

**PRIZE GIVING 2011 – ST DAVID’S SCHOOL
ACTING HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**

Guest Speaker Mrs D Leonard...

Chair of Governors, Mrs Debbie Leonard, members of the School Governing Body, colleagues, friends, invited guests, parents and children of St. David’s, welcome to our Prize giving.

It is with great pleasure that I make this Prize Giving speech. The last few weeks have taught me possibly more about the life of teaching than I have learnt in all the previous years put together. When I set off for my half term break I didn’t think I would be writing and delivering the Headteacher’s Report at the 2011 Prize Giving and that Mr Fox would have had to leave our St David’s ‘family’ so suddenly.

Many hours of meetings with governors, parents, staff and children have since passed, along with signing my name I don’t know how many times on cheques and letters. This has made me realise what an enjoyable but sometimes frustrating and tiring job being a head of school is, but one which I am enjoying and making a success of, I hope!

From the Tuesday when Mr Brown sent me a text asking if it was alright for him to ring me, until this minute, I know that without the support of the governing body of St David’s, the senior management, the staff and especially, you the parents, life in the ‘hot seat’ could have been a lot harder than it has been. And for those parents who have written to me, or stopped me in the playground to give me their support – a big thank you from the heart. It made the transition from class teacher to acting headteacher much easier knowing that you were there batting on my team.

Speaking of my class I would like to give them – a thank you. I know this half term has been a difficult time for you. One day you knew who was going to be ‘up front and teaching’, then suddenly I changed into Mr Scarratt and Mrs Mitchell! You have done well. You have welcomed them into your room and given them a chance. That is what makes the St David’s children special. No matter who is teaching you, you give them respect and loyalty. So I would like to thank all of you in form 3 from the bottom of my heart for being so wonderful.

We are here first and foremost to celebrate and recognise the achievements of all your children, both in and out of the classroom. St David’s is a success because it values uniqueness – every member of staff knows your children, their strengths and weaknesses. We help them flourish and reach their potential but we also support them along the way when things get tough. They are treated as individuals and their continual success is reflected in the fact that our school numbers for the coming year are scheduled at 159, a record for the current economic climate. Indeed there are waiting lists for Reception and Form 1. This has to be a testament to the fact that St David’s gets the balance right between getting results and having a nurturing and encouraging environment. As Patricia Neal says “A master can tell you what he expects of you. A teacher awakens your own expectations”.

So thank you parents for your continued support, you have shown a huge amount of confidence in our school.

I now turn to the staff. This does not only include the teaching staff and teaching assistants who give your children an excellent education on the ‘shop floor’ but behind the scenes they support one another, the governors, the acting head and therefore, the whole school community. This dedication makes the time your children have at St David’s a happy and unforgettable one. This also includes the kitchen staff, who work to deliver a healthy and balanced meal for your children, the office staff who try their hardest to balance the books and read my messy handwriting and even the lady who comes in once a week to ensure our IT is working. Without all of these people working as part of one big team, St David’s would not thrive.

Let me now take you through the highlights of the year as we celebrate all that has been achieved.

OPEN DAY

Perhaps the greatest evidence of how far we have come was on Open Day when all the children's talents and staff enthusiasm and skills were there for all to see. The poetry, gymnastics and Mrs Edmund's Form III play were wonderful examples of what the children can achieve. Without exception all the children reach the high bar we set and learn their words and give a flawless performance. The show must indeed go on was our motto but Mrs George's firm but fair guiding hand was greatly missed this year.

MUSIC

I have the greatest respect for June George, our Music Teacher, and her not inconsiderable talent she shares with St David's, making music within the school a passion for every child.

Some of the highlights of the year being our Christmas Carol Service at St Mark's, the trip to Fairfield Halls at the Whitgift Music Depts. Invitation, Year 1's celebration of Mother's Day with their afternoon tea and, of course, our Year 6 Leavers Musical 'Jack!'.

Diversity and opportunity are always present in the Music Department and we thank Robin Ling for continuing with Rhythm Ensemble and Henrietta Rowsell for her work with the Flute Ensemble.

Miss Lorraine Temple was invited to conduct our newly established Chamber Choir and they sang with 'Belle Canto' at the Christmas Concert. Thanks also to Cyrilla Rowsell for coming in to the Music Dept. and giving the children an experience they won't forget.

OUTINGS

As always extending the curriculum beyond the classroom is incredibly important. So much is gained by the children from visits, not just educationally but also socially. This year has been as busy as ever with trips like:

Nursery and Reception to Purley Library

Bocketts Farm for the Lower School

Theatre Trip for Form 1

British Museum visit for Form 2

Eagle Heights, Mercers Lake and the Snow Queen for Form 3

Kew Gardens, Bird World and Bough Beech for Form 4

Hampton Court and Bough Beech for Form 5

Midsummer Nights Dream for Forms 5 and 6

Sutton Life Centre, Apple I-Store, France and Activity Week for Form 6

We also invited the Theatre Sans Frontiere to perform to Years 3 to 6

ACTIVITIES

The school continues once lessons finish and clubs and activities start: Chess, Brownies, Cookery Clubs enable the children to experience something new. Musical Theatre continues and at lunchtimes the children can attend Rhythm Ensemble, Flute Ensemble or Chamber Choir. We teach more than 88 peripatetic music lessons each week! A truly great breadth of opportunity.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

This year also saw the beginning of St David's offering structured after school care facilities. These have been co-ordinated by Sheila Townsend and Daniel Blades whom the children have taken to and seem very settled and happy with. We have welcomed Sheila and Daniel to the St. David's family.

