptional circumstances or an annual family holiday, if it cannot be taken within the 13 weeks school holiday available. If the latter is unavoidable, due notice must be given (2 weeks) so that your daughter can collect the work which will ensure she does not fall behind. We are very reluctant to authorise any such absence in a public examination year.

Email



This has become such a common and easy way for us to communicate that we have decided to give you the opportunity to receive your newsletter electronically. All you need to do is provide us with your email address when you send back your annual data sheet in September.

Safety in PE lessons

In March you received a reminder from Ms Stuart that we are concerned about your daughters' safety in PE. Please note that "nail extensions" and "body piercing" are strictly forbidden as they can lead to horrendous accidents, particularly in PE. This is in addition to the standard precautions regarding dress, shoes and jewellery. Please impress upon your daughter that safety has to be more important than fashion.

School Fund

Governors have agreed that our annual School Fund should be as follows from September 2003:

£21 for one girl

£31 for two sisters

£41 for three sisters

The amount collected through school fund at this school remains very disappointing. As I have mentioned previously it is essential to supplement what is a reduced budget this year. If you are able to contribute we thank you. If you are unable to contribute, please confirm this by ensuring the reply slip is returned. In order to simplify the process, a Direct Debit facility is being organised. We shall send you information in September.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning will remain an important focus for development in the next academic year. There are several strands to this work that are planned to continue from September in order to:

- a) improve the already high standards of Teaching (described by Ofsted as very effective and well organised) and
- b) give students strategies to make them more effective learners

Time has been allocated on several staff training days to run sessions on various aspects of Teaching and Learning, including Mind Mapping and Thinking Skills. Subject teams of teachers will be able to follow up this training by producing their own subject specific materials for use in the classroom to put some of these techniques into practice. This will eventually result in a whole school handbook of best practice in terms of practical classroom strategies.

We have adapted the PSHE programme for students to include units of work looking at how we learn, conditions required to optimise learning, implications for learning from the latest research into the way the brain functions, study skills strategies to increase learning effectiveness. At the beginning of this programme the girls will also identify their preferred learning style and consider how they should adapt their approach to their work in the light of this information. The most recent educational research shows that when learners spend time reflecting on the learning process, identifying and evaluating the skills and processes they are using they become more effective learners. Encouraging this kind of reflection in lessons tends to result in enhanced performance by the students involved. One very practical way parents can be involved in this is to encourage the girls to drink water rather than fizzy drinks. A dehydrated brain is a much less efficient learning device so bottles of water are encouraged in the classroom!

Staff Leaving

Regrettably we say goodbye this year to Mr Stoddart (Geography), Miss Speechly (Science), Mr Nash (Technology), Mrs Challand (English and Teacher Governor) and thank them for their contribution towards the successes of GGSG. I am pleased to report that they have all been replaced.

On Wednesday 23rd July term ends at 2.00pm for students. Buses will leave at 2.15pm **with the exception of the Nu Venture bus, which will leave at the normal time.** If you wish your daughter to stay in school until this time, please send a letter stating this to the School Office **by Tuesday 22nd July.**

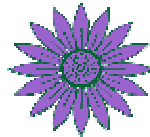
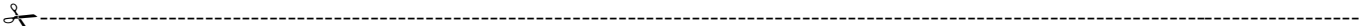
The new term starts on Thursday 4th September for all students at the normal time of 8.45am.

May I wish you all a pleasant summer.

Yours sincerely



Mrs N Chapman
Headteacher



Gravesend Grammar School for Girls

Please return to your daughter's Form Tutor

I acknowledge receipt of the following:

- 1 The Newsletter, Issue 6
- 2 Uniform List
- 3 Term Dates for September
- 4 Assessment Pattern
- 5 Mobile Phone Policy (reviewed)

Daughter's name _____

Form _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____