

26th January, 2009

Dear Parents,

Open Morning

Last week's Open Morning for prospective parents was very successful. Fifteen families visited and were shown round the school by pupil guides from Year 6. The feedback from our visitors was excellent, and they were particularly impressed by the courtesy, confidence and enthusiasm of the guides. This is most heartening – we have a long tradition at St. Helen's of nurturing these qualities in the children as part of the rounded education which we provide. It is always pleasing to hear that the good example and encouragement of parents and school staff is bearing fruit!

We are very grateful for your help in recommending the school to your friends and colleagues, and for displaying posters in prominent places, and we hope that you will continue to fly the flag for St. Helen's!

Upcoming events

A meeting of the Parents' Association takes place at 8:30 p.m. tonight (Monday 26th) in the Upper School hall. All parents welcome.

There are six class assemblies before half term, and parents are warmly invited to attend: R2 (Thu 29th Jan 8:40 a.m.); 6S (Fri 30th Jan 10:30 a.m.); R1 (Thu 5th Feb 8:40 a.m.); 3W (Fri Feb 6th 10:30 a.m.); 1C (Thu Feb 12th 8:40 a.m.) and 5H (Fri Feb 13th 10:30 a.m.)

Our first coffee morning, for 1H, was very well attended last week. We hope that as many parents as possible will come between 8:15 and 8:40 a.m. to meet each other and their children's teachers on Friday Jan 30th (5S), Friday Feb 6th (3B) and Thursday Feb 12th (1C, followed by class assembly).

Three outings take place over the next three weeks. On Tuesday Feb 3rd Year 3 will attend a Quantum Theatre maths show at the Beck Theatre and on Friday Feb 6th Year 6 will visit the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, to see Verdi's great opera Rigoletto. The Year 4 residential trip to Flatford Mill will run from Wednesday 11th to Friday 13th February.

There will be a Tog Day for the Calabash Trust on Monday February 9th. Children may come to school in casual clothes in return for a donation (recommended £2).

Lower School Parents' Evenings will take place on Thursday 5th (7 – 9 p.m.), Monday 9th (3:30 – 5:30 p.m.) and Wednesday 11th (7 – 9 p.m.) February. The teachers' timetables will be tight, and we would ask you to avoid over-running your fifteen minute allocation. If more discussion time is needed, then you should make a further appointment to see the teacher on another day, rather than hold up other parents.

Kindly remember not to park in the Methodist car park, or to block drives in Long Lane.

Meetings for Y5 Parents re. Senior Schools

Following on from the meeting which I held for last year when your children were in Year 4, I would now like to offer to meet you individually so that we can discuss your plans for senior education and I can advise you on schools and procedures.

I shall be available for appointments on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th February. Please telephone the school office to arrange an appointment time. I shall have a display of senior school prospectuses for you to view before and after our discussions. If you are not able to come on this weekend, I shall be happy to meet you at a later date.

I will be holding a meeting for Y4 parents next term so that I can explain options and procedures concerning transfer to senior school. September 2011 is a long way off, and you do not have to take any action for some time, but parents often find it helpful to know well in advance what will be involved.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Thanks to Mr. Lewis' expertise and hard work, our VLE has been developing steadily and we are now able to provide access to all St. Helen's parents. You will find a letter from Mr. Lewis with this mailing with further information and access instructions. We hope that you find it useful.

Bookworms please note!

We have many keen young readers at the school. The School Council recently asked for children to be allowed to have the option to read inside at lunchtime so, once we have sorted out the arrangements, the Upper School children will be able to choose to read inside for half an hour during the lunch break in the music room (where we have installed some cosy floor cushions) or Mrs. Hampson's room. Also, children who arrive early for school will be able to read in the science lab before school.

Stop Press - Handball

We have just heard that our handball team played very well in Saturday's District competition. The 'A' team reached the semi-finals where they were knocked out by the eventual tournament winners.

Yours faithfully,

D.A. Crehan

Mrs. G.R. Crehan