RECEPTION MODERATORS VISIT AND THE INSPECTION

This year ended with the Moderation of the Foundation Stage profiles which are kept in Nursery and Reception classes. These teachers have indeed had a demanding time and have been very successful with an excellent report.

As a school we are due our next inspection with 3 days notice at some point in the Autumn Term. We value enormously our membership of the Independent Schools Association. Indeed we were one of the first schools to join in 1946/47. It stresses that although we are independent we are subject to regulatory inspections. The whole staff and Senior Management Team are working hard to ensure that everything is in place that needs to be.

CENTENARY

The 100th anniversary of the founding of the school by the misses Talfourd-Joneses is celebrated in 2012. I would say 100th Birthday but some children might think it is mine! I wonder what the esteemed ladies would think now to see us planning these celebrations on that day back in 1912 when they opened their front door as a school for the first time? I cannot give away too many secrets but you can rest assured that the committee we have set up is planning some unusual and entertaining events to celebrate through the year. Details have yet to be clarified but we will write early in the new term and share them with you!

PARENT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The St David's PTA is always beavering away in the background supporting the school and raising funds for many worthwhile causes which benefit our children no end. Your involvement in projects for the school on a day to day basis helps preserve the ethos that St David's is so justifiably proud of. The £5000 from the Travel Plan is being put towards the safer redevelopment of the front of the school and monies have been set aside, as you heard from Mr Douglas Brown, for the refurbishment of the Pavilion, which we hope to open as part of our 2012 Celebrations.

The PTA is heavily involved with our forthcoming 100 year Celebrations and Mrs Williams, Mrs Hanford, Mrs Weeks-Greener, Mrs Cheeseman and I have already met to start putting ideas together. I am grateful to the PTA for all the support they give the school.

YEAR 6

As a non-selective entry school we have a determination to extract the strengths and talents of the children. Whether academic, sporting or the arts our current Form 6 have shown how very much this is borne out.

Form 6 are to be congratulated on their successes in the very competitive 11+ and entrance examinations.

Activity Week started with a restless morning in school and a maths lesson! Accompanied by Mrs Chamberlayne, Mrs Palfreyman and Mrs Cheeseman they set off in a convoy of cars after lunch on Monday 9th May. The destination was PGL Activity Centre in Hindhead, Surrey.

They were met by Ryan, their enthusiastic 19 year old host for the week. His job was to accompany them to meals, activity meeting places and to fill in the gaps between with fun games.

With no time to relax the children were immediately whisked off for the first activities. Throughout the week they experienced the thrills of the Giant Swing, rock climbing and abseiling to the skills of rifle shooting, archery and problem solving.

Every minute seemed to be filled. If they weren't eating they were marching to their next activity. They certainly upheld the St. David's Way and were a credit to the school. Without exception the Centre Staff commented on the politeness and conduct of our Form 6 pupils.

CHARITIES

Charities supported this year include Over the Wall (supporting parents and children with respite care) and Macmillan Cancer Fund. Form 6 Business Week had enormous success this year and raised over £700.00. This money has been donated to Childbirth Injury Trust, Purley Overseas Trust, Make a Wish Foundation and Help for Heroes.

SALUTE/VALETE

In September I start my 5th year at St David's. We generally have a very stable staff and this year is no exception. However we do say farewell to Mr Karoly, our gym teacher, who is returning to his native Hungary to be with his family. He has promised to pop back and visit us when he returns to Britain. In his place we welcome Mr Ian Heasman who has long been associated with St. David's and is a gym coach at Shirley Gym Club. He will be taking over Mr Karoly's role and running gym clubs after school and guiding our ISA team.

We also welcome Mr Peter Scarratt to our team – he came into our school under difficult circumstances with very little time for me to 'handover' the baton but together with Mrs Mitchell has done a superb job and bonded quickly with the children. He will be continuing as the Year 3 Teacher and having already supported our Year 6 play and helped make props, I have every confidence that he will be an asset to St David's.

We welcome back Mrs Jude Mitchell in September again. I owe her a big thank you for organising all the grandparents of baby Imogen so seamlessly into a rota for babysitting that enabled my Year 3 children to have a familiar face back for their last few weeks. Thank you.

The sports days were also a raging success and Mr Jones will fill you all in with the sporting achievements of the school a little later.

I started this year as a class teacher and deputy head. Now I am the acting head teacher of a marvellous school which has excellent prospects. I see that both I, with the support of the Senior Management Team, and the school have the backing of a wonderful collection of parents who support the school 100%.

I value greatly the strong bond between home and school. You all know that I am always happy to meet with you.

Finally I would like to share the following poem with you:

UNITY

I DREAMED I STOOD
IN A STUDIO
AND WATCHED TWO
SCULPTORS THERE
THE CLAY THEY USED
WAS A YOUNG CHILD'S MIND
AND THEY FASHIONED
IT WITH CARE

ONE WAS A TEACHER
THE TOOLS SHE USED
WERE BOOKS AND
MUSIC AND ART
ONE WAS A PARENT
WITH A GUIDING HAND
AND A GENTLE LOVING HEART

AND WHEN AT LAST
THEIR WORK WAS DONE
THEY WERE PROUD OF
WHAT THEY HAD WROUGHT
FOR THE THINGS THEY
HAD WORKED INTO THE CHILD

COULD NEVER BE
SOLD OR BOUGHT

AND EACH AGREED SHE
WOULD HAVE FAILED
IF SHE HAD WORKED ALONE
FOR BEHIND THE PARENT
STOOD THE SCHOOL
AND BEHIND THE TEACHER
STOOD THE HOME

That is enough from me so now let's get on with the real business of why we are here and that is to celebrate the success of your children.

Cressida Mardell
Acting Headteacher