



From the Headmaster

Dear Parents

As we reach the end of an extremely busy term and calendar year, I would like to express my thanks to staff and pupils who have worked exceptionally hard, especially in recent weeks during our ISI inspection. We are very grateful for the time parents and pupils took to complete the inspection questionnaire and await the full report in the New Year, which will be communicated with you as soon as possible. Informal feedback from the inspection teams was highly complimentary but it would be tempting fate for me to say more until we have seen the final written reports.

I was delighted to meet so many of our Year 7 parents at the new Leathersellers' Hall recently. It was a very enjoyable evening where parents who are new to the school had the opportunity to meet the Governors – including Master Leatherseller Ian Russell – as well as the Head of Year 7, form tutors and members of the Senior Management Team. The new Leathersellers' Hall was also the venue for the very successful Old Colfeian Society annual dinner last month. Our link with the Leathersellers' Company has never been stronger and we are deeply grateful to the current Master for all that he did during his time as Chairman of Governors to cement this vital relationship.

Award-winning success

Colfe's has once again been awarded Best Strategic Educational Initiative at the Times Educational Supplement (TES) Independent School Awards 2016, for our PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education) initiative – the 'Colfe's family'. This is the second time Colfe's has won the award in the last three years, winning previously for our work with the Tougher Minds programme in 2014. Read more on our website. We look forward to continuing to develop our outstanding pastoral programme.

Choristers in Years 1 and 2 have won the prestigious Beckenham Festival, one of the largest amateur Performing Arts competitions in South London. The choir were awarded Best Infant Choir and the Margaret Cooper Cup. Well done to the 41 pupils who took part and to Key Stage 1 Head of Music, Ruth Hall who also directed no fewer than four seasonal performances in school last week each one a triumph. Chairman of Governors, Matthew Pellereau particularly enjoyed the Nursery Nativity production, on which more below.

Music

This is always a busy time for musicians and we have enjoyed a number of truly impressive occasions in recent weeks. 200 Colfeians performed Karl Jenkins' inspirational and uplifting work *The Armed Man – A Mass for Peace* at the historic St Alfege's Church in Greenwich. This special event marked the first public performance of Colfe's Combined Choir which brings together pupils, teachers, parents, Old Colfeians and friends of the school. This ranks with the best musical performances I have seen at Colfe's in the last 10 years. It was a particular pleasure to return to St Alfege Church after several years of absence – the venue contributed to the success of the evening as did the fact that no fewer than 70 of our newest Year 7 pupils were part of the choir.

Choirs from across the school, including 75 singers from the Junior School, performed at the annual Carol Service in St Mary's, Lewisham on Tuesday evening. Thank you to Director of Music Emma Bond and Sue Watts and Ruth Hall from the Junior School who work to make this such a landmark event in the school's calendar.



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Junior School

Pupils across the Junior School have embraced the festive season with a series of Christmas productions: Early Years and Reception pupils performed a delightful version of *Away in a Manger*; Years 1 and 2 had a slightly different take on the traditional nativity with *Christmas with the Aliens*; and it was a livelier affair for Years 3 and 4 with their feel-good production of *Strictly Aladdin*. Well done to all involved and particular credit to Head of Art (and Year 3 teacher) Emma Higgs who wrote and directed the production of *Strictly Aladdin*.

Drama

There were very impressive performances from our A-level and GCSE drama students in their devised original pieces. The A-Level *What It Means to be Human* production was a particularly thought provoking and moving piece based on the human stories behind the statistics on refugees.

Debating

It has been an outstanding term for our debaters from across the Senior School who have had success in a series of high profile national competitions. Colfe's teams won the first rounds of both the *Debating Matters* and *The English Speaking Union* competitions and performed strongly in the recent *LSE Schools' tournament*. Their success was made even more significant as many of the Colfe's team were taking part in debating for the very first time – a reflection on the strength of our debating programme. Well done to the teams which included *Leathersellers' Scholars* Chelsea Sampson and Jayden Gittens (Year 12), David Battersby and Thomas Jenkins (Year 13) Momo Shoroye, Connor McLean Wait, Max Hedley, Sean Palmer and Ally Bulgin (Year 12), Victor Famosaya, Stefan Pasternak (Year 8) and Miles Robson and Louis Richardson (Year 9).

