

End of Year Message from the Principal

10th July 2020

Dear all,

As the sun begins to set on this academic year, I am finding it hard to adequately sum up the last 12 months. Whilst there is no doubt that this year will always be remembered for the Covid-19 pandemic and most pupils not being in school for several months, when I look back on the last 12 months so much more defines this year at CFS.

I became Principal last September, and I made a clear promise to all parents, pupils and staff that CFS was a school striving for excellence in everything we do. With already a very strong foundation, this year we have made great strides in this pursuit. We have seen: the rejuvenation of the House system; increasing all-through approaches; a rigorous focus on behaviour and standards; an increased spotlight on rewards and praise; continued development and refinement of our teaching and learning practices; widening sporting success; a range of trips and events; development of pupil leaders in all areas of the School; and the successful introduction of our middle school model. Whilst lockdown forced us to press pause on some of these things, I have been so proud of the staff's ability to not lose momentum or the long-term vision in any of these areas. I want to reassure you all, as parents, that we have never lost sight of the big picture, whilst also navigating our way through the immediate challenges of lockdown. In September, all staff will be returning to school earlier than planned; this is so we can conduct the comprehensive onsite training that is needed for September, whilst also still having time to focus on continuous improvement and development. It would be so easy to start next year focusing solely on the latest logistical challenges as a result of the pandemic but, whilst we will always give this the essential time it needs, I promise you that we will also be ensuring that your child receives the best possible education.

But of course lockdown will always be a huge part of our memories of this year. As I reflect on the last four months I am slightly overwhelmed at the amount that has happened, the number of challenges that have been overcome and the number of unexpected developments we have all responded to. I am so proud of the whole CFS community. We may not always have got everything right first time – there really is no rule book for these situations – but I have genuinely been astounded by the overwhelming support throughout the crisis from everyone linked to CFS. I would like to publicly thank all the staff who have kept our core purpose - education - going throughout. I have also been so impressed by the resilience, patience and understanding of our pupils. From the very youngest who have struggled to understand why they can't see their friends and teachers every day, to our oldest pupils who have had GCSE and A Level assessments pulled from under them, or exam courses impacted in unimaginable ways.

And then to you as parents. I cannot begin to comprehend what you have been dealing with over the last few months, juggling your own lives, worries and careers whilst also trying to support the remote learning of your children. And in between all of that many of you have taken the time to send messages of gratitude and thanks to myself and many other members of the team. Thank you. I have to admit I was a little teary eyed this morning when I arrived in school to a wonderful card from the parent body, and news of an extraordinary donation of over £800 to be spent on the staff. I cannot express the level of my gratitude for your support; CFS continues to be a very special place.

I fear this is all sounding a little gushing, but the sentiment is genuine; the end of the year is always an emotional time as teachers say farewell to classes, but my emotions are certainly very heightened this year. I have really enjoyed communicating with you all each week, and thank you for indulging me in sharing with you my own

personal experiences of lockdown. When I was first appointed as Principal, the most common thing said to me was, 'Headship is lonely.' There have definitely been some very lonely moments over the last few months as I have had to lead on decisions I never dreamed we would have to make, but an amazing team around me, supportive Governors, and your understanding have made it all a lot easier. I would like to especially thank Mr Hanna for his wisdom, hardwork and creativity.

As you will have seen in my communication yesterday, the Covid challenges are far from over. I am so excited for September – finally getting everyone back in the building where they belong – but am also acutely aware that things will still not be back to normal. But I am confident, as we have proved all term, that we will be able to execute everything safely whilst still providing a wonderful education for our young people.

But before the summer holiday finally starts, I just have a few final bits of information to share with you all.

Rhythm of the Year (School Calendar)

Please find attached to the main email the first draft of next year's 'ROY'. As always, we will send out a revised version by the end of September. I am afraid that there is of course a huge caveat to the calendar this year; what is outlined is what we intend to deliver, but for each event we will need to decide nearer the time if we can conduct it safely in line with the guidance. I have already indicated on the document things that I think are highly likely to be delivered virtually in the first term, instead of on site. I have everything crossed that events like Sports Day, end of year trips, the House Festival and our Summer Fayre will be able to happen next year in a way that was simply impossible this term.

