



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



From the Headmaster

21 October 2016

Dear Parents

Autumn half term Newsletter October 2016

This half term has come upon us extremely quickly and I thought, as is customary at this time of the year, to update you with some news from school which I hope you will find of use. The school is now larger than at any other time with 920 students on roll; it is good to know that many students can benefit from an education at RGS.

The **new staff** have all settled very well and I am delighted with their contribution. There will be little change in the coming half term up to Christmas although Mrs Morpeth, teacher of music, will be going on maternity leave at some stage in November; a replacement for her is being sought.

The **Parent Governor elections** are now underway. There were four candidates and I am grateful to them for putting themselves forward for this very important role. A reminder that the deadline for your vote is **1pm on Monday, 31 October 2016** so if you have not yet voted and wish to do so there is still time to return the paperwork to school. An envelope with full details was sent home to each family on Friday, 7 October and all details are also on the school website.

The second half of term promises to be a very busy one with some excellent school events, including House drama, Speech Day and the Carol Service at Ripon Cathedral. I am particularly looking forward to **Speech Day** when our guest speaker will be Bridget Kendall, MBE, former diplomatic correspondent for the BBC and currently Master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge. Her father, Professor Kendall, is an Old Riponian and an eminent mathematician and statistician, having taught at Cambridge University. I am sure Ms Kendall will have much to say and will inspire our prize-winners. This event is open to parents of the current lower sixth, including students who have joined us from other schools. In addition, all parents of last year's upper sixth have been invited. If you have not yet responded, could you please do so by Friday, 4 November to Mrs Kinread at kinreadc@ripongrammar.co.uk

We have just enjoyed a very successful **Charity Week** when money was raised for 'Brace', an Alzheimer's charity chosen by the students. The many activities, including the staff panto, obstacle course and various panel shows, proved very popular with the students and I hope that a substantial amount of money will be raised for this very worthy cause. As soon as the total is finalised I will let you know.

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The **UCAS** season is still in full swing and those students who needed to meet the early deadline to apply for medicine, veterinary science or courses at Oxford and Cambridge have all been sent off. The quality of the applications was superb and I hope that the students will be successful in receiving offers at very sought-after universities.

Details of the **third form entrance tests for entry in September 2017** are now finalised, with the tests being held on Saturday, 4 February 2017 and the deadline for applying for a place being Friday, 27 January. All details are on the school website if you know of anyone who is interested in applying or, indeed, as parents you may have siblings at other schools who may wish to sit the test. There are nine places for day students and four for boarding students.

The **World Challenge to Ecuador in July 2018** is proving extremely popular, with a very high level of interest following the great success of the previous trip to Malaysia and Borneo. I am very pleased that a number of staff are showing interest in accompanying the students and clearly there will be much fund-raising taking place over the next couple of years in preparation for this.

It has been an extremely busy half term for **sport**. The U14, U16 and U18 girls' **hockey** teams all qualified for the County round of the National Schools competition. The U14 and U16 teams qualified as winners while the U18s were runners up.

As I write, the U18 **hockey** team acquitted themselves extremely well, beating several independent schools in the County finals. All the matches were very close but unfortunately they did not progress to the next round. The U16 and U14 teams have both qualified for the North East semi-finals. The U16s are county champions having beaten St Peter's in the final while the U14s lost out on penalty flicks to St Peter's in the final and thus qualify as beaten finalists. Lucy Williams and Ben Pimley have been selected for the U17 North of England squad, girls' and boys' teams respectively, so will be attending the England Hockey High Performance Assessment Camp over half term. The U16s are both Area and County champions and have also had some very impressive wins against other schools, including a 6-0 win against Royal Grammar School, Newcastle.

Well done to the **cross-country squad**; the junior girls, inter girls and inter boys have all qualified for the regional finals in November. There were some excellent individual runs, the highlights of which were Mena Scatchard, 2nd, Ella Foster, 4th and Robbie Eames, 5th.

The third and fifth form boys' **tennis teams** competed in the regional finals of the Aegon National tennis tournament, with the fifth form boys finishing second and the third form boys finishing in third place; an excellent achievement by both teams.

The U12 **netball** team got off to a flying start by winning the first round of the National Schools' Knockout competition, albeit by just one goal. The girls will be sporting a brand new strip, provided by Mrs Hartas of Ripon Uniform Shop, in the next round. The U13s defeated Queen Ethelburga's in the first round and Queen Mary's in the second round of the same competition. Jessica Merrin and Amy Mackenzie, both in the fifth form, were successful at regional netball trials, with Jess being selected for Regional Academy 2 and Amy for the Regional Performance Academy. Amy has been invited to attend National Screening during half term. RGS is fielding a senior netball team for the first time in years and we hope that the squad will progress beyond the area, and even the County round of the schools' competition.

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In **rugby**, the first years have won six matches, drawn one and lost one in the White Rose Series so far, as well as a 8-2 home win vs Ilkley Grammar School. Whilst the second years beat Horsforth 6-0, and have won five but lost three matches in their White Rose Series fixtures so far. The third years have already secured progress into the second round of the Yorkshire Cup after beating the Hayfield School followed up by some excellent results at their White Rose Series matches. The fourth years have won three matches and lost one of their White Rose series games. They play their first round Yorkshire Cup game this week, whilst they are through to the second round of the NatWest Plate after a convincing away win to Wickersley.

The 1st team **football** have had a tough start exiting the national cup at the first hurdle against Harrogate Grammar; the team will get a chance for redemption against the same opposition in the county cup this coming week. The highlight so far has been a 4-2 win over Ermysted's. The U15 football team beat Queen Ethelburga's 5-0 in the County cup. U12, U13 and U14 football have all made positive starts to the season too. The **swimming** team secured a comfortable win over Harrogate Ladies' College. Well done to each and every student who has represented the school this half term.

