



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



12 April 2019

Dear Parents

I spoke this morning in assembly on the importance of monuments since next Thursday is National Monument Day. My point was that the monuments society builds can often be seen as reflections of itself; that monuments matter, but, like history, monuments often suffer the same fate of re-appraisal. The exposure of folly and the decline of deference perhaps means fewer people are willing to erect monuments to others, or are more willing to challenge the monuments of the past, much like the war memorials of the 1920s spoke of the futility of war. I wished all the students a happy Easter and that wherever they travelled, if they saw a monument, they reflect on its value and the message it was seeking to instil.

When students return after Easter they will, I hope, see clear progress on our own new 'monument to sport' - the 3G pitch. For some it may be little interest, but I am sure for many and for generations to come, it will be a much-used facility for the school and will also serve to connect the school further with the local community. The first assembly back will include a short introduction on the project from me, and an important safety briefing from Mr Hogg, our Premises Manager.

This term has been a typically busy one and I do hope you have found the monthly edition of RGS News a useful and accessible way to keep up to date with the school. There have been too many individual student success stories for me to mention here. However, on a sporting front there have been some notable successes with the boys' rugby teams finishing Yorkshire Cup Winners at both U16 and U18. The U18 boys' rugby won the Austin Friars 7s competition whilst they were runners up in the inaugural Ripon Grammar School 7s tournament as we said goodbye to the U6th students as well as the memorial field pitches in their current locations. What has also been wonderful is that 70% of our boys across the year groups have represented the school in sport at some stage this year. In girls' sport, the U18 girls became State Boarding School netball national champions - to add to our titles in rugby and hockey last term. There was also a huge amount of success in individual sports but one to mention is the success of our girls swimming team who had a very successful season and now look forward to the finals of the Leeds and District Championships – hopefully looking to go one better than last year and bring home the trophy. Looking ahead to next term some points to note include our entry into the national cricket cup for U15 girls and in athletics we have high hopes for a number of individuals who will hopefully go on to run at the nationals in July, whilst there will be a number of opportunities to compete in the area and district competitions.

From a house perspective, there have been some real developments, ably supported by the new Head of House School Officers. Next term's house cricket and sports day will prove to be key events. However, this term our inaugural House Singing was a tremendous success with Porteus winning both part and whole house songs, narrowly pipping Hutton in a tense

Headmaster: Mr. Jonathan M. Webb, MA (Cantab).

Address: Clothierholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DG Telephone: (01765) 602647 Facsimile: (01765) 606388

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'sing off' between renditions of songs by *Take That* and *Bon Jovi*. It could almost have been choreographed to thrill! This term also had as its highlights a wonderful spring concert held at Holy Trinity with Haydn's Nelson Mass the highlight, while earlier in the term the school production of *Pygmalion* was an extraordinary display of acting ability with Emma Belward and Harry Edwards in the starring roles.

Turning to staff appointments the news is always bitter sweet. Mrs Southwell will be retiring in August having joined RGS in 2006 as a teacher of Business Studies and Economics. More recently, she has worked as the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator [SENCO]. Her knowledge, patience and absolute professionalism will be greatly missed. In her place, we have appointed Mrs Patricia Etherington who is currently the SENCO at Greenfield Community College Darlington. Mr Seymour who will also depart us at the end of this year to take up his new post as Director Music at Ampleforth College. Mr Seymour has worked tirelessly since he arrived in 2014 to raise the profile of music at the school. Of particular note has been his work with the choral ensembles. Even tonight, the chamber choir will be singing evensong in Durham Cathedral, which is wonderful opportunity and achievement. In Mr Seymour's place, Mr Michael Barker will take up the post in September. He is currently Head of Music at King James' School, Knaresborough. Finally, Mrs Garmory will be departing the Art department at the end of next term too. She will also be greatly missed and her teaching is always held in the highest regard. We are in the process of appointing her successor. We will be bidding farewell to all our leaving staff at the end of next term in the usual manner but I know they will all be greatly missed by both their colleagues and students alike, such has been their impact on the life of the school.

The term has also been a key one academically. Our examination years have all completed their mock examinations and will no doubt be reflecting on their work to date and revising hard over the Easter break. I wish them all the very best of success this summer and do hope aspirations are fulfilled, or even surpassed, in August. This year has also been very successful from a university application perspective with many of our students now having chosen their university of choice. This year was also a record one for competitive course applications with currently 12 of our students with offers from Oxford and Cambridge. In addition, and so far, 10 students have offers at medical school, 4 have been successful in securing a place for veterinary medicine and 3 hold offers for dentistry. As always, I would stress that whichever path a student takes, it is a great success if it fulfils their dreams. The list of courses is typically and wonderfully diverse, from primary teaching to American and Canadian Studies, from Music Song Writing to Fashion Management, from Liberal Arts to Aerospace Engineering, from Nursing to Marine Biology.

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Finally and once again, can I take this opportunity to thank the support that parents give and the time and effort the teaching and non-teaching staff put in to make RGS such a strong and supportive, and I hope, happy community.

All of us here, in whatever role we play, have a single-minded focus to advance the personal development of our students.

With best wishes for Easter and a happy break.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

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