



# Oakhyrst Grange School

PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR BOYS & GIRLS

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HEADMASTER: MR. ALEX GEAR B.Ed

13<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Dear Parents

We have all enjoyed a jammed packed, fun filled Autumn Term.

Year 6 continue to work incredibly hard toward their next school placements. My congratulations to them on the quality of their work and indeed the superb way in which they are leading the school as our senior pupils. Well done Year 6 on an excellent term's work.

Year 6 enjoyed a Junior Citizenship afternoon at Lingfield Race Course. I am pleased to report that the Year 5 Bushcraft trip was enjoyed by everyone. The children had a fantastic time and my thanks to Mr Burke and Mrs Gorman for making it possible. Year 5 also enjoyed a Music Expressive Arts concert at the Fairfield Halls. Thanks to Mrs Dance and Mrs Stevens for arranging this. Year 4 children were able to go on the annual Bough Beech reservoir trip and they too learned a lot and had a good time. Thank you Miss Hopkins for arranging it. Our Chamber Choir took part in the Junior Choir Festival at Woldingham School. Thanks to Mrs Stevens and Mrs Budgen for setting this up. I know that our choir made a very positive impression on everyone. We have the video evidence to prove it.

Our annual visit to St Mary's Church for our Harvest Festival Service was marked by a wonderful collection of food supplies that were ultimately donated to the Caterham Food Bank. Thank you all for your kindness and generosity. Mrs Carter, one of the PFOG team, was instrumental in enabling this all to happen. There was a lovely atmosphere in the church, full of joy and celebration. It was a pleasure to be able to invite parents in to watch assemblies that were delivered by Years 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Years 5 and 6 performed a Remembrance Day assembly in front of parents. On the Remembrance Day itself Heath K, Year 6 performed the Last Post and the Reveille beautifully. All of the children observed a perfect two minute silence. Year 5 Class Concert was, thoroughly enjoyed by parents and staff alike. It was a lovely evening. Mrs Stevens and Mrs Budgen took our Chamber Choir and some of our ensemble groups to perform at the Oakhall Church to the Cameo Group of over 60s. As I qualified by age, I joined the event. It was a truly heart-warming experience and I know that those of us in the over 60s bracket in the community had a thoroughly festive afternoon. The children really did excel themselves.

The school Nativity play was, as always, a major calendar event. All of the Early Years children and the Year 1 Class performed magnificently. Well done to Miss Cockbain, Miss Lomax and everyone involved in the production. A word of thanks too for Mrs Flanders for the backdrop. I understand that Ilana N and Amaaya P, our Art Monitors helped organise and support the work. A sincere thanks to the many parents who made retiring donations toward our designated charity, Diabetes UK to the sum of £83.00. Our Carol Service was once again a very special event and a sincere congratulations to everyone involved and especially to Mrs Stevens, Mr Holland, Mrs Baker, Mrs Bird, Ms Bucknall and Mrs Budgen, as our musicians. It was a very special treat to have our professional musicians accompanying the music in the service. Mr Holland, our organist and pianist for the evening got a well deserved round of applause from the packed congregation which was shared by way of recognition among all of our musicians.

Sport has continued to be an important aspect of life here at Oakhyrst Grange. Across the term, children in Years 3-6 have had the opportunity to compete in regular fixtures in both Football & Netball against local opposition. Our U11 Football team took part in the recent ISA London South competition and performed extremely well against some tough opposition. Our annual inter-house Cross Country competition went down a storm with all the children from KG – Year 6 running their hearts out around our magnificent cross country course. A special thanks to all of the parents who turned up to support their children. I would like to say a very special thank you to Mr Smith & Miss Lomax for all their hard work in teaching and preparing our children for fixtures.

*Mighty oaks from little acorns grow*

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Five of our swimmers represented the London South region at the ISA National Swimming Finals hosted at the Olympic Pool in London. Alec W won an individual gold medal and recorded the second fastest time in England for the 50m front crawl – an amazing achievement. Amaaya P won a gold medal in the team relay and swam brilliantly for her team. A huge well done to Freddie F, Jude M and Sofia C who also swam and should be very proud of their efforts. There have also been two swimming galas at Caterham and Royal Russell and children from Years 3 to 6 performed really well. Congratulations also to Mrs Evans, our lead Swimming Coach and Mrs Cox, Assistant Swimming Coach.

Mrs Dance led our anti-bullying week assembly and everyone enjoyed Odd Sock Day. All members of the SLT team took a lead in the assembly programme during the week. Mrs Dawson arranged for a special assembly for our LAMDA candidates and 24 children performed in front of their parents and the school. The children went on to take part in the LAMDA examination process and we are delighted to announce that all received a Distinction. Certificates will be awarded next term. I know that our musicians have been very busy in preparation for the ABRSM exams which are now completed. We are eagerly anticipating some great results in the new year.

The School Council under the leadership of President Daniel H and guided by Mrs Dance have been very busy this term. I would like to thank the Vice Presidents Amaaya P and Heath K, and Councillors from Year 5 Eliza B and Laurence E, Year 4 Theo B and Violet R, Year 3 Isla W and Jasmine S, Year 2 Willow P and Oscar G and Year 1 Manny R and Georgina F. The pupil voice matters. A further School Council initiative from last year returned with the seasonal Reindeer Run, managed by Mr Smith and Miss Lomax. At the point of writing my letter the children, parents and staff have raised a significant sum yet to be confirmed for St Catherine's Hospice on the Just Giving page. The page is still open and I am sure that there will be plenty more donations that will be completed during the Christmas break. The pupil, parent and staff voice really matters.

We were pleased to be able to arrange special performances for parents that were put on by our ballet dancers. Thank you to Miss Eleanor and Miss Sophie. Miss Lomax also staged a wonderful Modern Dance performance to a packed hall full of parents. Well done to all of our dancers. I was rather pleased with the little input that I gave with our younger children that gave me the opportunity to work with them during a technical breakdown with the music.

The Christmas lunch was as always, a festive treat. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Liu our Chef and his team for providing a continual menu of outstanding food for everyone at the school. His attention to detail especially around dietary requirements, is exceptional. The staff joined me in an impromptu strictly come dancing in Christmas jumper event which the children loved. Surprisingly, I did not win. The prize was shared between Miss Lomax and Miss Hopkins.

A special word of thanks to every member of staff at Oakhyrst Grange School for their professionalism and care. A word also for the ladies who so wonderfully turn up each and every day to assist with the drop-off arrangements. They are simply invaluable.

I close by offering a sincere thank you to you, as parents, for all your continued support and understanding. A huge thank you to Mrs Smith and her PFOG team who not only help to brighten up our Christmas but provide fun and excitement for both parents and pupils alike throughout the year. The children have enjoyed a Spooky Disco, Pantomime and Christmas Parties this term.

With season's best wishes and greetings.

Mr Alex Gear  
Headmaster