

September 2021

Dear Parents,

The summer break seems to have passed very quickly this year. I hope you and your children have managed to take some time to rest and recuperate after what has been a testing 18 months for everyone. We are delighted to have the children back in school and, as detailed in my letter last week, we start the term with optimism for a successful return to a 'near normal' school life. We shall of course be monitoring the situation closely and recognise that there may be a need to 'step-up measures', if necessary. We know from experience that the school can function very effectively, if this is the case, although I hope, of course, that a return to further COVID-19 control measures will not be required.

As we start the new academic year, with restrictions lifting, I am mindful that it is too easy to take for granted how other people might be dealing with something - everyone has their own individual circumstances and challenges. Should you have any concerns over the coming weeks, please do feel that you can raise them with me.

During the summer break, Mrs Rae Knight one of our longest serving members of staff decided to retire, following her extended period away from school last year. Mrs Knight has served the school loyally for over 30 years, teaching throughout Little Stream and most recently in Year 3. She has been much-loved by colleagues, children and parents alike, who recognize and value her commitment, pastoral awareness, wise counsel and willingness to go the extra mile. We wish Mrs Knight every happiness for the future and send her our very best wishes.

This term we welcome new members of staff and there are a number of internal changes in roles and responsibilities:

Ms Hannah Woodcock joins the Science department in Upper School and takes on the responsibility of Form Teacher in Year 5. A former Biomedical Scientist and previously Head of Science at The Weald Academy, Ms Woodcock has extensive experience of teaching science at KS3 and KS4. We also welcome Mr Richard de Wet to the Games Department. Mr de Wet will be supporting the Games programme in the afternoons. A keen triathlete and hockey specialist, he has previously worked in the P.E. and Games Department at Benenden School and is currently an Assistant Housemaster there.

In Little Stream, Mrs Alice Coleman takes on the role of Year 2 Form Teacher. Mrs Coleman will continue to provide SEN support to Little Stream children and will be supported by Mrs Siobhan Hind and Mrs Hannah Chuter who have been appointed as SEN Teaching Assistants working in a job-share arrangement. Mrs Hind is a qualified teacher who has more recently been working in a learning support role and Mrs Chuter is an Early Years qualified teacher. Mrs Susan Boshier, who has previously provided one-to-one SEN support, joins the Nash House team as a Teaching Assistant. Mrs Sandra Wilkinson and Miss Alice Hill have been appointed as one-to-one Learning Support Assistants working in Little Stream.

Following the period covering Mrs Knight's absence last year, Mrs Mundell has now been appointed on a permanent basis to teach in Year 3; she will share the Form Teacher role with Mrs Kate Carter, Head of Little Stream Science.



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Internal changes see Mrs Helen Sampson joining the Nash House team to teach in Reception and she also takes on the role of Early Years SENCO. Mrs Alison Brinklow has been appointed Head of Year 2 and Miss Laura Phipps moves from Year 4 to take on the role of Head of Year 3. Mrs Helen Gardner, having provided cover for Mrs Davey's maternity leave in Year 1, takes on a permanent position as a Year 4 Form Teacher. Mr Michael Schuldt takes on a full-time position in the Upper School Mathematics department and Mrs Hester de Wet takes over as Head of Little Stream P.E.

In Upper School, Miss Lizzie Pearmine reduces her teaching timetable in the Art Department and Miss Lydia Spearink becomes full-time, supporting Art in both Upper School and Little Stream.

Miss Tor Millard takes on the role of Information Systems Manager, in addition to some of her IT Technician role and Mrs Karen Brock takes a sabbatical year from her position as Teaching Assistant in Little Stream, but continues in her role as Archivist.

This term we welcome three new GAP students. Mr Hugo Carrie and Miss Henrietta Parsons are former pupils and return having completed their time at Tonbridge School and Kent College, Pembury respectively. Mr Max Bargeton also joins us from Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh and I am sure that they will quickly settle into Dulwich life.

I know that parents will wish to join me in congratulating Miss Alonso, Head of Modern Languages, who was married in Spain over the summer break. We wish Mrs Alonso (as she is now known) and her husband the very best for the future.