Staff Farewells

Saying goodbye to staff is always a sad time, but I am also excited for these colleagues, many of whom are leaving for new and very different challenges, in some cases a long way away. We wish them all well on their next adventures and sincerely hope they keep in touch.

First of all I would like to say thank you to Megan Humphries and Harvey Cox, members of the LSA team who have supported the School and many pupils in temporary roles this year. Good luck to you both! A fond farewell to Julian Emsley, teacher of maths, who is leaving CFS to embark on a new career, and to Deborah Amor, Year 7 teacher, who is starting work in post 16 education at Chichester College. Thank you to Rosie Griffiths for her work in Key Stage 1 this year; Rosie is returning to a school slightly closer to home. And farewell to Mark Hunter, teacher of science, who is focusing on his A Level teaching. We are very sad to say bon voyage to Lilly Bradley-Singleton. Lilly has worked at CFS over the last two years as both a Secondary LSA and, more recently, teacher of music. Over the last term she has also worked tirelessly in our Primary provision. Lilly is returning home to Manchester and has sadly concluded that – despite her desire to stay – the commute might be a little too much! I would also like to wish Ella Campbell huge luck as she moves into the world of equine studies; Ella started at CFS as a cover supervisor and over the last year has taught in the PE department. Over the last two years CFS has had the benefit of the talents and wisdom of Elizabeth Newington, delivering music in both the Primary and Secondary phases. Elizabeth has decided to make a career and life change – currently having a very long commute – and is moving nearer to home to become a Primary Languages teacher. We will miss her but thank her for all she has done for music at CFS.

Five years ago I had the pleasure of recruiting an exceptional HLTA who spent her first couple of years at CFS providing excellent English interventions throughout the Secondary phase. I was so pleased when Julie Wilkie decided to complete her NQT year with us as a teacher, and Julie has gone on to provide excellent English teaching

to Secondary pupils and expert provision for our A Level Government and Politics cohort over the last couple of years. Julie is now making the next step in her teaching career, and we wish her well at Midhurst Rother.

I know that many pupils and parents are very sad to be saying goodbye to Hannah Lithgow, Year 5 teacher, as are we. Hannah has been an exceptional Key Stage 2 teacher at CFS. She is making a change in direction, retraining in Educational Psychology. Whilst I am sure Hannah will excel in this area as well, she knows the door is always open to her here if she ever decides to return to Primary teaching. Good luck Hannah!

As many of you are already aware Steve Apsey, Head of Sixth Form, is leaving us, the South coast and, in fact, the country at the end of this month – and starting a new life in Saudi Arabia! Steve has secured a new Head of Sixth Form role in the Middle East, combining his passions for post 16 education, travel and adventure. Send us a postcard Mr Apsey!

And finally, we say very fond farewells to two members of staff who have been with CFS since the very first year – Aly Ede, Pastoral Manager, and Clare Dolan, Assistant Headteacher. Both have given tirelessly to the School during the last seven years and have been instrumental in CFS being the place it is today. Whilst staff, pupils and parents alike will miss Aly's support and care, I wish her huge luck in her return to being a school secretary. Ms Dolan has held many roles in the School, as Head of Maths and in the Senior Leadership Team. She is a truly exceptional teacher and many pupils have had the benefit of her teaching and support over the years. I wish Clare huge happiness in wherever her next adventure leads.

The House Cup

Whilst some of the key events, such as Sports Day and the House Festival, could not happen year, there were a wealth of House activities in the first term and a half, and of course pupils have continued to earn House Points both in and out of school. If we simply look at House Points earned by pupils for their work and effort, Pegasus are our winning House this year, but when added to all the House Events, we actually have joint winners of the overall House Cup this year.

And the winners are... **Noctua** and **Pegasus!**

Congratulations to both Houses, and to all pupils who have contributed to House events or received House Points for their efforts this year.

And all that is left for me to say is to wish you all a very happy, safe and peaceful summer. I will be in touch towards the end of August with final details of our return in September.

2019-2020, we will certainly remember you!

With very best wishes

Louise New

Principal