John Glyn Society

We were delighted to welcome back the eminent philosopher Professor A.C. Grayling to the school this week for our concluding John Glyn Society lecture of the year. Professor Grayling is Master of the New College of the Humanities and a Supernumerary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford and spoke to senior pupils on *Conversations of Humankind – The Humanities*. His talk stimulated a lot of subsequent discussion amongst pupils and staff, not least around his most memorable point regarding "information" derived from the internet as opposed to that which can be found in books which have undergone editing and, in the case of academic publications, peer scrutiny and review. Taking an example from History, he invited pupils to type the two words "did the" into Google. The somewhat shocking results made his point convincingly.

Sport

In Netball our U12 and U13 A-D teams had a successful block fixture against St Dunstan's with convincing wins, one draw and one narrow loss. Over 90 pupils took part in a competitive fixture against Caterham – the largest ever block fixture for our Year 7-9 and the U19s secured a bronze medal position having reached the finals in the highly contested Kent Schools' tournament.

In Rugby last weekend we had a successful competitive block fixture against City Of London Freeman's school with strong wins for our U16A, U15B, U14A, U14B, U12A teams.

The First XI girls Hockey team have had a fantastic season so far and remain unbeaten after wins against Eltham College (6-1) and James Allen's Girls' School (6-1).

In Swimming, Colfe's hosted the final Year 3 and 4 Home Gala of the year against Merton Court, Farrington's Breaside, Bickley Park and Eltham College. Well done to all those who took part (especially those participating for the first time) with special mentions to Leo Walker, Lucy Chamberlain, Gabriella Noyce, Zofia Lehmann and Billy Wright (all Year 4) and Jackson Skillicom (Year 3) who took first place in their respective strokes.

While swimmers in Year 7 and 8 took part in their first mixed Gala of the year competing against teams from Alieyn's, St Dunstan's and Kingsdale securing first place overall.



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Individual achievements

- Thai boxer Necati Hassan (Year 7) has won the WTKA Intercontinental Junior Muay Thai Open Championship 2016 and is currently ranked number one in the UK for his weight and age category.
- Ajan Surenthran (Year 7) has achieved his black belt in taikwondo – at the age of 11.
- Barnaby Marchant (Year 9) has had an impressive year in sailing, winning a bronze medal at the London Youth Games and coming third in the Chipstead Sailing Club Junior Topper Open.
- Sophia Kirkman and Anna Hadingham (both year 8) to train with the London region Junior Triathlon squad.
- Swimmer, Elspeth Oliver (Year 8) won two gold, a silver and a bronze medal taking part in the 'Carn Brea & Helston Winter Invitational Meet' in Cornwall.
- Georga Halloumas (Year 11) won Silver in the Welsh Open Judo championships and Bronze in the British Championships.
- Old Colfeian Henry Chapman, who has just completed his first term at Durham University, has been awarded a Durham Cathedral Choir Scholarship.

PAFA

Last Saturday PAFA (Parents and Friends Association) held another successful Christmas Fair featuring craft and food stalls and – for the first time – a stall created and managed by the Sixth Form committee. Thank you to the many staff and parents who supported the day with money raised this year going to the Magic Breakfast and Carers Lewisham charities.

General Notices

Finally, should we see any snow at the beginning of next term, I take the opportunity now to remind you of our extreme weather policy. In the unlikely event that we need to close the school you will be informed, in reasonable time, beforehand by text/email and an announcement will be put on the school website. If the decision to close is taken during the school day you will receive a text/email and parents of pupils in the Junior School will be required to collect their children as soon as possible. Senior pupils who have parental consent to return home independently will be able to do so, senior pupils who do not have permission to return home independently should remain in school until they can be collected. Catering will be provided for all pupils and staff who need to remain in school.

I wish you a very peaceful festive break and look forward to seeing all pupils back in school on 5 January 2017.

Best wishes

Richard Russell
Headmaster