Last term, relevant staff completed training courses as follows: Educational Visits Refresher Training; Trips Training Refresher Course VLM Adventure Consultants; EYFS and Pre-Prep Framework; A Practical Guide for Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Updates; Mr David, Mr Scanlon, Mrs Mackie, VWV Effective Investigations; VWV Managing Allegations for Independent Schools; Theatre Workout's Working With Text and Frantic Assembly's Teacher Training Course; Certificate of Completion of The Sudden Cardiac Arrest (Sport England and UK Coaching); First Aid at Work.

Our theme for this term is **Look outwards - Consider others**. As we start this new academic year, I am mindful that the last eighteen months has caused us, quite understandably, to withdraw, to become more isolated than we would wish, and, perhaps, to have become more self-focussed. Whilst there is much to commend in placing an emphasis on self-care, I fear that, at times, this has been at the expense of a real understanding of and consideration for others. As educators and parents we want our children to thrive and do well at school, but equally, if not more importantly we want them to feel part of something bigger than themselves – to feel happier and more fulfilled by looking outwards, considering and caring for others and improving the world around them. Let's work together this term to promote this theme both at school and at home.

Thank you to all parents who completed our survey in the lead up to the Summer Term. The aim of the survey was to find out what parents particularly value about Dulwich Prep Cranbrook, how they would like to see the school develop in the future and to gauge parental views on a wide range of aspects of school life. There was a 66% response rate which is a strong response, slightly above the benchmark of other independent prep/junior schools who have conducted this type of survey.

Overwhelmingly, the feedback was extremely positive; the strength of parental advocacy for the school and all it offers was wonderful to read and I was delighted to be able to share this feedback with colleagues in all departments and sections of the school.

Overall, the vast majority of parents (94%) would 'definitely' or 'probably' recommend Dulwich Prep Cranbrook to friends. In terms of satisfaction, 80% of parents feel either 'completely' or 'very satisfied' with the school, with only 2% highlighting areas of dissatisfaction. When asked if the school had met parental expectations, 92% of parents said the school had either met or exceeded their expectations.

Many areas of the school's provision received ringing endorsement. The most positive praise was for areas such as the administration and day-to-day running of the school, the care and communication of our boarding team, the approachability of staff to parents, the school's concern for a child's wellbeing, the relationship between children and teachers, general communication, the leadership of the school and the quality of teaching.

84% of parents felt that the school achieves the right balance between academic and wider curriculum areas, with an even split of the remaining parents wishing for either more emphasis on academic achievement or more emphasis on pursuits and activities.

When parents were asked to choose five words which together best describe the school, the most frequently selected were Welcoming, Encouraging, Caring, Rounded and Balanced, with Academic, Creative and Sporty also chosen by a significant number.

The survey provided some useful feedback on areas for future focus and we shall be reviewing our provision of information and support for 11+ entry, endeavouring to return to the quality of catering we enjoyed prior to recent necessary limitations and looking at our SEN provision in Upper School and specialist coaching in sports as areas for further development.

The responses regarding the future provided some useful feedback as we plan further developments with Governors and The Dulwich Preparatory Schools Trust. I will keep parents informed as these discussions progress over the term or so.

We are not resting on our laurels and start this year excited about the future, having learnt a great deal from our experience over the last year and a half. Please do continue to feedback to us so that we can work together, in partnership, to offer the very best opportunities for all the children to learn and develop.

Our online Calendar gives you 'real-time' information about forthcoming events www.dulwichprepcranbrookcalendar.org. Clubs will be advertised to parents over the first few days of term days and sign up on SOCS will be in the week commencing Monday 13th September. All Clubs start from Monday 20th September.

I would draw your attention to three imminent events. On Monday 13th September at 7.00pm, we will be hosting a Little Stream Information Evening for parents. On Tuesday 14th September, we host a Social Evening for all parents of children in Year 5 to introduce Upper School staff. In the afternoon on Friday 17th September, prior to collection of the children after their time at Lordship Wood, parents of children in Year 7 will have a chance to meet with Tutors and other key staff.

I look forward to seeing you throughout the first few weeks of term. Should you wish to arrange a meeting with me at any stage this term, please contact my PA, via headmaster@dulwichprepcranbrook.org.

With all good wishes for the year ahead,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul David". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Paul David.