



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - EASTER 2006

ISI Inspection - a triumph!

We all know that Ashfold is a great school, but at the end of our Inspection week we learned just how impressive we really are. Although, I am not allowed to 'go public' until after we have received our formal written report some time in June, I can tell you that the Inspectors' Report could not have been more positive; the superlatives flowed with "exemplary", "outstanding" and "excellent" being used prodigiously during their Oral Feedback session. Indeed, two of the Inspectors came up to me and said that our report was the best they had ever seen! May I thank you all for your input - the parents' questionnaires were reported to be "overwhelmingly positive".

All-Round excellence

I am tremendously proud of the breadth of achievement of this year's sixth form, 30% of whom sat for scholarships this year and three of whom were successful:

Sebastian O' Donnell has earned an Academic Scholarship to Stowe School.

Dominic Noakes an All-Rounder (Roxburgh) Award also to Stowe School.

Rupert Shipperley a Sports Award to St Edward's, Oxford.

two others, who faced stiff competition and narrowly missed out were:

Matthew Judge on an All-Rounder to Bradfield College.

Edward Batchelor on a Music Scholarship to Magdalen College School.

Our 11+ CE candidates too did magnificently with all of them passing and being offered places at Queenswood, Headington and Rye St Anthony.

Spring Supercharts break all records

Children have been working harder than ever in class this term with a record 161 of them earning Superchart Certificates and 38 of them winning Gold and Gold Plus; and this, despite us raising the grade boundaries three times in the last eight years. Every time we raise the bar, the children simply respond by jumping even higher!

Record number of academic outings & visits

This term every child in the Pre Prep and Junior Departments has enjoyed an outing or visit, some have had several.

An Indian Dance Workshop came to work with the whole Junior Department; Form II children worked together to create a Hindu dance based upon their thoughts and interpretations of a traditional Indian story. This also fitted in perfectly with their term's geography topic, India. Forms I warmed up to some Bollywood style dancing and then created a dance based upon the Aesop fables. Transition children even tried a Bollywood version of Cinderella, dancing as mice and horses pulling coaches to the ball.

Junior Department 'World Book Day' celebrations. During the morning a travelling Talesman visited them and re-told several ancient, spell-binding

stories which kept children and staff entranced; a particular favourite was the tale of the Genies and the Field. During Prep, we hosted a massive department book swap, at the end of which almost everyone went away with something new to read.

Form I visited the Think Tank in Birmingham. Their day included visits to a Science Exhibition, IMAX and the Planetarium.

Form II visited the British Museum where they spent their time at an Egyptian Exhibition learning more about their History topic of the term.

The 'History Off the Page Company' visited Transition and with the help of a few sporting mothers and staff, turned the Saloon into a scene from Biblical times. Children spent the day experiencing living in the 'Life and Times of Jesus', scribing Hebrew on wax tablets, fishing with nets, embalming bodies and grinding corn. They also acted as characters in an imaginative enquiry by a Roman Praefector just after the Jesus' Crucifixion, before gathering together to share a meal with 'wine', whilst Greek servitors danced for them.

'Where the Wild Things Are'. Pre Prep children sat in awe as a parent, Mrs Chroman, and her travelling puppet show brought this story alive for them. Although few of them knew the story, by the end of the session, it had become a firm favourite with all.

Toys Through History. Pre-Preps II & III had a day's visit from a Travelling Toy Museum. As well as discovering what toys were like 2,000 years ago, the children played as archaeologists, unearthing artefacts buried long ago and made clay animals, spinners, fishing games and peg dolls.

Perform Theatre Group visited Pre-Preps II & III for workshops designed to develop children's confidence and ability in drama. The theme for the day was, quite naturally, 'Toys' and saw the children driving imaginary toy cars, tooting as they passed their friends, soldiers chopping down trees, advancing towards a make-believe castle, all in the hope of rescuing Flopsy the Teddy from the Scary Witch! Even the most inhibited enjoyed miming their toy-making skills in front of the others in their forms.

