

WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL

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18 December 2019

Dear Parents

I would like to start this letter by asking you to reiterate my thanks to your sons and daughters for their commitment and contribution to what has been an extremely busy school term. Quite how they managed to fit in everything I will never know; from end of unit tests, preparation for trial examinations and university applications, to taking main roles in the school play or performing in music concerts (in the case of some, both) at the same time as playing for a sports team or representing the Grove in another way.

In the ever-changing political landscape, independent schools are facing unprecedented challenges, including: the nebulous uncertainty of government-driven initiatives; the implications of Brexit; a teacher recruitment and retention crisis; spiralling pension costs; the loss of mandatory business rate relief; VAT on school fees and the evermore demanding push and pull of inspection. However, all this uncertainty should not distract us from what is really important; namely, our young people. At every level our pupils are making what they will one day realise have been giant academic strides, as well as being involved in a multiplicity of activities. I would also like to thank them for the help they always offer, with great humour and loyalty, whenever we hold Open Days, prospective parent visits and school events, for parents and the public. When visitors write to me to thank the school for running one event or another, they invariably praise the boys and girls who chatted to them or provided a tour.

I would also like to thank my colleagues. It heartens me to see how much Woodhouse Grove pupils appreciate what their teachers do for them, whether in lessons, on the playing fields or taking trips, or by offering help and advice over university choices, or dealing with pastoral issues. This appreciation makes our jobs much more fulfilling as we strive to ensure that, when the day comes, your sons and daughters leave us with the best possible results, golden prospects and fond memories.

On the sporting front, our rugby players have battled hard on a very strong fixture list. The 1st XV did very well to progress as far as they did in the National knockout, recording a fine victory away to St. Peter's School, York before being defeated by a very strong RGS Newcastle side away from home. Our netballers are having a fantastic season. For the first time ever, our U14, U16 and U18 squads have all qualified for the regional round of the Nationals. Participation levels in inter-school fixtures are also very impressive with over 70% of students representing the school in inter-school sports fixtures this term. For the first time ever, our Junior Boys and Junior Girls cross country runners qualified for the English Schools' event, having been victorious at the regional round of the competition - at which Maisey Bellwood and Archie Peaker both came first in their respective races. In the English Schools' Final event, Maisey put in an outstanding performance, winning the Junior Girls' race in style. This is the second National Schools' title she has won this term.

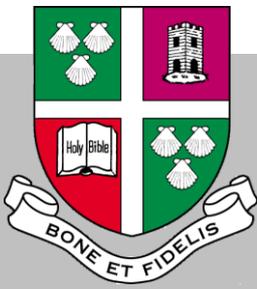
At the Grove we have become used to high quality productions, but even so, this year's School production of *Great Expectations* was a truly remarkable achievement. Mrs Baker and Miss Evers quietly unveiled a miraculous production where every line and every moment was totally credible. The staging, costumes and

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I am Grovian.



Woodhouse Grove School is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust.
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make-up put many professional productions to shame but, even more astonishingly, so did the cast who made each performance unforgettable.

In timely fashion, earlier this month, our A-level Politics students orchestrated a mock General Election. To hear pupils as young as 11 discussing the relative merits of the different political parties is testament to the Sixth Formers who represented the main parties and their policies so eloquently in assembly.

Following a magical Solo and Chamber Concert and excellent Carol Service, the festivities concluded last night with the spectacular Christmas Concert, attended by a capacity audience. Congratulations to all those who took part in these signal events.

On behalf of the School and the Bradford North Foodbank Centre, I would like to thank all members of the Woodhouse Grove School community for your generous support of the collection. I have no doubt that your donations will have made a significant difference to the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves within the local area, and my thanks to Mr Hole and Mr Lambert for coordinating the appeal.

This January we will once again have a huge number of 10-year olds sitting our entrance examination. This is testament to the growing reputation of Woodhouse Grove and all that we offer our pupils.

Reminder of next term's Parents' Evenings:

- Year 8 Thursday 5th March
- Year 9 Thursday 16th January
- Year 10 Tuesday 10th March
- Year 12 Wednesday 12th February

Our boarders return to school on Monday 6th January 2020; with School starting for day pupils at 08:30 on the following day, Tuesday 7th January 2020.

In closing, my thanks to you, our parents, for your unstinting and loyal support throughout this busy term. It is through the building of good relationships between pupils, parents and teaching staff that truly effective school communities are created.

Sarah and I wish you all a very peaceful and relaxing Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

James Lockwood MA
Headmaster

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