

## Prize Giving 2011 Speech



Mr Eagers, Mr Mason, Parents, Staff,  
Children and Friends

We have had another fantastically busy year as the School has gone from strength to strength. I would like to congratulate each and everyone one of you for participating so enthusiastically throughout the year- from the glorious May Pageant to shows, trips and academic success, all of which I will mention later in this speech.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud we are of the girls in Tops as they leave for pastures new. This Prize Giving is dedicated to each one of you and in a moment we will be hearing more about each of your successes and about the schools that you will be progressing on to.

This year, we have welcomed several new members of staff – Mr Brian O’Connell became a permanent member of staff, as Head of ICT and Design Technology, after he so successfully covered for Mrs Roles during her maternity. Miss Vicki Gasston stepped in for Mrs Baxter as she embarked on her maternity leave, Mr Phil Morton became Head of Music, Mrs Caz Patterson joined the catering team, Mrs Suzanne Warner was welcomed as the new Marketing Manager and Mr Mike Mason was appointed Chair of Governors. These new staff members have already made a significant impact in the school and I am delighted that they have chosen Bramley to further their career.

Bramley continues to excel in all academic subjects. 50% of our Tops girls who took independent school examinations gained scholarships including Sports, Drama and Art. In addition, once again, all girls obtained places in their first choice of senior schools. As in previous years, this is a record that Bramley School is proud to maintain.

Bramley also believes passionately in providing a broad all-round education and it is this that allows girls to express themselves and develop hobbies and interests which may well continue into their adult lives.

This year Mr O'Connell has introduced media technology into the School. This has meant that girls have been able to design their own websites, record adverts and create video recordings all with the newly purchased I MAC Computer.

In design technology girls have developed their practical and creative skills. Tasks this year have required woodwork and electrical skills as girls have had the opportunity to make clocks, photo frames, traffic lights and models with motors and alarms.

In Art, the girls continue to explore different mediums thanks to our specialist teacher, Miss Gilliam. This year there were 4 winners in the local art competition.

Sport has continued to thrive. Years 1 and 2 have enjoyed their newly introduced netball and rounders coaching and Years 3 to 6 have competed in a great number of matches and tournaments throughout the year. The Spring Term brought an opportunity to learn different skills in cross-country, football and pop lacrosse. Girls in Years 4 to 6 watched the Surrey Storm Netball Team play in the first match of the season in January in the Netball Superleague and our U10 netball squad took part in the annual Netball Tournament with a new combination of players from Middles and Uppers.

Gymnastics has been enhanced by the introduction of dedicated Gymnastics coaches and competitions have created exciting and tense atmospheres as girls have had to perform individually in front of large crowds. The girls in Years 3 and 4 were runners up in the most recent competition.

Music, under the direction of Mr Morton, continues to grow. We are now able to offer a wide variety of instrumental lessons. In addition to violin, guitar, clarinet, flute and piano we can offer cello, electric violin, viola and ukulele. Our instrumental concert in the Spring term was a great success and girls in the Prep part of the school gave a confident performance of John Rutter's "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" at the Reigate and Redhill Music Festival. Other musical annuals have included the harvest assembly to Senior Citizens and the Christmas Carol Concert. This year we were delighted in the creation of a School Orchestra and many of you will remember their performance of Handel's "Themes from Water Music" in the Spring Term

Our drama productions this year have been outstanding. For Little Bramley and Reception there was Handa's Surprise and the Little Red Hen while Years 1 and 2 performed The Little Fir Tree and will be performing Roald Dahl's Little Red Riding Hood towards the end of this term. Meanwhile, Years 3 to 6 are in the throws of rehearsals for Romeo and Juliet. Tops entertained their parents in their Tops Soiree in March with various acts, many written and directed by themselves.

