



Wednesday 7th September 2016

Dear Parents,

As the first week of school comes to a close, it is time I wrote to you to update you on news concerning our school and, of course, to wish your child a successful school year.

Public Exam Success

59 pupils in Year 11 sat for IGCSE exams and 84 pupils from Years 12 and 13 sat their AS/A-Level exams in May and June. Of the 457 IGCSE exams taken, every single exam was graded (for the first time in many years none were “ungraded” for scoring less than 40%) and by far the most common grade was A* - in fact there were 113 of them! What is more, 44% of all the IGCSEs taken resulted in either an A or A* grade. That is very pleasing and is broadly in line with the performance of pupils taking these first public exams at our school over the last ten years. Furthermore, 92% of pupils taking IGCSEs secured a C grade or better in at least five subjects; which compares to around 55-60% of Year 11 pupils in an average UK school.

At AS & A-Level 300 exams were taken and again the most common grade achieved was A/A*. 37% of all the exams taken resulted in this grade. Of the 29 pupils who finished their A-Levels, 26 are now progressing to UK universities while one is remaining in Greece and two are continuing their studies at colleges in the USA. Among those who will start undergraduate degrees in the UK, are students studying at Bristol, Edinburgh, Surrey, University College London (UCL), Swansea, University of East Anglia (UEA) and Glasgow. Our school leavers are starting courses as diverse as Economics; Electronics and Electrical Engineering; English Literature and Philosophy; Business Management; Mathematics and Finance; History of Art; Osteopathy; Neuroscience, Law among others. I am sure you join me in congratulating them and wishing them all every success in higher education.

New Teaching Staff

There are 9 new members of staff joining us this year:-

1. **Ms Helen Kokalis**, B.Ed. Primary Education (University of Melbourne, Australia) is a class teacher in Year 3. Ms Kokalis has taught in several primary schools in Australia.
2. **Ms Peggy Gongou** B.Ed. Primary Education (University of Wales at Newport, Wales, UK) is a class teacher in Year 5. Ms Gongou has taught in several primary schools in Wales.
3. **Ms Clare Bakewell** B.A. Music and English (University of Aberystwyth, Wales, UK) teaching music throughout the junior school. Ms Bakewell previously taught music in a primary school in the north of England.
4. **Ms Sofia Terzian**, completing a B.Ed. (Oxford Brookes University) as a Teaching Assistant in Year 1.



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5. **Ms Lamiak Boverhof** B.Ed. (Hanze University, Groningen, The Netherlands); Masters in Special Educational Needs (University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht, The Netherlands) will be teaching and supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs across the entire school. Ms Boverhof has extensive experience as a teacher in schools in the Netherlands and in London, from where she now joins our school.

6. **Ms Theoni Agathou** B.Sc. Mathematics (University of Crete) Masters in Applied Mathematics (National Technical University, Athens) will teach Mathematics Years 7-11. Ms Agathou has experience of teaching in the north of England.

7. **Ms Alice Marlow** B.Sc. Environmental Sciences (University of Newcastle); M.Sc. Environmental Management (University of East Anglia, UK); P.G.C.E. (University of Warwick, UK) will teach A-Level and IGCSE Biology in the senior school. Ms Marlow has headed environmental projects in the UK, and, since becoming a teacher, has taught sciences at a top UK grammar school in Coventry.

8. **Ms Rania Kouvari** B.A. Ancient Greek (University of Ioannina); Masters in Educational Administration (University of Athens) will teach Greek throughout the entire school. Ms Kouvari has many years of teaching experience and joins us from St. Catherine's School, Athens.

9. **Ms Eleni Angelaki** B.Sc. Pharmacy (University of Brighton, UK) will teach Science in Years 7 and 8 and has special responsibility as overall laboratory technician for the science departments of the senior school. Ms Angelaki has extensive experience dealing with organisational and administrative matters relating to sciences and has experience teaching science at Key Stage 3 of British education.

School Development

The entire indoors of the nursery, junior and senior schools were painted over the summer holidays and a number of further capital developments were realised - from increasing the provision of smartboards and classroom projectors in the senior school to new carpets in all junior school classrooms and new artificial grass in the nursery section of the junior school. Further capital development is planned for the coming year.

Curriculum Development

Both the junior school and senior school are introducing PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) programmes. In the junior school this entails a dedicated lesson each week while in the senior school PSHE themes are integrated into subject lessons and covered through form period and assemblies. PSHE is taught in all schools in the UK and while it does not lead to a formal qualification it serves the essential purpose of developing life skills and awareness in children which helps them to cope with and understand issues either concerning themselves as they grow or relating to the community and society they live in.

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The new school website

The new school website will be launched before the end of September and will deliver an outstanding, attractive, bang-up-to-date picture of our school. One important addition to the website will be the open publication of our school policies which have been formalised into documents over the last year and which, put simply, describe how our school sets about certain issues – from teaching and learning to child protection; from assessment to anti-bullying action. I especially encourage you to visit this section of the website once it is launched.

COBIS

The school has fulfilled the rigorous application process that enables St. Lawrence College to be a full member of the prestigious COBIS organisation. COBIS (Council of British International Schools) is a worldwide organisation of approximately 250 schools that are supported by experts in UK education in terms of curriculum development, staff recruitment and background checking, online and in-person continual professional development of teachers, and the provision of resources. COBIS also successfully lobbies the UK government and specifically the UK's Department of Education on behalf of British schools overseas. Just as an example COBIS is currently working hard to ascertain the impact of Brexit for EU citizens wishing to attend UK universities, and is keeping schools such as ours abreast of developments on this very fresh issue. Being a member of COBIS will allow St. Lawrence College to sustain the highest of quality in areas such as teacher training and to react promptly and correctly to changes in UK education.

Professor Barry Hymer's Presentation to Parents

Next Friday (16.09.16) our school will be visited by Professor Barry Hymer who is, quite simply, one of the most senior thinkers on education in the UK. I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important his visit is to the school and how useful it will be for you, and by extension your child, if you can attend his talk to parents at 09.00am that Friday. Many parents have confirmed they will attend – if you have not yet decided I hope you will make sure of your attendance. You might like to know that after talking to parents, Professor Hymer will be working with groups of teachers all day, finishing with a talk to all teachers after the pupils have gone home.

Finally

This is my twenty-first year at St. Lawrence College, and my fifth as Headmaster. I am immensely proud of our school, as the Head, as a teacher and as a parent. For all the development that has happened recently, for every smartboard and coat of paint, for every speaker who visits our school, every organisation we subscribe to and every page on our website, there is one resource that matters the most and by which a school succeeds or fails. That is our teachers. I am so proud of our teachers who continue to show outstanding professionalism and genuine personal care towards our pupils. This makes all the difference, has always been present in our school and is still at the root of the ethos that flows through St. Lawrence College. Long may it continue.

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I know I am supposed to treat all children equally – and I really try to do so – but I think you will forgive me if I give extra best wishes for a wonderful year to the 130 brand new pupils starting at our school this week. Wherever they are joining us from – Peru, China, the UK, the USA, Libya, Canada or Athens (all real examples) I wish them every happiness at St. Lawrence College.

Finally I thank you, as parents, for your unwavering support of our school. Please continue to give me and my colleagues your feedback which is so valuable.

Sincerely,

Phil Holden
Headmaster