



BEECHWOOD

Sacred Heart School

An Independent School for Boys and Girls (3-18)

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Dear Parents,

At the start of this term I attended a conference for Catholic Independent School Heads and was fortunate to hear Chris Patten, former government minister, Governor of Hong Kong, Chancellor of Oxford University and now member of the House of Lords, speaking about his Catholic faith and what he thinks schools should be engendering in children. He strongly believes in educating young people to become compassionate, global citizens who strive to improve themselves and make the world a better place. I am proud to say that our pupils and staff constantly strive for this ideal in the small things which we do at Beechwood every day of the year.

Year 11 and 13 returned to school in January for their mock GCSE and A Level exams. Year 11 are now fully engaged in revision classes and are hoping to do as well as our students last year, whose GCSE results were 20% better than the national average. Year 13 are now receiving their university offers, including many unconditional offers from their first choice universities. This is an acknowledgement both of the hard work of our students and the dedication of our Sixth Form tutors, led by the Head of Sixth Form, Mr Awdry.

In response to the interest that students have shown in the care of the environment, Frau Covarr has initiated a Beechwood Eco Club; her team of class representatives are working hard for us to become an accredited Eco School. March 11th will be the start of Waste Week, following on from Switch off Fortnight last term. Students will be encouraged to refill their own water bottles rather than use plastic disposable bottles, and the school kitchens will be moving towards using recyclable pots. Mr Walters is helping volunteers build bird boxes for the school site and plans for an eco garden are well underway. Look out for more details in the school newsletter.

At the very end of the Christmas term Mrs Hope organised a day of training for selected Beechwood students and students from two other local schools to take part in workshops led by the Diana Awards to train as anti-bullying ambassadors. The whole of the senior school has now had an assembly presenting the idea, and on March 5th the ambassadors will be hosting a café during break times where students can meet and chat, and a Feel Good Friday on March 22nd.

The Sixth Form enjoyed their annual Etiquette Dinner in January. This is an occasion when students wear evening dress and attend a meal hosted by senior staff. It is always a great pleasure to see students from all over the world socialising and learning some of the skills required for attending a formal dinner. I am delighted that the Sacred Heart Lunchtime Lecture series which was introduced a couple of years ago is still thriving. Sixth Formers are expected to attend as are Academic Scholars, and all students, staff and parents are welcome.

Mrs Phipps continues to lead our grand trips to far flung places. This term her intrepid group of explorers hosted a very successful quiz night to raise funds for their trip to Peru. As well as including sight-seeing, this will involve a considerable amount of charitable work. This term also sees the house charity weeks. Each house's fundraising activities contribute to the school's annual project, which this year is the Air Ambulance Service. During the half term a group of fourteen students are visiting New York with Mrs Smith and Mrs Burton, while Mr Rowe is visiting Hong Kong to meet the parents and agents of some of our students and attending Academic Asia. I am very pleased to say that the International Sacred Heart language exchanges are thriving. This term we have students

attending schools in France, Germany and Spain and we look forward to hosting their partners at Beechwood later in the year. For the first time one of our senior staff will be spending time teaching in a Sacred Heart School in Korea, further strengthening our international connections.

Next half term we have the Celebration of Song (March 19th) and the Cultural Showcase (March 29th). Both events celebrate the artistic talents of our children and involve the Music, DT, Art, Photography and Cookery Departments in two evenings of wonderful entertainment. I would also like to highlight the Choclatier event organised by Mrs Cook on 27th March. This fun evening is a must for anyone who loves chocolate and provides a great evening to socialise with friends and raise money for the school. Mrs Cook is also planning a Ball for parents in September. Further details to follow.

Mr Coakley's weekly newsletter in the Prep School is a reflection of how busy the younger children are in the school. Together with his staff he continues to create a nurturing and challenging environment for the children as they progress through the early years of their education. A major initiative this term has been the re-introduction of dance in school. Emily McAllister Brown is running various classes in the Prep and will be offering classes to senior children in hip hop. We are hoping to see a display on Beechwood Day.

Many of you will now have had a chance to see the newly refurbished gym. Sports teams are flourishing at school with the creation of a school basketball team, and work on the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) begins on March 5th.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Mrs Sara Pittman to Beechwood. She has joined us as Marketing Manager and will continue to promote our school to the local and international market. I would also like to offer a warm welcome to Michelle Burton our new Head of Drama, Dominic Newton-Atkins Science Lab Technician, Dexter Barker our Gappy in Boarding and Rebecca Wilks Nursery Assistant.

I wish you a restful and happy half term break. I am currently at home recovering from an operation and will be in and out of school over the forthcoming weeks but as ever I am always contactable via email if you cannot catch me in person.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Rowe". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Helen Rowe
Headmistress
Beechwood School.