



September 2015

Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to write to you at the start of a new school year. I have much to tell you and plenty of information to give you, so do please read this email carefully.

Exam Success

Articles on the school's website and Facebook page, posted in the third week of August, have already provided detailed analysis regarding the public exam success of pupils who sat for IGCSEs, AS-Level and A-Level exams, and so I will not repeat that level of detail again here. However, I do want to reiterate that more than half (53%) of all the 506 IGCSEs that were taken resulted in either an A* or A grade and that at AS/A-Level, 41% of all 292 exams entered resulted in an A grade or better. These results were slightly better than public exams in 2014 and sit about 4th best over the last ten years of the school's exams. Pupils who have left us to progress to higher education will take up their studies in a variety of top institutions, including, in the UK, Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics, Queen Mary, Bath, Birmingham, Imperial College, Warwick, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and many others. Some pupils are progressing to higher education universities outside the UK, in Italy, Norway, Holland, Canada and the USA.

I congratulate every pupil and all the teachers throughout the school who have contributed, over the years, to the education of these children. Exam success comes as a result of hard work and excellent teaching and learning right from Early Years all the way through to the final years of a child's schooling. If you would like to learn more about our exam successes this year there are articles on both our school website and Facebook page. I have also prepared a short video analysing our results which you can watch by following this link:

<https://youtu.be/IsaCTWY9c0c>

New Teaching Staff:

This year we warmly welcome several new teaching staff to St. Lawrence College. Here is a brief guide to who they are.

1. Ms. Georgia Tsagka - our new SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)

Ms Tsagka will lead our provision of teaching for children with Special Educational Needs throughout St. Lawrence College. Ms Tsagka trained in the UK and joins us from a London school where she had been the SENCO for several years after gaining degrees in SEN teaching from the University of the Aegean in Greece and from the University of Exeter in the UK.

2. Ms Estelle Alexandrou – teaching Mathematics from year 7 to year 11.

Ms Alexandrou completed her Mathematics degree and her PGCE teaching training degree at the University of Hertfordshire. She has experience of teaching in the North London/Hertfordshire area of the UK.

3. Ms Hara Economou – teaching Spanish (years 4-7) and French (years 8-11).

Ms Economou joins us having been teaching at other British schools in the Athens area. She studied for degrees in both Greece and Spain before undertaking a British PGCE (Modern Languages) at University College Plymouth. Ms Economou has taught Spanish in other British schools in the Athens area and also in UK schools in the Devon area.

4. Ms Maya Bakti – class teacher year 4.

Ms Bakti joins us from another British school in the Athens area. She acquired her Bachelor's degree in Primary Teaching from the University of New England, Armidale, Australia and followed this with a Master's in Education from the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.

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5. Ms Artemis Fermeli - class teacher year 1.

Joining us from another British school in the Athens area, Ms Fermeli received her degree in Early Childhood Education and Teaching from the University of Volos, Greece.

6. Ms Samantha Whitworth – class teacher Early Years Foundation Stage 2.

Having previously worked in Greece, Ms Whitworth actually joins us having been teaching in a British school in Madrid in Spain. Ms Whitworth acquired her Bachelor's degree in Primary Education from the University of Bradford in the UK.

As colleagues, parents and pupils we welcome all our new staff warmly and hope that they enjoy professional fulfilment as they contribute to the learning and development of the pupils they encounter throughout the school.

Pre-school teacher training

I am very proud that in the week before school began for pupils, all teachers were present at school, working hard in preparation for the new school year. It was a very productive week, as in addition to planning meetings and classroom preparation, all staff received expert training delivered by visitors to our school. These included an inspiring seminar on “Building Pupil Resilience” from an Educational Psychologist and an entire day of training on “Child Protection and Safeguarding” delivered by a representative of Kidscape UK – the premier trainers of teachers on this important topic in UK schools.

Curriculum Developments

Spanish is now taught at our school. This year it is available to children from Years 4-7. This will expand upwards, year by year, as the pupils currently starting year 7 progress through the senior school. Eventually it will become an IGCSE subject. Our vision is that it will remain available from year 4 as a third language option (along with French, Chinese and Russian) in addition to the English and Greek that all children learn.

In the senior school last year we trialled an experimental class of Further Mathematics AS-Level. This class was available to pupils who had achieved an A* grade at IGCSE Mathematics, or had already acquired an A grade at AS-Level Mathematics. It was taught at lunchtimes and proved to be a success. Therefore it will become a regular class in our school, though for the moment still taught every lunchtime and still restricted to those pupils who are in A-Level years of study and who have demonstrated exceptional ability in Mathematics in public examinations. It is **Further** Mathematics, after all!

Maintenance developments

As you may be aware, a programme of painting around the school has been initiated and is ongoing (though naturally never close to children during school hours). Furthermore, new artificial grass has been laid in areas of the junior school and around the swimming pool complex. Battling against capital controls, it has still been possible to equip a large number of senior school classrooms with overhead internet-enabled large screen projectors and smart boards are being utilised in the senior school now as well as throughout the junior school. As you will appreciate in these difficult times, such capital investment is challenging, but the school continues to make progress in these areas as it can.

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Pupils and Physical Education

Please ensure that appropriate health certificates are updated and delivered to the school nurse so that your child can take part in P.E. lessons. Physical Education is a compulsory subject for all pupils right up to and including year 11 and consequently it is essential that all parents recognise the need to have their children's certificates in place. For further information regarding what is needed for your child, please contact the junior school or senior school office, or the school administration office. In cases of pupil sickness, the P.E. department requests that you email pe@slc.gr to inform them of your child's inability to take part in the lesson even if the child is at school. Finally, senior school parents please be aware that your child will have swimming in PE lessons from Monday 14th September until Friday 23rd October, so they should bring their swimming kit accordingly.

School calendar

I have attached to this email a school calendar. This is also downloadable from the school website. Please note that certain events such as drama productions, sports tournaments and other occasional activities cannot be listed as dates have not yet been fixed. Naturally you will be informed of such events by email, letter and website/Facebook news in good time.

Elections

Although the school has not been officially informed at the time of my writing this email to you, it is highly likely that we will be ordered to close on Friday 18th and Monday 21st September due to the general election in Greece on Sunday 20th September. If the school is permitted to remain open on these days, we will do of course. As soon as we hear from the Ministry of Education, we will inform you.

Finally...

Allow me to finish this long email by wishing you and your children a very productive year. All of us are very conscious of the difficulties and challenges we confront, as families, as a country and as a continent. One of my key responsibilities is to be continually monitoring and supporting the dedication and commitment our pupils apply towards their education. I want every child to enjoy and care about their learning. And I want them to appreciate the education that you as parents, and that their teachers are making sure they receive. At a time when others less fortunate than ourselves leave their homes and risk their lives for the chance to try and start again in what they hope will be a safer environment, I want all our children to be aware of, and to make the very most of, the outstanding opportunity they have been provided with. That must come from the school's support but very much from a child's home environment too. By working together we can give our children the very best start in a world that is rapidly changing and where nothing is certain. For these reasons, but also because learning should be enjoyed and is not merely a 'means to an end', I thank you for your continued faith in our school, and wish you every strength, success and happiness for the 2015-2016 school year.

Phil Holden
Headmaster