Scholars' Club play the Stock Market

After learning about hand signals and witnessing a live feed from the trading floor and its pits in Chicago, Mr Boydell (a parent) had our 'Scholars' trading furiously on the floor of the Exchange. This was not a quiet evening, as they were then given cards with which to trade amongst themselves and shouting was encouraged – indeed, necessary – to accompany the hand signals, which it should be said were almost forgotten in the melee. At the end of the session, we were all hoarse and a little deafer, but had learned a great deal.

'Under the Sea' - in the Performance Studio

Mr Phil Cave masterminded another outstanding House Art Competition this year and was thrilled with the 152 entries; his theme 'Under the Sea' produced a staggering array of excellent works from paintings to sculptures, and from cardboard box scenes

to T-shirt designs. The Performance Studio made an excellent exhibition space and I know how impressed parents were with the quality of children's work, as indeed were the ISI Inspectors who shared the studio for a week. Judging them required the 'Wisdom of Solomon', so it was appropriate perhaps that we had asked the Assistant Priest in Charge of the Bernwode Benefice, the Rev Julia Wright.

'The Boyfriend' - our best musical ever?

After two term's rehearsals and not a little drama both in the run-up to the performance week and during the performances themselves, the cast which was so expertly led by Mr Alan Williams and Mrs Gill Crampton Smith, produced a wonderfully impressive spectacle. Our audiences throughout the week were overwhelmingly impressed with the quality of this year's production. Not only were the choruses powerfully sung, but also the depth of talent on display amongst our many soloists and leads was breathtaking.

Stowe Choral Day

The Senior Choir has been busy this term preparing a particularly challenging piece of music for the Stowe Choral Day. Once there they rehearsed with over 400 other prep school choristers in the morning and sang alongside them and the Stowe Chapel Choir in an afternoon concert. The Senior Choir also provided a strong lead at our own Evensong and they are currently working hard on pieces for next term's Choral Concert on Saturday 24th June, with the orchestra of St Edward's School, Oxford.

Forms III & IV Informal Concert

Any who were fortunate enough to have attended this concert would, I am sure, have been impressed not only with the quality of performances and with the confidence of children, but also with the extraordinarily wide range of pieces being played on such a variety of instruments.

Groups and Ensembles steal the show

It was wonderful to hear so many groups and ensembles playing at this year's Spring Concert in Brill Church on the last day of term. A debut performance by the newly formed Guitar Group was impressive, as were our young Brass and Clarinet Groups, and the String Ensemble. Individual soloists performed consummately and the Intermediate and Senior Choirs entertained us greatly with their tribute to Mozart's 250th Anniversary Year celebrations.

Pre-Prep packs them in

It was standing room only for Pre Prep's end of term Spring Assembly as parents crowded into the Saloon to be entertained by their children. Pre-School & Pre-Prep I began proceedings with a song, Pre-Prep II children then each spoke of their thoughts on Spring, which they illustrated with pictures they had painted. Mrs Venn's Form had chosen to celebrate Mothers Day and after telling us why their mothers are so special to them, recited an amusing, if somewhat 'nagging', poem reminding us to love our mothers. Miss Hasluck's Form closed proceedings with the Easter Story of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the symbolism of 'new life'

Match Analysis

Boys	<u>Soccer</u>	P	W	L	D	For	Against
	1st XI	5	1	2	2	9	11
	Colts A	4	2	2	0	4	8
	Colts B	4	2	0	2	8	12
	U9	3	2	1	0	8	2

Hockey

1st&2nd XI	3	1	2	0	12	8
Colts A&B	4	0	4	0	4	18
U9 A,B,C&D	5	3	1	1	12	9
<u>Overall</u>	28	11	12	5	57	68

Girls	<u>Netball</u>	P	W	L	D	For	Against
	U12/13	3	1	2	0	16	33
	U11	4	2	2	0	43	41
	U10	4	1	2	1	13	30
	U9	5	3	2	0	5	3
	<u>Overall</u>	16	7	8	1	77	107

Overall then a very balanced season for us with both boys and girls teams winning about as many matches as they lost. The strongest match performances have been by our U9s where boys and girls teams both enjoyed 'Winning Seasons' - this all bodes well for the future.