Emma Beaumont's **artwork**, 'Gare Du Nord', has been selected for exhibition at the Royal Society of British Artists/NADFAS exhibition in London; a very prestigious award and well-deserved. My thanks to our local NADFAS for submitting the work for consideration.

I hope that the parents who attended the '**internet safety**' presentation given by Mrs Sarah Lynch found it very useful. It highlighted all the potential areas of mis-use of mobile 'phones by teenagers which can cause issues both in and out of school. If you were unable to come to the presentation, the link to her website is Go Wise Online, www.gowiseonline.co.uk or www.facebook.com/gowiseonline. One of the issues raised was regarding teenagers checking their mobiles in the middle of the night. A recent poll suggests that around 45% of young people check their 'phones after they have gone to bed. As a boarding school, this is something of which we are aware and in accordance with good practice 'phones are kept overnight by staff to minimise sleep disruption. This means that the temptation to use them is removed and the students get a good night's sleep, which is extremely important. I am sure teenagers will be very reluctant to give up their 'phones before they go to bed but the survey suggests that this would be very good practice for families to follow.

The **music department** has got off to a busy and energetic start this term. Their first engagement was for the newly formed Jazz Trio to play at the Harvest festival in Ripon Cathedral on 3 October. A week later all choirs and ensembles performed in the Autumn Concert which provided a platform for them to share the music they had been rehearsing for the past five weeks. On 12 October, all the senior choirs joined choirs from other local schools in a service for the Royal School of Church Music at Ripon Cathedral; in each case they performed exceedingly well. What the students have accomplished in such a short space of time is astounding and a credit to their hard work and dedication. All eyes and ears now turn to an even busier half term: Chamber Choir will be singing choral evensong on 31 October, our students will take part in the RnB factor and of course the gradual build up to Christmas will keep all our musicians busy! All the details can be found on the school website.

I feel it is important to let families know that the **school budget** for the current financial year is incredibly tight. The surplus which remains for re-investment is somewhat diminished and continued cuts to education budgets in the next year or two will continue to put incredible pressure on schools. I would like to reassure you that the financial oversight of the school is taken extremely seriously and every effort is being made to save money

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where possible. The introduction of a national funding formula, which would be extremely beneficial to RGS, has been delayed for another year. Potential levies on school budgets to fund the national apprenticeship schemes mean that much needed funds are being taken from school budgets. In addition, pension holes in both teachers' and support staff pension pots are being plugged by removing money from school budgets. I feel it is very important to ensure that all children receive the same high quality education, irrespective of the prevailing financial climate, when they attend RGS. I have written to all parents who contribute to the **Activities Fund** to thank them and to whom I am immensely grateful. This funding provides much needed resources to enable the wide range of extra-curricular activities to flourish. I hope that if you are not currently contributing to the Activities Fund, you will consider doing so. A donation of £5 or £10 per month will make a significant difference if many more parents contribute. The form is available on the school website and I would appreciate it if you could give serious consideration to contributing towards it. It can be downloaded and returned to school.

A planning wrangle has delayed the **3G pitch** but it is still progressing and this planning issue can be resolved successfully, I am sure.

The Ripon Grammar School Ball Committee are delighted to announce that tickets for the **Ripon Grammar School Masked Ball 2017** are now available to order. This is without doubt the highlight of the Ripon Grammar School social calendar this academic year and is definitely not to be missed. This will be held **on Saturday, 24 June 2017** and will be a magnificent event, bringing together the whole of the Ripon Grammar School community; parents, teachers and governors in celebration of another amazing year. During the evening we are hoping to raise a significant amount of money to support the school and the education of our children which extends way beyond the classroom. It is very important to stress that it is simply enough to support your school and the evening by buying a ticket and joining in. Please book a ticket, come along and support the evening; everyone will be delighted to see you there, along with the other 250-300 guests! Tickets cost £55 and can be reserved with a deposit or bought via parentpay. Please contact paball2017@hotmail.com for further information or to reserve your table.

The last week has been very busy with a visit to the school by **BBC Channel 5 Live national radio**, following the possible expansion of selection nationally. I think the staff, parents, governors and students did very well on live radio and gave a wonderful impression of Ripon Grammar School. The podcast is on i-player for a time if you have not yet heard it.

I hope that you are able to enjoy half term and I look forward to seeing you soon, perhaps at Speech Day or at our Carol Service.

With best wishes

M L Pearman
Headmaster

Forthcoming dates: ...

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Forthcoming dates for your diary:

Monday, 31 October	School opens at 8.45am
Tuesday, 1 November	U6 parents' evening 4.30pm
Monday, 7 November	L6 parents' evening
Thurs – Sun, 10-13 Nov	Art trip to Paris
Wed, 16 November	Medical mini interviews – L6 and U6
Thurs, 17 November	House drama 7pm
Fri, 18 November	L6 practice interviews
Fri, 18 November	House drama 7pm
Mon – Fri, 21-25 Nov	Fourth year tests
Mon – Tues, 21-22 Nov	L6 reviews
Friday, 25 November	Speech Day 2pm. Bridget Kendall, MBE
Tues, 29 November	North Country Theatre
Wed, 30 November	Fifth form parents' evening 4.30pm
Friday, 2 December	L6 practice interviews
Saturday, 3 December	PA Christmas Fair
Thurs - Sun, 8-11 Dec	U6 trip to Berlin
Friday, 9 December	L6 practice interviews
Tues, 13 December	Christmas concert
Wed, 14 December	Carol Service in Ripon Cathedral 7.30pm
Friday, 16 December	School closes at 3.55pm for Christmas holiday
Saturday, 17 December	Old Riponians' Day
Tuesday, 3 January	School opens at 8.45am

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