



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



From the Headmaster

8 September 2017

Dear Parents

On Monday morning I was keen to test the School's motto 'Giorne ymb lare y diowatdomas' and so headed down to the school gates to welcome the students. I have to confess that I struggled to assess their capacity to seek after righteousness. Eager to learn? Well perhaps it was too soon in the morning and too immediate to, what I hope has been, a relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday for you and your sons and daughters. Term has indeed started apace and as I write this Friday morning, it seems for many as if the holidays were perhaps a mirage conjured by the imagination.

First, I would like to congratulate all those students involved in public examinations this summer. At 78.6% the A*-B rate at A Level was the second best in the School's history. Remarkably over 55% of those grades were at A*-A. It was particularly pleasing to know that the vast majority of our leavers were able to secure a place at their first choice of university with just under 80% being placed at prestigious Russell Group universities. Of those, Jonathan Tanner, Ross Sullivan, Emily Evans, Katie Veitch and Francesca Haldane secured places at Oxford and Cambridge. In addition 8 students will be starting courses in medicine, 5 in veterinary medicine and 1 in dentistry. I would like to thank all staff involved in working with last year's Upper Sixth to secure such excellent results and in particular Mr Fell and the Sixth Form team for working so closely to support them through the UCAS process as well as providing advice and support for those who chose alternative pathways.

At GCSE results were also very pleasing with 64% of grades at either A*-A or 9-7 under the new assessment system. At a time of considerable change in both content and assessment, the students clearly took the new qualifications in Mathematics, English Language and Literature in their stride. Well done in particular to the nine students who achieved straight 9s in those three subjects. They join a select group of only two thousand students nationally to achieve that feat.

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This term it has been good to see how quickly the new First Year has settled in to the wider Ripon Grammar School family. I am looking forward to joining them in tutor time over the next few weeks to get to know them better.

We also welcome 45 new students into Year 12 which make that year the largest in the School's history at just short of 160. It has also been pleasing to hear from Mrs Addis and Mrs Sanderson how quickly our boarders have settled into the rhythms of boarding school life. I am looking forward to having tea with the boarders over the next couple of weeks. On Wednesday I also had the great pleasure to meet the 7 school officers and, amongst other things, hear of their plans for charity week. They do seem a remarkable group of lively and enthusiastic individuals and undoubtedly a great asset to the School.

Aside from the rigours of academic study it is clear from the long list of notices read this week in assembly that the wider co-curricular life of the School, has begun in earnest. Already auditions are under way for house drama, debating begins and a large array of musical groups and ensembles are starting.

In assembly this week we heard an experimental musical composition, Pachelbel's polyphonic masterpiece - the Canon in D - and Mr Auger entertained us with Bing Crosby's 'Busy Doing Nothing' as he then went on to discuss the importance of finding time for quiet reflection rather than just obey the modern mantra of always trying to appear busy. My message to the School on Monday was on the importance of *Commitment*, not just in terms of academic study, but perhaps, more importantly, the commitment we make on an ethical and personal level to ourselves and to others. While resolutions at New Year might be broken for being too ambitious or impractical, my concern was that students should focus on the little acts of kindness and respect for each other which together builds a great community. A new academic year marks just such an appropriate starting point.

I hope you all have a happy weekend.

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

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