

HEADMASTER POINTS TO RESULTS OF THIS SUMMER'S CAMPAIGN AS A 'TASTE OF THINGS TO COME'

**Parents' money answered desperate plea for
help as school numbers exceeded planned
provision.**

**'PARENTS HAVING TO DIG DEEPER
TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS'**

**'HARPENDEN SCHOOL'S PROJECT ENTIRELY
SUPPORTED BY PARENT'S HELP'**

**New Sixth Form building and state of art Music Centre
done 'in-house'**

**No government finance to support inevitable
impact of school's expansion.**

Leaders of the Parent Staff Association saw for themselves the pressure that huge sixth form numbers were creating at St George's as they joined students on the first day of use of the new study facilities - provided as a result of parents' hard work and generosity this summer.

Since June 1st parents led by the Development Director Pam Bainbridge have raised £77,000 to refit the Sixth Form area with 90 study spaces, 55 new computers and a redesigned and larger Café.

£38,000 was also provided to relocate the Music department and equip it with Apple Mac computers and new recording studio.

Enjoying the attractive menu in the Sixth Form café during break and lunchtimes parents were impressed with the healthy eating approach.

PSA member Sue Clarke of Harpenden has two boys at St George's and is delighted to think that in a few years time her children would benefit from these super facilities " like many parents we supported this campaign as we want present and future students to have the best places to study, access to computers and the Internet and quiet rooms for serious work"

Headmaster Norman Hoare explained that there was no funding from local or national government to help their sixth form provision.

- *" It is frustrating that having warned that the increase in pupil numbers lower down the school over the last five years would have a significant impact on entry to our already oversubscribed sixth form, no one was prepared to listen and indeed turned a blind eye to our arguments.*
- *We have had to raise all the money ourselves, with our Foundation doing the building work for the two part project and our Summer Gifting Appeal bringing in enough cash to fit out not only the Sixth Form area but the new Music Centre.*
- *This is I regret to have say once again, **is a taste of what is to come.***
- *There will be very little available to help any schools to met the unprecedented demand for additional school places especially at the senior end.*
- *We know that Hertfordshire faces an explosion in demand for primary places but secondary schools are also under immense pressure and despite warnings from Governing bodies for some years of the consequences of expansion at secondary transfer stage, no one seems to accept that **the bulge moves through an 11-18 school.***
- *on top of this the economic situation encourages more to stay on and the last government made education to 17 compulsory anyway – without thinking through the long term financial needs of such a policy.*
- *We are not alone in facing this predicament. All good secondaries are wondering how and where they can accommodate these senior students who want to stay on and study."*

At St George's Parental contributions have flowed in since June, with the PSA making a £25,000 grant to the project with the profits of last year's events, including the annual School fete which provided over £10,000.

Development Officer Pam Bainbridge who led the Summer Gifting Campaign is delighted with the response.

- *“ Parents understood we were desperate and have continued to support us with cash donations and pledges, most of which attract Gift Aid and have swelled the coffers.*
- *Music got everything it wanted for its new centre which has state of the art recording facilities and fantastic new music studios and new offices in the converted Goddard House on the edge of the school site.*
- *This meant we can double the space for our 375 sixth formers and although we haven't got enough space yet, it was the best we could do and the impact of this provision is amazing.”*

St George's expanded to six forms of entry five years ago in response to community demand and as the extra 30 pupils have moved through the school most of these have stayed on into the sixth form.

The sixth form offers over 20 courses at AS and A level and competition for places for new students is fierce.

*“Whilst the Foundation's work and Parents support has been invaluable we have not really cracked the real problem at St George's” **commented the Headmaster.** “The school remains short of specialist accommodation and such basic provision as a decent size dining room and wider corridors to let the 1300 pupils move around safely and quickly.*

Every 50 minutes at lesson change we realise that most of the school was built for half of this number and circulation and social space is woefully inadequate.

All we seem to do is relieve pressure point after pressure point, but that is the reality of the current situation and this will remain for the foreseeable future. I really don't know what we would do with the Herculean efforts of the Development Office to improve our lot and our parents who are behind us all the way.”

[Photos show parent representatives touring enjoying new Sixth form Café at St George's and general shots of study areas]