A clean sweep at the Eastern Area Championships

The main focus for the term's clay coaching was the Easterns and there our two teams shot really well; the A Team (James Percival, David White, James Webb & Kristian Wood) won convincingly and Kristian shot magnificently to win the individual High Gun Cup as well.

Three young marksmen

Three of our best young .22 shots have been training hard all term for nationally recognized, Prep School Rifle Association Marksmanship Certificates. By the end of the term all of them had secured awards, Freddie Cloke gained a 2nd Class Certificate, whilst Nick Paine and James Webb secured 1st Class Certificates.

Cross-Country, but not a cow in sight

"Fun, bouncy, painful, long, freezing, muddy, tiring, slippery, excruciating, hot and sweaty, torturous, challenging"....were just some of the adjectives used, by some of the 152 children who took part in this year's Wigan Run. Having moved this from the summer to the spring term, the course now follows a genuinely cross country route across styles and fields without the risk of disturbing any livestock. Individual cups were won by Dominic Whaler (Junior, and for the second year in a row), Elliot Jones (Middle) and Matthew Judge (Senior) with the Fastest Girl being Helen Adams. My thanks go to the multitude of parents who turned out to support the event.

Record numbers at our Open Morning

Yet another record was broken by this term's attendance at our Open Morning. Not only did twenty-six sets of parents turn up to be shown around so confidently by Senior Department children, but also these parents represented a record forty-eight

potential new Ashfold children. Although we have long waiting lists in some years, you should know that we have absolutely no intention of increasing the size of the school.

Gryphons win the Junior Pancake Race

Despite the freezing cold weather, our annual Pancake Races drew a large crowd of enthusiastic spectators. Dressed in House Colours, children raced around the Oval at top speed, clinging desperately to their frying pans!

Gryphons take the House Cup again

Although Lions won the House Art Competition and Dragons the Soccer and Netball, Gryphons won the Hockey, Wigan Run and Personal Credit Competition to win the House Challenge Cup at Prize-Giving by a convincing margin. Congratulations to all Gryphons.

Headmaster addresses parental concerns

A fabulous Parent Committee initiative this year found me speaking on current issues at Parent Coffee Mornings. Having spoken on the 11+ Common Entrance and Grammar School results; the progress of our new Pre Prep building; the impact of the 'Age of Transfer' changes in September 2006; and most recently, on the question of whether Ashfold is an Academic School, I have to say that I have been inundated with compliments about how valuable these sessions have become. If you have any issues you'd like me to cover in future, do please just ask me, or any member of the Parents Committee.

Parents Committee funds new stage lighting

Thanks to the generosity of the Parents Committee we have been using some fabulous new stage lighting for our productions this term. Over the summer, phase two of the project sees the majority of the lights permanently hung over the screen in the Saloon and all of them plugged into an extremely high-tech lighting box.

"I counted them out As ninety-four parents, children and staff (all fetchingly dressed in olive green tops!) mounted their coaches and headed off to Torgon in the Swiss Alps for a week's skiing, unaccountably this iconic news report sprung to mind. At the time of writing, there have been no worrying 'phone calls from them, so I trust they are all still in good health. **and I (hope to) count them back in again"**.

Prep School Squash Championships

We wish every success to Dominic and Alex Noakes who are representing Ashfold this holiday at the IAPS Squash Championships being held at Martlesham Heath, near Ipswich in Suffolk.

NOTICEBOARD

Staffing matters

Mrs Jo Kelly. Very sadly Jo has resigned as Head of PE with effect from the end of this Summer Term. I am however, delighted that she will be continuing as Head of Girls Games.

