



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

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Spring Term Newsletter 2016

Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you well and, as ever, there is much to update you with. The RGS News will convey many of the highlights but I hope this letter will supplement it.

The major news has come from the budget given by George Osborne earlier this month which has declared that all maintained schools must become **academies** by 2020-2022. Myself and the governors have been aware of this impending forced academisation programme for some time, and much thought has already been given to what this means for Ripon Grammar School. It is vital that the eventual conversion to academy status is carefully considered and managed well to ensure that students come first. We will keep parents fully informed of future plans.

The Spring term has been an intense and busy one; as ever, **mock examinations** for the fifth, lower sixth and upper sixth took place with a change in timing for the upper sixth to allow more of the syllabus to be covered (after half term). This initiative appears to have been successful, both from a staff and student perspective. There has been some urgency required to get the upper sixth reports finished by the end of this term so that they can guide the students during their remaining time at school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes at A-level. Monitoring the outcomes in the summer at this particular stage suggests bright outcomes at A2, AS and GCSE. Both staff and students are working hard and there is a plethora of revision sessions and support available. Provided students do their very best and are proud of their achievements then we can ask no more of them. Unfortunately, we will need to wait until August for the outcomes, remarks permitting!

The upper sixth are doing particularly well regarding university offers. Seven students received **Oxbridge offers**, which are as follows:

OXFORD: Flo Hall, History, Lady Margaret Hall and Jess Rutherford, Theology, Lady Margaret Hall.

CAMBRIDGE: James Donaldson, Natural Science, Clare; Ryan Wood, Mathematics, St Catharine's; Max Vesty, Veterinary Science, Gonville & Caius; Annabelle Blyton, Architecture, Gonville & Caius and Alfie Ashton, Law, Gonville & Caius.

Both medics and vets have been successful although, as I write, outcomes are still being waited upon, particularly for medics. Some students are in a great position with many offers to consider; a few medics have received a few rejections and are waiting for the deadline to hear the final outcome. As ever, Mr Fell and his team will support all students and I hope that when the closing date for UCAS is reached, all students will be clear about the next stage of their careers. I am very grateful to Mrs Wilson and Mrs Locke for the excellent support afforded to students who are considering going straight into

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employment or into an apprenticeship. Matthew Ford applied for several apprenticeships with leading IT firms such as IBM and Capgemini, British Telecom and the Civil Service. He was one of only 12 students nationally to be considered for the IBM apprenticeship but was unsuccessful; however, he learnt much from the experience.

I am very pleased that planning permission has been submitted for the **3G pitch** and we await the outcome of that, which should be early in the summer term. This will be a tremendous addition to the school's facilities and I am grateful to the governors for their support in ensuring that a robust business plan is in place to ensure that we can manage this facility in perpetuity to ensure that it covers running costs.

The **replacement of the doors** at the Clocktower entrance and at the end of the North corridor, in addition to much improved access, will take place over the Easter break. It will cause considerable disruption and we are working hard to ensure that this is kept to a minimum. It is six week project and started just before the Easter holiday. Ramps and key pad access for both doors will be installed and it will also improve the school environment significantly.

The **sixth form open evening**, in line with previous years, resulted in over one hundred applications from other schools to join our own fifth form in the lower sixth next September; one hundred day applications and around thirty boarding applications have been received. The **third form entry** for September 2016 attracted twenty-three applications, slightly more than last year, with thirteen passing. Places will be allocated and these students will increase the size of the year necessitating an extra form as in past years. The **first form** in September is over-subscribed and 117 places (including 7 boarders) have been offered. The dates for **testing in September 2016 have been fixed as 10 and 17 September**.

The **careers evening** focused on STEM subjects and sport and had 54 organisations represented. It was very well-attended and both students and parents were very appreciative. Next year will see the turn of law, humanities, languages, arts and business. My thanks to Mrs Locke for organising it so successfully.

With regard to **staff changes**, we have appointed a new member of the PE department, Mr Harding; he joins us having undertaken a year at Egglescliffe School following his PGCE and degree course at Durham University. He is particularly strong at rugby and cricket and I am convinced he will make a very strong addition to an already strong department. Ms Garner has started as the new Health School Worker, replacing Mrs Morrell. Ms Garner has been a paediatric nurse at Harrogate hospital, as well as working in schools. Mr Andrew Hogg replaces Mr Jonathan Dunmore as Premises Manager; he will take up his post officially on 1 April. Mr Hogg has a background of running his own company as well as managing premises at Middlesbrough College. I am sure he will be a very good addition to the team. Mr Willis has retired from his position as Teaching Assistant from the end of this term. He is currently working one day per week and additional hours have been given to Mrs Rickard to cover his post.

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Mr Highton was interviewed for an established post of teacher of chemistry and was successful. He replaces Mrs Lewis who left at the end of the last academic year. Mrs Southwell has resigned from her post as Head of PSHCEE and her post has been advertised internally. Mrs Schofield has been appointed STEM Coordinator from 1 March and I am keen to ensure the development of the liaison with local primary schools in particular. Currently Mrs Schofield and Mr Barker visit primary schools on rotation to help them with their delivery of science and DT. I am looking to increase the size of the team to include coverage of English and maths; this will enable RGS to support local primary schools in these important curriculum areas.

There is a vacancy for a **cook** in Johnson House; details are on the website should you know of anyone who may be interested.

