



From the Headmaster

Dear Parents

This is the first of my fortnightly newsletters to all parents this year. Its purpose is to celebrate pupil achievement across the range of school activity and to report on key events within the school.

The Autumn Term started on a high with our best GCSE results ever and A level results which held above 80% A*-B for the third year running. Pupils of all ages are now suitably engrossed in the business of the new academic year and the optimism which derives from success and achievement is very much in the air.

Exam Results

This year saw our best ever GCSE results – despite grades nationally going down – with A*/A grades reaching 62%. Two thirds of Year 11 achieved at least one A* with seventeen pupils gaining ten A*/A, and Michael Ly, Lydia Fearn and Max Hedley all gaining 11 A* grades. Physics, Latin and Maths were amongst our top performing subjects achieving 94%, 83% and 75% respectively.

For a third year in a row, our A-level results topped the 80% mark for A*/B with all six of our pupils who applied to read Medicine (a notoriously competitive subject) successfully gaining a place. Over 60% of Year 13 gained places at prestigious Russell Group Universities (up from last year) and Oxbridge success included places for Modern Languages and Medicine. Amongst the many success stories this year, Olivia Carruthers-Jones gained three A* grades and will shortly depart for Cambridge to read Modern Languages. Andrew Ravendren, who joined Colfe's in the Sixth Form from Conisborough College as a Leathersellers' Scholar, will read Medicine at Imperial College, London.

This unprecedented level of success derives mainly from the unrelenting commitment of pupils and staff over the last two years and congratulations are due to all involved. The importance of sustained effort over time is a hallmark of our Tougher Minds programme the focus of which has switched this year to Year 7. If future year groups are to emulate the success of their predecessors it is essential that they should learn good study habits from an early stage.

Work Experience

More than 70 of our Year 12 and 13 pupils took part in a wide range of work experience over the summer in sectors as varied as Medicine, Politics, Banking and Journalism and the Law. As ever, we are grateful to the parents who offered these valuable placements. Plans are already under way for next year and Dr Jerry Lea would be delighted to hear from any Colfe's parents who can help us to expand the range of options still further - jlea@colfes.com.

New Senior Appointments

This term sees three new appointments to the Senior Management Team.

The new Head of the Junior School, Mrs Catriona Macleod was previously Head of the independent Dunottar Junior School for Girls, Knightsbridge Junior School and, latterly, acting head of a free school. Mrs Macleod joins us at a very important time for the Junior School as the former pre-prep and nursery and prep schools combine to create one united school.



COLFE'S

Newsletter

Mrs Donna Graham joins us as new Deputy Head, previously from Forest School where she was Senior Mistress. As Deputy Head, Mrs Graham will have a range of senior responsibilities within the school and will deputise for me in my absence.

Mrs Jane German, previously Head of Year 7, has been promoted to the position of Pastoral Assistant Head in the Senior School. She is already working closely with pastoral leaders to ensure that our systems continue to support pupils and promote their wellbeing.

Senior School Prize giving

Our annual prize giving ceremony this week was an opportunity to celebrate not only our record exam results but also the many outstanding achievements of our senior pupils in sport and the arts. It was a particular pleasure to welcome Ian Russell to the platform once again, this year as Master of the Leathersellers' Company. We are equally grateful to his wife Sue who distributed the prizes.

Duke of Edinburgh

Summer activity also included 30 of our cadets in the CCF squadron (Combined Cadet Force) travelling to Kent for Bronze and Silver expeditions and a second, more demanding, trip to the heart of the Snowdonia National Park for Mountain Skills and Silver and Gold assessment in wild country. Alex Hagelberg, Rebecca Hall and Marc Gibbons all passed their Gold Qualifying assessment.

Lower Sixth Adventure Day

Last week our new Year 12 enjoyed the inaugural Lower Sixth Adventure Day at Stubbers Lane Adventure Centre in Essex. Highlights included laser tag and jet skiing. Parents were invited to the school in the evening for (a more sedate) chance to meet teachers. Thank you to Director of Sixth Form Spencer Drury and to Major Cherry who coordinated the day.

Junior School

It was good to see so many parents at the introductory meetings with teachers last week. Thanks to Mrs Welch and Mrs Gurr, heads of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 respectively, for their organisation of these evenings.

Junior School pupils celebrated the centenary of Roald Dahl this week with a range of activities including dressing as a book character and a cake sale with proceeds to the Roald Dahl children's charity. Over the summer the English Department invited pupils to enter a competition to build or create a model of one of Roald Dahl's book characters. The results (foxes, witches and Matildas) were hugely impressive, although not all the costumes were suitable for the hottest September day so far this century. Pupils with whom I spoke were extremely well-informed on the author's biographical detail as well as his books.