Mr Alan Johnson, whose Teaching Degree is in PE, English and Drama, and who has been covering PE lessons in Jo's absences, has agreed to take over as Head of PE from September 2006. We are currently advertising for a replacement Form III Teacher.

Miss Ilze Pauw. After four very successful terms as Resident Boarding Assistant, Ilze has decided to return to South Africa and then to travel. In the short time she was with us she became a friend to all, proved herself to be invaluable on the boarding wing and was a wonderfully capable and responsible assistant in surgery. We will miss her. She is being replaced by

Mrs Heidi Smith. Heidi is a mother of two, whose children have recently 'flown the nest'. She has travelled extensively with her husband (an Army Officer) and worked in schools as a volunteer helper in Germany, Kenya and Canada. She completes her first aid training over these holidays and will be a great addition to the staff.

Miss Jenny Alexander who has been doing work experience with us for much of this term, is joining the staff for the summer term as a full time Classroom Assistant in the Junior Department. She will also be standing in for Heidi for the first week of term, as Heidi cannot start until Tuesday 25th April.

OA in England Squad

Zoe Shipperley, who left Ashfold last year on a Sports Scholarship to St. Edward's, Oxford is currently representing the England U16 Hockey Team. In April she flies over to Holland for a Four Nations Tournament and in the Summer she will be going to the European Championships.

Tokens for Schools

We are again collecting Tesco's 'Computers for Schools' tokens so if you do shop in Tesco, could I ask that you keep an eye out for these tokens and hand them in to your child's Form Teacher/Tutor.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Fasti

Please could I encourage you all to look through the Fasti for the Summer Term, a photocopy of which is included in this end of term package, and put key dates into your diaries now.

Summer Barbeque

On the last night of the term the Parent's Committee hosts an informal evening when parents and children get together for a barbecue (generally cooked by the press-ganged husbands of Committee members). Parents bring their own drinks and rugs; the Speech Day marquee providing ample chairs and cover in the event of rain. A children's entertainer keeps children busy in the marquee for much of the evening. It is a great event for every Ashfold child and their families, from Pre School to Forms VI, and I strongly recommend that you book this evening into your diaries.

HEADMASTERLY REMINDERS

Pick-up times

Last summer, for one reason or another, there appeared to be an increasing number of children on the school site well after their end of school pick-up times. This caused a number of problems for duty staff, members of staff taking Junior Activities, disturbance to Senior Prep and the undermining of boarders' privileges. While the Adventure Playground and short tennis courts are an obvious attraction, may I remind parents that collection times are when we expect children to leave the site. I thought it might be helpful for me to clarify things before the Summer term starts:

Wednesdays. All children should leave school at 3.30 p.m. or shortly thereafter, unless they are involved in a match, or boarding that night. Parents should consider carefully the implications of sharing lifts with children involved in matches; most cricket matches finish after 6.00 p.m. and much later if it is an away fixture.

Rest of the Week. Transition children should be collected at 4.15 p.m.; Forms I & II at 5.00 p.m.; Forms III - VI at 6.00 p.m.

Junior Activities. The only Junior Department children on site after these 'collection times' should be those who have older siblings at school and who stay on for Junior Activities.

Late Pick-ups

Any child not picked up after their normal pick-up time will be looked after as follows. However, if you are going to be late, we would really appreciate a call, so that we can set your child's mind at rest.

From 4.25 - 5.00 p.m. Transition children will be taken to Crèche, so please collect them from there.

Between 5.10 - 6.00 p.m. Junior Department children will join Junior Activities. To find out where these activities are taking place, please check the whiteboard immediately outside the Staff Room, then collect your child from the activity venue.

After 6.10 p.m. All children who have not been collected will go to the Senior Dining Room, where they will be supervised by the Housemaster.

Uniform - Summer Dress

Please do not forget that children are to return to school in Summer uniform. If it is cold they may of course all wear jerseys and girls may wear tights.

I wish you all a very enjoyable Easter Holiday.