We are currently in negotiation with St Aidan's regarding joining the **Yorkshire Teaching School Alliance**. The areas of most interest to us are initial teacher training and staff CPD. With teacher recruitment set to become increasingly challenging, it is vital that we ensure that as many channels as possible are kept open. Ripon Grammar School will remain part of the White Rose Alliance with King James's School, Knaresborough regarding initial teacher training placements.

The process for appointing **school officers** for 2016-17 has almost been completed. This has worked very well with students having the opportunity to apply in writing and undergoing an interview to assess their motivation and suitability. In addition to this a staff and peer vote is also undertaken. The final decision will be made next term.

The musical, '**Anything Goes**', was a great success with a very big cast and a tremendous enthusiasm for undertaking this project. I am very grateful to Mr Seymour and Mrs Morpeth for overseeing it.

The upper sixth students ran a **non-uniform day** on Thursday, 10 March to raise money for the **Moorfields Eye Hospital**, a charity very close to their hearts given all the fantastic support that David Owens in the upper sixth form has received. It raised £1,300 for the hospital.

I am grateful to the governors for overseeing the **school Facebook page**, which is a new initiative overseen by Mrs Redfern. In addition we have had a version of Twitter for some time and this is attracting well over 1000 followers, which is pleasing.

The **U15, U16 and U18 rugby teams** have reached the finals of the Yorkshire Cup. This is the first time we have had three teams in the finals and they played their matches over the weekend. Ted Wainwright has been selected to play in the Wellington Festival for Yorkshire Carnegie U16s – this is an England selection competition. In football, the U16 football team have reached the semi-final of the County Cup. In **cross country**, Laura Bosomworth, Toby Osman, Libby Rickard, Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla, all competed in the National X-Country finals; Toby Osman finished in 15th position. In **hockey**, the U15 hockey team won their Area Spring Tournament. Eight U13 students have been

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selected to represent Harrogate and Craven in the Inter Area Tournament. In **netball**, 10 out of the 11 students selected to represent H&C in the Inter Area Netball Tournament are RGS students. The U12 netball team won the first round of the National Schools' competition and will now represent H&C in the next round. Well done to Amelia Reed, Alice Simmerson, Eve Maylor, Grace Marczak, Ella Foster, Abi Price, Charlie Taylor-Jackson and Georgie Borchard. In **badminton**, the KS4 girls' and boys' badminton teams reached the Yorkshire finals where the girls' team were beaten in the final and the boys' team reached the semi-finals.

Christa Wilson won gold in the 200 fly and bronze in the 100 fly at a prestigious **swim** meet in Edinburgh.

Grace Branch, in the lower sixth form, has won the **Poetry by Heart** regional round in York and will now progress to the finals in Cambridge.

Musicality were successful in the lower school choir competition in Harrogate defeating Harrogate Ladies' College and Harrogate Grammar School to take first place. The **RGS Chamber Choir** will be singing Choral Evensong at St Bede Durham on April 28th and in Ripon Cathedral on May 9th.

Mr Margerison ran a very **successful ski trip** to Austria over half term, taking around seventy students; no-body returned with any injury whatsoever! Plans are well advanced for next year already.

The **Junior Schools' Challenge team** were runners up in a very tight contest against Barnard Castle, Yarm and Argyle House. Well done to the team of Freddie Dunn, Jie Taw, Alex Dale and captain James Dobbs.

The **Young Enterprise** team swept all the honours at the recent Harrogate round winning three categories. They now progress to the North Yorkshire round in May and we wish them well.

Starting in April and running until the end of term in July, there will be the **RGS Chess Cup**. Games will take place on Monday and/or Thursday lunch-times. All pupils can enter and they should contact Mr White (Head of mathematics) either by e-mail or in person to confirm their participation. Deadline for entry: **Friday 15th April**.

I am looking forward to **Lower School Prizegiving** where our guest will be Nick Chester, technical director of the Formula One Renault team. Nick is a former student of Ripon Grammar School.

The **draft calendar for next academic year** (2016-17) is available on the school website with term dates and some key events. This will be updated as more dates are finalised.

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I hope that you enjoy Easter and I look forward to seeing you next term,

Best wishes

M L Pearman
Headmaster

USEFUL DATES

Wednesday, 23 March	Second form parents' evening
Thursday, 24 March	School closes for Easter holidays
Monday, 11 April	School opens for Summer term
w/c 11 April	Fourth year exams
Tuesday, 19 April	Higher education evening 6.30pm
Thursday, 28 April	Staff twilight training
Monday, 2 May	Bank Holiday
4 – 6 May	Third form exams
Sunday, 8 May	Boarders' tea 4pm
w/c 9 May	Third form to Beverley Park
w/c 23 May	Fourth form on work experience
Tuesday, 24 May	Induction day for new third form
Friday, 27 May	School closes for half term
Monday, 6 June	School opens
w/c 6 June	First and second year exams
Monday, 20 June	New first form welcome evening 6.30pm
Tuesday, 21 June	New first form induction day
Thursday, 23 June	Concert and Music Colours 6.30pm
Monday, 27 June	Open Evening re first form 2017 5.30pm
Wednesday, 6 July	Lower School Prizegiving – Nick Chester
w/c 11 July	Lower sixth work experience
Wednesday, 13 July	Sports Day
Thursday, 14 July	School closed – Staff Training (GYS)
Friday, 22 July	Commemoration Service 11am
	School closes at 12.30pm
Thursday, 18 August	A level results day
Thursday, 25 August	GCSE results day

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