

## **PRIZE GIVING 2011 – ST DAVID’S SCHOOL CHAIR OF GOVERNORS REPORT**

Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, pupils at St David’s School...

It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you all to this year’s Prize Giving, which by my reckoning with our centenary next year means this is the 99<sup>th</sup>!

It is my particular pleasure to introduce our guest of honour Mrs Debby Leonard, Headmistress of Croydon High School, who has made time in a very busy schedule to be with us today. Some of you will already know of her through our recent “next school event” and I am confident that you will all be impressed by what she has to say later in the proceedings.

At one level this has been another normal year at St David’s.

A clutch of scholarships and bursaries for our school leavers - as well as excellent results for entrance to the next schools

High levels of team and individual success in intra school competitions.

Wonderful performances such as the Sixth Form Play and the Carol Concert.

Ever increasing popularity of the Early Years Facility such that there are now waiting lists for acceptance to a number of classes.

Some things are a given at St David’s, such as high academic standards and to some degree this requires stability and continuity. However there is a constant need for innovation and some degree of calculated change. It is pleasing to report that the interactive white boards installed last year are now a vital part of the educational process and I would like to thank all the teachers who have undertaken the training and taken on the new challenge with gusto.

You will hear from Miss Mardell of other changes that have been adopted during the year—all with the intention of increasing the quality of the all round educational offering of St David’s.

Having talked about normality that was suddenly changed last half term when our Headmaster- Vincent Fox- advised me that for a number of personal reasons he was unable to continue in the role and wished to resign with immediate effect. That was quite a moment and it began a chain of events that had in part been covered in some emergency and disaster planning, but only in part!

Our Deputy Head Cressida Mardell was on holiday in France, peeling some prawns I gather, when I managed to reach her on the telephone. It was quite a long conversation and I was impressed by how calm she was throughout even though she was recognising the magnitude of the situation. I asked if she was prepared to take on the role of acting head and was enormously relieved when she agreed. In the event she curtailed her holiday and got stuck in to dealing with some of the urgent issues that included ;

Recruiting teacher cover for her class

Allocating roles and responsibilities within the SMT

Advising the staff of the situation and setting up acceptable and agreed reporting structures

Liaising with parents and many other parties

Meeting with the two former Heads, Lindsay Nash and Ann Stranack to obtain as much advice as possible in a short amount of time.

The governing body is immensely grateful for everything that Cressida Mardell has done in the past 6 weeks and the fantastic support she has received from the staff.

It is particularly pleasing to report that I have personally received a number of letters from parents expressing their appreciation and support for Cressida Mardell.

Light-heartedly I refer to her as the St David's tsunami that has swept through the school not in a destructive and harmful way—in fact the complete opposite.

We will be advertising for a new Head in September with the intention of appointing someone to start in January or April 2012. I am pleased to report that Miss Mardell has already given the Governors notice that she will be applying for the role.

It is now appropriate for me to thank all those that work at St David's for their fantastic commitment throughout the last year. They are a team and work together to the best of their ability. Of course this goes wider than the teaching staff since the grounds man is every bit as important as any other member of the team.

In addition I would like to thank all my fellow Governors who do so much behind the scenes and carry the burden of responsibility with a light touch.

Needless to say we did not lose any of our staff on last week's day of action by the teaching unions despite I might add a considerable amount of pressure from certain unions.

Our big project for the summer holidays is the total landscaping of the front of the school by Harrington Brothers, one of the leading landscape contractors in the South East. It is a big project and is expected to take at least 5 weeks but it will be finished, apart from some planting that is intentionally being delayed until the Autumn, for the start of term. There has been a lot of thought gone into the design to ensure it combines an impressive and practical solution without becoming a vast expanse of paving slabs.

We have decided to utilise the funds, some £5000, the PTA raised from Croydon by their brilliant travel plan, towards this project. At this time it is appropriate to thank the PTA for all their fantastic efforts at fundraising for the school and we all very much appreciate what they do.

At a more mundane level we are also increasing the IT infrastructure since capacity is now becoming a problem. It appears IT is one of those black holes that continually soak up funds.

We are also looking at the Sports Pavilion as a project for next year and the PTA has already built up a significant fund towards the project. We have a subcommittee of governors, staff and the PTA exploring the most suitable solution and we expect to have a clear plan in the next six months.

The success of Early Years is another challenge and we are looking at ways in which we can make more space available without creating problems for other areas of the School. I would hope we will have clarified our thinking on this project in the coming year.

So to conclude, I re-state that whilst it is very much business as usual on the key and core criteria for St David's we are also constantly looking at means to improve the infrastructure to assist in the educational process

I would now like to ask our Acting Head Teacher - Cressida Mardell to give her report on the academic year.

**Mr Douglas Brown**  
Chair of Governors