

### **Notes from Friends of Ricards (FOR) Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

The meeting was attended by Alison Jerrard (AJ), Anita Mannan (AM) and Sarah Sawyerr (SS) together with parents from most year groups.

AJ reiterated, for those new to FOR, that our main focus is as a forum for ideas and discussion, although we also fundraise to some extent.

AJ reported:

- the school's exam success (Just under 70% achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades);
- the success of the Celebration evening
- a conference she attended with regard to the 'International Day of the Girl'
- her visits to Outstanding schools, to share good practice
- the positive reaction of staff towards the new GCSE exam arrangements (linear), which make for a less disrupted examination preparation period during KS4.
- the fact that parents will be invited to talks on the new exam arrangements once they have been finalised
- the way in which Key Stage 4 tutor groups are now generally smaller (there are 11 instead of 9) and are based on the learning needs of the students, such that tutor time can be used more productively

AM reported that year 7 have settled in very well, particularly after the very successful 3 day residential trip to Wiltshire in October. This has helped many of the girls with the transition from primary school and has resulted in very positive parent feedback.

SS reported on the large number of trips coming up over the next few months, both residential (within the UK and to Spain, Italy, Germany and France) and day trips (to places of worship, museums, theatres, the Belgian battlefields etc.) There was also discussion of a possible adventure trip to South Africa at some point in the future and of David Cameron's intention to send 2 students and one teacher from every school in England to Belgium in commemoration of the First World War.

SS advised that the annual Carol Concert at St Mary's Church will this year be on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm. She requested that anyone who can help with mulled wine and mince pies from about 5.45pm onwards to email her.

The Quiz Night will be on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March. Arrangements for this will be discussed at the next FOR meeting.

AJ told us of a staff book club which loans books of educational interest to the staff such as How Girls Thrive by Joanne Deck and Raising Girls by Steve Biddulph. It was suggested that these titles and others might be of interest to parents too. AJ will circulate an extract from Raising Girls, via the students for debate at our next meeting.

AM advised that a collection of tinned food, blankets and clothing is being made by a member of staff from the Philippines to be taken to the disaster area by the Red Cross on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November.

AJ advised that Ricards now has a twitter account @Ricardstweets.

It was mentioned by a parent that an article in the local Wimbledon Guardian by UKIP local councillor Suzanne Evans, did not paint an accurate picture of Ricards Lodge or other local schools. It was suggested that anyone who would like to, could write to the paper to correct her.

The next FOR meeting will be on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014, where Ms Simmons will be asked to update on curriculum matters and the 'Raising Girls' articles will be discussed.