



16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Re: They are singing, 'deck the halls!'

Dear Parents,

What is your favourite Christmas song?

The keen-eared audiologists among you will have twigged from my title above that, for me, it is the bittersweet Phil Spector-produced anthem 'Christmas (Baby, Please Come Home)' by the divine Darlene Love. Whatever your favourite tune is (I hope it is not Wham!) I trust that you have it playing in the background as you decorate your tree and, quite possibly, your house and garden. I have been heartened these last weeks to see Pitsford and lots of other local towns and villages don their Christmas coats of lights and tinsel as we get to the end of a year that we will all remember as a tough one, and say goodbye to it with a smile and a determination to accentuate the positive.

Nonetheless, were I am gambling man (heaven forfend), I would have put money on us not making the end of this year as well as we have. New variants of coronavirus, profound supply-chain issues, rampant inflation: we have had so many obstacles thrown in our paths. I am amazed that we have dodged them as well as we have and that we can now look back with so much satisfaction on a unique year well-spent and seen off with no little aplomb. As I never tire of saying, Charles Darwin could have been talking about Pitsford School when he said the small, intelligent animals which can adapt to different environments are the ones who will win the game of evolution. The staff and children of this wonderful school have moxy aplenty and have triumphed in the face of adversities that have felled many others: it has not been easy but then what thing of value and beauty is ever easy?

These last weeks of this long year have been an unalloyed triumph: the charming Nativity and the outstanding Panto in the Junior School were wonderful, the al fresco Christmas Concert was a breath of fresh air both literal and figurative and I was – as always – bowled over by the quality of performance and singing (not least Julian Harris's hidden Easter Egg piano piece as we packed up – wowzer), and the final days in school were a winning admixture of fun and learning. The Pitsford Run was excellent and I was pleased to see so many of you there to cheer on the boys and girls as they ran in disappointingly clement conditions. I am writing before our Omicron-enforced carols round the tree which ends the term, but I am confident that they will be wonderful.

Nonetheless it has been a year of years and we all deserve a massive break and I hope that you all get unplugged from stress and plugged into fun. Before that though, let me give you some updates and news:

### Hellos and goodbyes

As this term ends we bid *adios* to Mrs Whiting (who I told you about earlier this term). In January, into her position as Head of Computer Science, we welcome Mr Rizvi: a fond farewell and a warm welcome respectively. We also say *ciao* to Mrs Arroyo who leaves her position as a Spanish teacher for pastures new. She is being replaced by Mrs Clark, an experienced and dynamic teacher who, despite her Anglo-Saxon surname, is a proud Madrileña. Earlier this term Mrs Newton left her position as Arts Technician and we are

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# PitsfordSchool

delighted to have appointed Miss Watkins who as well as becoming Art Technician is a working artist herself and this will help us develop further what is already a vibrant department in school.

We also say *Auf Wiedersehen* to Mrs Townsend as Mrs Drakeford makes her long-awaited return in January. I am most grateful to Mrs Townsend who stepped in to help us at the last minute for what was expected to be a term and then was able to rearrange her schedule over and over as we needed more time from her, always with the same good grace and positivity.

On the subject of Mrs Drakeford, she intends to retire in August, which is well-earned and well-deserved and about which we will do a great deal more in the new year. We undertook an extensive recruitment process, had a most impressive field of candidates, and after rigorous interviewing I am delighted that this resulted in our own Mrs Cowling being appointed as the next Head of Biology from September 2022; she will do a fantastic job.

Connected to these changes, I am pleased that from September 2022 we will add Computer Science (delivered by Mr Rizvi) and Psychology (delivered by Mrs Cowling) to the A level curriculum, as that gives our current year 11s and new students joining us for Sixth Form an even richer board of fayre from which to choose. Exciting times and I will write to the year 11 students about this in the new year.

Finally, as I mentioned a month or so ago, Mrs Pacheco, our previous Head of Marketing, has moved on and I am pleased as Punch to welcome to the team Mr Nash as our new Head of Marketing: he is currently at Northampton High School and I am sure that he will be a great success here at Pitsford.

## Fun fund-raising

As we get to the end of term I must take a moment to let you know that Jake Pearce and Joel Houghton (and their team of Sixth Form grocers) have raised over £1,000 through their after-school tuck shop. What an extraordinary achievement and a superb example of what Pitsford does best, namely allowing great young men and women to deploy their talents and enthusiasms to make a difference. The boys have sourced items to sell, do their own accounts (which are then checked by the Finance Department) and even have a debit card reader - such sophistication! The money that they have raised will go to Prostate Cancer UK and I am exceptionally impressed by this initiative, how well it was implemented and how great an impact it has had. Wonderful work and well done!

## Dates

For your calendars, God willing, we will all meet again on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January. Let's not think of that right now but it will be upon us before we know it.

And let us leave it there, draw close to the fire, pour a pint of eggnog (no idea what that is or even if it is a thing), have a plateful of steaming figgy pudding (?) and have a wonderful and safe break. I hope you enjoy the new Spiderman film and we will speak again on the other side,

CG Walker

PS here is the divine Ms Love: [Darlene Love - Christmas \(Baby Please Come Home\) \(Official Music Video\) - YouTube](#)



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