

Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Andrew M Jarman MA Headmaster



December 2009

Dear Parent,

It is my pleasure to write to you at the end of another very successful Michaelmas Term. There is plenty of good news and also plenty to anticipate in 2010.

ACADEMIC

The holiday period provides a well earned break after the rigours of daily school routines, but there are a number of groups of boys who need to keep the momentum going. All year groups except the Fifth Form have had internal exams and mocks this term, and will need to reflect on these. The holiday provides an ideal opportunity to fill any remaining gaps in either notes or knowledge.

The Fifth Form return straight into their GCSE mock exam programme and there are plenty of boys facing GCSE, AS and A2 exam modules early in the new term. These boys must not neglect their studies over the holidays, ensuring that plenty of time is allocated for revision and proper exam preparation.

We also hope for good news of the 35 Oxbridge candidates.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

As always, it has been a delight to meet and talk with parents supporting the boys at various events throughout the term.

The most recent highlight was the Carol Service last Saturday. My congratulations go to the Director of Music, Mr. Prescott. Our choirs are always good but the music this year was quite exceptional. The readers were polished and I know the service was enjoyed by all who were present. For many in the congregation, this marked a most memorable start to the Christmas season.

Our actors remain busy. There was an atmospheric production of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", written by Mr. Ashbridge, and directed in conjunction with Mr. Hall. Rehearsals are already well under way for the joint musical "Oh, What a Lovely War" to be staged at the Dukes Theatre in the week of 1st March.

The athletes swept the board at the district cross-country championships, and the hockey team have had a successful series on their league circuit.

We have also been treated to some excellent schoolboy rugby. There is a real strength in depth in the school at the moment; the very promising U12 teams are unbeaten and show that this should continue for years to come. At senior level, the first fifteen have been great ambassadors, playing with skill and imagination. This is a particularly strong senior squad, evidenced by an amazing full set of wins achieved by the equally impressive second fifteen.

My congratulations go to the U15 squad who have reached the last sixteen in the Daily Mail Cup. We are also unbeaten at all agegroups so far in the various Lancashire Cups. The boys must keep their fitness levels high (not too much Christmas pud!) in anticipation of the challenges ahead next term.

We have a talented set of rowers in the Middle School who have already met some competitive success. This will be the first year for some time in which we will be rowing a strong eight.

Seven boys have been awarded their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, 22 the Silver and 3 boys (Duncan Eastoe, Ryan Robinson and Joe Winstanley) have had Gold approved and are now awaiting an appointment to collect their award from the Palace. Well done!

Congratulations also to the second year boys who won third place in the national Kid's Lit. Quiz.

PARENTS EVENINGS

The dates for next term are as follows. Please note the slightly earlier start time for the evening meetings.

First Form	5.45 pm	Thursday 7 th January
Third Form	5.45 pm	Tuesday 19 th January
Lower Sixth	5.45 pm	Thursday 4 th February
Fifth Form	5.45 pm	Wednesday 10 th February
Boarders Parents	10.00 am	Saturday 6 th March
Second Form	5.45 pm	Wednesday 10 th March
Fourth Form	5.45 pm	Tuesday 23 rd March

The Fifth Form and their parents are also invited to start considering A-level options at the annual Sixth Form Open Evening to be held from 6.00 pm on Monday 25th January.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

As we all recognise, boy post is very convenient but not necessarily the most reliable method! We are therefore assembling a parents' e-mail listing so that as much communication as possible can in future proceed electronically. A separate letter is being sent home and I would urge a prompt return please. We are also looking at ways in which grades and reports can be made readily available. In the meantime, all letters which are written to parents are stored on the school website at www.lrgs.org.uk then click onto the "Parents" section and then "letters to parents".

HEALTH EDUCATION

There have been a series of assembly presentations this term on health issues and the school policy with regard to drugs education, including tobacco, alcohol and legal highs. In this regard, I would particularly recommend to parents (as I do to the boys) the website www.talktofrank.com Please take the opportunity to talk with your son about these important issues. They have decisions to make and need to be fully informed. The website is excellent in this regard.

DEVELOPMENT

Plans have been drawn up for the first building of the new Masterplan. This will incorporate a room for the teaching of food technology so that we can offer cooking lessons to the boys in the future. There will also be a new staff commonroom and extra pupil space, incorporating a new catering outlet, to ease the queues and pressure on the existing Dining Hall.

The new building will be sited below the Dining Hall, adjacent to Quernmore Road. If things go to schedule, it will be open for September 2011.

I will be taking the opportunity at each of next term's parents' evenings to present our plans for the future of the School as explained in our recently published "Plan for Renewal".

e-SAFETY

Technology is constantly changing, and society's view of technology is similarly fluid. For many parents, there is often a considerable knowledge and attitude gap with their children.

Training and support is readily available however, and we would particularly recommend the Parent section on www.thinkuknow.co.uk which offers up-to-date information to parents, and the opportunity to sign up for e-mails explaining the latest trends and issues.

For your son, ICT plays a regular part of their lives. Learning to enjoy the technology safely is an important lesson. We have been tackling the issues in various ways throughout the year, and will be building awareness on the approach to eSafety Day on 9th February.

On the Parents' homepage of the LRGS website (and also on the VLE) you will notice a new icon – the CEOP Report button. This is a direct link to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. If you are concerned that your son might be in danger online, you can use this button to click directly to the Government's 24 hour eSafety service.

20 mph ZONE

We have continued to lobby strenuously for the roads around the school to have a reduced speed limit, and I am pleased to report that this at last seems to be coming to fruition. There is a proposal which is out for consultation at the moment which would provide traffic calming and introduce a 20mph restriction around the central crossroads.

Whilst this is certainly a step in the right direction, the zone as initially proposed would not cover the whole school site. I have written to express the school's view about this missed opportunity and I invite you to do the same. Please help us to ensure the best safety model that is possible. I have put a copy of the County Council's proposals and explanatory letter together with my response on the school's website at www.lrgs.org.uk then click onto the "Parents" section and then "letters to parents". If you wish to comment on the proposals (as I hope you will!), you need to respond by 15th January.

EXCHANGES WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

One of the opportunities available to our Lower Sixth boys is the chance to visit one of our partner schools during European Week. This year, the week runs from 6th March and the boys can opt to visit either Finland, France, Germany, Hungary or Poland. It is usually substantially oversubscribed.

Priority is given to boys whose families have previously hosted foreign students, and my thanks go to the many of you who have cleared the spare bedroom to provide for one of our guests in the past.

We are currently seeking host families from the Third Form and upwards who might be able to assist during the week this year. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Haigh.

NEXT TERM

Term resumes on Tuesday 5th January. Half-term is over the week commencing Monday 15th February and an unusually short second half of term concludes on Friday 26th March. The two boarding exeat weekends start on Friday 22nd January and Friday 12th March.

I close with another reminder to the Fifth Form and the various exam candidates that they must not lose sight of their academic priorities over the next two weeks.

My very best wishes to you all for a very Happy Christmas, coupled with good fortune in 2010.

Yours faithfully,

A. M. JARMAN