Speech and Drama continues to be a popular activity of choice and girls from Years 1 upwards elect to take lessons with Mrs Phillips. From Year 2 upwards, girls have sat LAMDA examinations in up to 15 disciplines. Girls in Tops have reached Grade 3, a level usually tackled in Senior School.

The Bramley Ballet and Tap Show was a particular highlight of the year. Through ballet, the girls told the story of the Wizard of Oz. Tops and Uppers played the lead roles with Reception to Year 4 dancing as chickens in the farmyard, the rainbow, crows, munchkins, poppies and, of course, the Emerald City. Meanwhile, the tap classes performed numbers from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street ending in a grand finale with all tappers on stage dancing together to Lullaby of Broadway.

The girls in Little Bramley and Reception were incredibly happy to welcome their fathers into school in May for a Father & Daughter Morning. Dads joined in with various activities decorating biscuits, painting photograph frames and playing outside and I understand the drawing and writing in shaving foam was a particular hit with them!, Well done to all the dads for taking part!

Our residential trips have been hugely successful this year with Years 2 and 3 at Juniper Hall and Years 4 to 6 going to the Isle of Wight. And, as ever, our school visits have been wide-ranging and encompassing, providing all sorts of different experiences. They have included theatre and farm visits, environmental days, a visit to Hampton Court Palace, the British Museum and RHS Wisley, taking part in the Junior Citizen Day at the TS Ark Royal in Redhill and a visit to a Hindu Mandir.

Not forgetting our commitment to the environment – Bramley took part in The Big Tree Plant in February and we are now watching with interest a number of new trees in our gardens as they begin to grow and we nurture them. The school continues to work towards the Eco Silver Award.

The May Pageant was bathed in glorious sunshine and the procession was particularly colourful, identifying the many musicals of the West End. Our thanks go to Mr Morton and the girls who sang a medley of Abba songs and, of course, the talented Miss Johnson's solo performance of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" and a version of Adele's song "Make you feel my love".

Bramley Open Mornings have taken on a whole new look as we have welcomed more prospective families than ever before. A number of Old Girls have also taken the opportunity to come back and visit us during the Mornings and it has been wonderful to catch up with them and share memories with them.

At this point, I would also like to thank our parents without whom Bramley would not be able to offer as much as it does. Parents give tirelessly and contribute a great many things helping to make our curriculum as wide-ranging as possible. Thank you to those who help in classrooms and on school visits, thank you to parents who have established and run new clubs such as cross-country, pet care and cookery club, thank you to parents who have helped the girls with our fundraising efforts. Our cupcake competition and sale, in aid of Comic Relief, was a fantastic success and raised just over £400.

And the help our parents give us doesn't stop there. The Friends of Bramley are a wonderful testament to the Bramley spirit with numerous events such as the curry quiz, the Christmas fair, the nearly new uniform sale, the Bramley Golf Day and the Spring Ball whilst also running coffee mornings throughout the year. Their fundraising efforts are much appreciated – This year the FOB have provided the money for a number of resources including items to further enhance the Little Bramley and Reception outdoor learning area and, of course, the climbing wall has been is a huge hit!

Our parents are a vital part of the lifeblood of Bramley but, of course, our staff are central to our success. I would like to thank all the staff at Bramley for their outstanding commitment and passion for the education of each and every girl. I never fail to be impressed by the staff's energy and ability to stretch themselves and to go that extra mile, which I see, time and time again.

This year we say goodbye to three staff members who have made a significant impact on the lives of so many girls whilst they have been here at Bramley.

Mrs Kathryn Thompson, Head of Mathematics, will be retiring at the end of this summer term. Mrs Thompson started teaching at Bramley in January 1988 and has led the learning and teaching of mathematics throughout the school for nearly 24 years. Mrs Thompson has been

meticulous in her planning of Mathematics; she has been an outstanding teacher and has ensured that every girl has achieved their very best. Senior schools have always commented on how well prepared Bramley girls are for their entrance and scholarship examinations. Over the years, Mrs Thompson has organised Mathematic Weeks, arranged school visits and has overseen many a scoreboard for Sports Day. In addition to all of these responsibilities, Mrs Thompson has been a dedicated form teacher and mentor.