Arts

We are delighted to welcome our first 'Artist in Residence' to the Senior School Art Department. Lily German who graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College, will be working in her own studio in the department and running workshops with pupils. This is a fantastic opportunity to have a practising artist in the school to inspire and support our pupils. Our relationship with Goldsmiths (alma mater to Damien Hirst, Malcolm McLaren and Alexander McQueen, amongst others,) is increasingly strong.

More than 100 pupils from the Senior and Junior schools achieved record results in their prestigious LAMDA exams (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) – with 98% achieving the higher grades of either Merit or Distinction. These internationally recognised exams cover areas such as Acting, Public Speaking and Musical Theatre. Seven sixth-form pupils took the highest level Gold Medal and Grade 8 exams. Congratulations to Sophia Rosen-Fouladi and Megan Marchant (Year 13) both of whom scored 98% for their Gold Medal Acting exams. Record numbers of pupils have already signed up for LAMDA examinations this year.

We were very fortunate to welcome the composer of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, Dominic Peckham, to Colfe's last week. Dominic ran workshops with Year 7 to help launch our 2016 Instrumental scheme – set up to encourage Year 7 pupils to learn an instrument they have never played before with all lessons and the use of the instruments free of charge for a year. Regarded as one of the UK's finest young orchestral and choral conductors, Dominic gave up his time freely to visit us through his links with our Director of Music Emma Bond, who sings in his prestigious choral group the London Oriana Choir.



Sport

The year has got off to a great start for our sportsmen and women with competitive fixtures for senior netballers against Latymer Upper and in the Fast Fives tournament against Caterham, Royal Russell, Latymer Upper and Reigate Grammar School.

Rugby teams are already on winning form with success for the 1st XV, U16s and U14s against St Olave's and wins for our 1st and 2nd XV, U15s, U14s, U13s and U12s against St Dunstan's College. The U13s defeated Tiffin Grammar School in the first round of the Daily Mail Cup.

Other individual achievements over the summer included:

- Luke Okosieme (Year 11) who won the South of England Championships in the U17 High Jump held in Ashford. Luke jumped 1.94 m beating his personal target of 1.90. Luke went on to place 7th in the England Champions – ranking him in the top 6 in the country.
- Georga Halloumas (Year 11) was selected to represent England at the UK Sainsbury's School Games competing with the England Judo Squad.
- Music scholar Ruby Collins (Year 13) toured Sweden with the London Schools' Symphony Orchestra. Following UK-wide auditions back home, Ruby was also selected as a stand-by bassoonist for the BBC Proms Orchestra for Last Night of the Proms.
- Oyinkansola Odumade (Year 13) was selected to take part in the Girl Guides Inter-cultural programme in the City of Busan in South Korea representing South East England.
- Barnaby Marchant (Year 9) took part in the sailing Big Race in Cyprus (the only participant of school age) winning two out of three races and taking silver place in the second. Barnaby is now training to become a prestigious RYA (Royal Yachting Association) assistant instructor.
- Aashi Datta (Year 6) achieved a record five Zenda Kai karate belts in just one year – attaining her blue belt (5th rank) in July.

After-School Activities (Senior School)

Sports training sessions, drama and music rehearsals and other after-school activities have begun for this term. Please note that Senior School pupils not involved in such activities should be working in the school library or the IT suite where there is supervision. Sixth Form pupils are free to make use of their common room areas and Roebucks café is open to all pupils from 4.30pm.

Charities

Fundraising efforts are underway for our annual trip to Kotu School in the Gambia, which this year will focus on the construction of two much-needed canteen buildings. We are grateful for the very generous prize donations from parents for our Auction of Promises evening on 30 September. To book your place please contact Naomi Herbert - nherbert@colfes.com

Finally, welcome home to Head of Classics Claire Le Hur who took a gap year from Colfe's last year to cycle around the world with her fiancé Stuart Block. Claire and Stuart travelled 11,000km in ten months finishing in Shanghai and raising (so far) over £55,000 for charity. Claire said it was 'the most mentally and physically demanding thing I have ever done but definitely the best.' You can read more about their achievements in The Telegraph.

This is always an exciting time of year and it is clear already that we have much to look forward to. I wish all pupils well in their various endeavours over the year ahead.

Best wishes

Richard Russell
Headmaster