

DESPITE WINTER'S ICY GRIP of the Thames Valley in recent weeks, it seems (I write this on Monday) we can all breathe a sigh of relief that the weather has not been worse! As usual, the main victim has been our sports programme, though the nasty dose of 'flu which ran through the cast of the College's Junior Panto, has led to the latter's rescheduling in the New Year. Please spare a thought for those individuals and communities whose circumstances have been so much worse, marooned by snow, ice and transport failure! Spare a thought also for those attending a certain Windsor school whose future is less than certain in 2011. We are always grateful for personal recommendations!

As I hope that you all now know, it is our Golden Jubilee this year. When we were planning our celebrations, we had no idea that the Independent Schools Inspectorate would pay us a snap, no-notice visit, but this is precisely what happened to us on Armistice Day! Two inspectors from ISI spent the day with us, their particular focus being the Welfare, Health and Safety of the pupils (known in the trade as 'Regs 3 & 4') in our care.

I am delighted with their conclusions: "The School complies with relevant standards in Welfare and Health and Safety, suitability of staff and proprietors and takes a meticulous approach in ensuring the day to day safety of its pupils." They found that the pupils were well behaved, courteous and considerate of each other and that the welfare of the children was given very high priority. "The school is well organised and administered and its system of procedures and policies is of very good quality."

Our staff induction programme was considered impressive and exemplary. The School was meticulous in risk assessment of activity within and without the classroom, engaging an external H&S Consultant to work closely with teachers to manage and reduce risk. Currently ISI does not publish the reports from such visits, since these are part of the DfE's quality audit arrangements. However, as we expect our next formal inspection in 2011, I don't think it will be long before our 2008 Inspection report is updated!

In our Jubilee year, we are not just celebrating, but also participating in a number of partnership activities. Our sponsorship of *Art on the Street* in Maidenhead on 20 November meant that we could take a collection of our pupils' work onto the High Street, right into the heart of this outstanding event. There, our ISA National Art winner Edward McLaren received his award from Catherine Bursnall, our lovely RBWM Mayor, and got to talk to the Home Secretary, Theresa May, as an added bonus. The Barn Dance on Saturday 27 November was an extra event added to this year's programme, the second joint Society/PTA occasion of the Year and provided a return for the 'Local Yokels', a Bracknell-based band who first visited us sometime last century (our memory has genuinely faded as to when!), and who lived up to their reputation as a bunch of brilliant musicians. Our next social event is the Burns Night supper on Friday, 28 January in the Claire's Court Sports Hall. Tickets (and Tables of 10) are now on sale!



This end of term mailing comes complete with further editions from the *Court Circular* stable, with a *Sports* edition for everyone and a *Scribblings* for the middle years, publishing much work of our poets in this part of the school. These high quality publications (the *2010 Results* section was published just after half-term) provide a focal point for celebrating the contributions of many in our community, which are as wholehearted as ever.

I've been delighted with your early feedback on our new website, and the news-and-media section is updated almost daily. Blogging from the Junior Prep sections continues the lively contributions from our younger pupils, and, during 2011, I hope to unite our various secondary, academic and 'social media' sites under a single log-in gateway. As 2010 draws to a close, (the forecast shows that the Arctic winds are due to return for Christmas), I do hope you find something to cheer you from the 'bumf' contained within this mailing. Both our staff and your children have worked really hard this term to make the very best of the brilliant opportunities available within Claire's Court Schools, and I thank them as I do you all for the fantastic support given during the first term of our 51st year!

James Wilding