Mrs Rosalie Taylor will be retiring at the end of this summer term. Mrs Taylor started teaching at Bramley in 1985 and was initially appointed Head of PE which she taught to all year groups within the school. Latterly, Mrs Taylor undertook specific training as a SENCO (special needs teacher) and has supported girls with specific learning needs in a way that has helped them to reach their full potential. We have been very grateful to Mrs Taylor as she has always fully supported school functions including residential visits which could not have taken place without her. Mrs Taylor has combined her SENCO role with netball and rounders coaching and has arranged and accompanied many a girl to matches and tournaments. Her skills will be sorely missed.

Miss Gasston Has been with the school for only a year but what an impact she has made! She has ably taken on the role as Acting Head of PE whilst Mrs Baxter took her maternity leave. As well as doing a terrific job, Miss Gasston has introduced us all to the art of KuK Sool Won! For those who don't know what that is it is a traditional Korean Martial Art, in which she is a Black Belt instructor. And boy do you not mess with Miss Gasston! Recently Miss Gasston made a name for herself with victory at the recent Spanish Martial Arts Competition. She won three Golds and three Silvers. Meanwhile, in the European Championships at Kings Lynn in Norfolk in June, Miss Gaston won three Golds and one Silver and her club, Barker Martial Arts, was ranked third in the whole of Europe. Some of you will already know that Miss Gaston is the reigning World Champion in Kuk Sool Won after winning the title in America last year.

We are very honoured that Miss Gasston will be continuing to coach Year 3 and 4 netball. And we wish her the greatest of luck in her new business venture.

Finally, Mrs Anne Morrell retired as our Chair of Governors earlier in the year. Anne Morrell served on the Bramley Board of Governors for 15 years, seven of these as Chair of Governors. As an educator herself, Anne and I worked very closely together and I feel indebted to her, and I would like to thank her, for all of the support that she has given me in my role as Headmistress.

As we have said goodbye to several members of staff, so we will also welcome new ones to Bramley.

Hello to Mrs Baxter returning from Maternity leave it is lovely to have you back at Bramley.

In September we will be welcoming Mrs Elaine Crawford who will become our Humanities Teacher and SENCO/Head of Special Needs. Mrs Crawford is recognised by Ofsted as an outstanding teacher and has considerable experience in managing pupils with specific learning needs. We are delighted that she has chosen Bramley School to continue her career.

Mrs Jane Blake, who many of you know as Head of Humanities and Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning, is taking over the Head of Mathematics post from September. Mrs Blake has 24 years experience teaching mathematics to all year groups and has spent many of these preparing girls for all forms of senior school examinations. Mrs Blake will continue to teach Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning in September and will become a full time member of staff.

September will see a number of new initiatives such as Breakfast Club, Late Provision Club and there are plans for the introduction of a

Toddler Group. We are looking forward to these initiatives and we hope that you will be able to fully support them all.

We have embraced new challenges this year – we have entered into the world of social networking. We now have our very own Facebook page and our own Twitter account. Impress your girls and tune in for the latest news! Also this year we have seen the development of our new-look half termly newsletter, *The Bramley Blog*.

2011 has been an exciting and rewarding one that has seen the girls experience all sorts of new challenges. Every day I count myself lucky to be involved with such fantastic pupils and school. We are a small and dynamic community where our primary aim is to develop in the girls, enquiring minds, a love of learning and a confidence that will allow them to believe in themselves and reach for the stars. Thank you Tops for being part of such a noteworthy year. This is your special leavers' day. I very much hope that you will continue to stay in touch with us here at Bramley, remember us fondly and help spread the word about how special Bramley truly is.

Mrs Paula Burgess  
Headmistress

July 2011