



GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS: 2021-2022

Introduction

I started the report of last year again citing 'the last academic year as one of unprecedented challenge'. Thankfully, this year, school life has gradually returned and we see a 'new normal'. Covid restrictions have been lifted and the school has worked hard to bring everyone back together. We cannot ignore the effect the previous years have had and I pay tribute to the resilience and commitment exhibited by everyone to move forwards.

I would therefore again like to start this report by, on behalf of the governors, thanking every member of the Ripon Grammar School staff team for the dedication and commitment they demonstrated throughout the year. I also again pay tribute to the resilience, diligence and motivation demonstrated by students, who have worked so incredibly hard during these times of great adversity. The cancellation again of the public examinations and the disruption of the usual school learning environment have brought with them unimaginable stress and uncertainty, and as governors we appreciate the support given by parents too.

Following two years where public examinations had been cancelled, this year saw the exams return. Students prepared for and sat A levels and GCSEs and were justly rewarded for their efforts with excellent results. Whilst we of course celebrated outstanding successes of achievement, the 100% pass rate at A level meant that every single A level student was rewarded. Whilst there is much publicity regarding individual successes, the progress made and the individual achievements of so many is far more. I would like to offer my congratulations to every single student – and hope that you feel justly rewarded for your efforts. Governors are incredibly proud, and to see the interactions between staff and students on results day demonstrated why Ripon Grammar School is so special: the relationships, the support, the mutual respect, and the understanding of the individuals and their circumstances. It is not just about the grade. The educational experience is far more than this. We are grateful to the entire staff team for the commitment and dedication they, without exception, devoted to this process to ensure all students achieved their best. We look forward to hearing of the news of our leavers and hope that you continue your relationship with RGS as a member of the Alumni community.

The RGS News, published monthly, continues to showcase the incredible endeavours of our School. This month we read of sporting excellence, music exam results, charity fundraising and work of the sixth form students as mentors across the school. The community of RGS is vibrant.

Governors are acutely aware of the challenges the last three years have posed on everyone. We appreciate how difficult life has been. This year governors will continue to focus on the safety and wellbeing of every member of our community. We are grateful for the support from parents. School welcomes communication from parents and I would urge you to proactively contact the school if you have any concerns. The partnership between home and school has never been more important. Governors have been delighted to meet with parents and students through the year and to hear of their experiences of the school. We were pleased to hear that school was responsive to communications raised and all expressed their satisfaction with the pastoral care of their children in school.

Governors have a role to ensure the wellbeing of the staff in school. Without a healthy staff team then how can we maintain the outstanding educational offering we aspire to? I would ask parents to ensure that when communicating

with the school they continue to do so in a respectful and non-aggressive manner. Governors have a zero tolerance of any form of aggression towards the staff team.

This annual report provides parents and others with an overview of Ripon Grammar School's main activities and achievements over the last academic year. Governors are always keen to establish effective communication with parents and provide opportunities for dialogue: one of the characteristics of good and outstanding schools is the feeling of inclusion that all members of the school community have in furthering the achievements of the students and enhancing the success of the school. Should any parent wish to contact a school governor, contact details are available on the school website.

We do however now face new difficulties. The school faces huge financial challenges. The funding allocated to school centrally does not meet our costs. The rise in energy costs and the high rate of inflation means we are running into difficulty. This means that our extraordinary provision is genuinely threatened. We are doing everything we can to mitigate against this. Prudent budget management and a freeze on discretionary spends means we are keeping as tight a control as possible. However, this may not be enough and parental support through the Development Fund has never been needed more. Within our website [here](#), is a link for monetary donations for school. Governors understand the pressure families face. However, Ripon Grammar School has never been in greater need of your support. Any financial contributions will help us protect the special educational offering afforded to every student. I would urge you to consider this as you read the rest of the report and the successes of the school.

Governors' Role

The full governing board (FGB) meets four times each year, but governors discharge their responsibilities largely via their committees: Admissions, Boarding, Curriculum, Finance and Personnel, Pastoral and the Estate Development Committee (formerly Premises). The principal role of the committees is to look in depth at the work of the school by being analytical, innovative and creative yet challenging and supportive of the Headmaster and the staff team. The committees regularly scrutinise the strengths and weaknesses and examine how any identified weaknesses are being addressed. As a full board, governors are responsible for setting the school's strategic direction; ensuring resources are used to maximum effect and participating in the formulation of the Strategic Development Plan in discussion with the Headmaster and the staff.

This year we held a strategy evening, where governors and the senior leadership team came together to agree priorities for governance over the next year, which have translated into a Governor Action Plan which informs the School Development Plan. We agreed five key priorities which we will work to deliver over this year and the years ahead. These are:

- Personal and Professional Development of all members of the RGS community
- Academic Excellence
- Ensuring a World Class Environment
- Staff Wellbeing
- Community Engagement

Governors are also charged with keeping abreast of changes in education nationally and the past year has seen an enormous array of changes which will continue to take effect over the next few years, much of it concerned with public examinations, but also changes in how schools are inspected and assessed and important updates and developments to enhance child protection and safeguarding.

Governors are accountable to the role they undertake. Attendance at meetings is recorded, and publically available on the school website. This year we have welcomed the opportunity to resume face to face meeting, whilst still utilising the online platforms to facilitate virtual meetings, where necessary and appropriate.

Safeguarding

Following the safeguarding review in the summer of 2021, a significant priority of the work of the Board must ensure, with rigor, the safety of every member of the school community. Mrs Keelan-Edwards was appointed Deputy Head Pastoral in September 2022 and is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) supported by two Deputy DSLs (Mrs Day and Mr Fell) who now lead the safeguarding team. Parents may have noticed that new lanyards are now being used which identify staff and visitors differently; the doors into school are now mag-locked, the gates are locked during the day and there are electronic displays throughout the school reminding students who the DSL team are but also who they can speak to. This means that we have met all the targets set by the review, and we are confident in the safety of our school. Of course, physical barriers do not ensure safety and so running in parallel has been a consistent and sensitively planned programme delivered via the PSHCE programme to educate our students on how to ensure their own safety and that of those around them and, very importantly, what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns whatsoever. Governors have been concerned about the impact of social media on the wellbeing of our students and have been supportive of the programmes of education around this to students and parents.

Public examination results

This year, after two years where public examinations did not occur because of the pandemic, students sat GCSEs and A levels. Following such an unprecedented two years of disruption, Governors could not have been prouder of how our students and staff approached the examinations and their results. You will recall that last year for both A levels and GCSEs, students were awarded grades based on 'Teacher Assessed Grades' - awarded by the school based on the attainment and progress through the course period. For Ripon Grammar School, the grades submitted were based on careful evaluation of individual students' progress and performance in assessments. The grades were carefully analysed, internally moderated and scrutinised by the teaching and leadership teams. Governors were confident that this was done with exceptional care and that the grades submitted were as accurate as possible.

Governors were delighted therefore with the superb academic results at both A level and GCSE this year. In 2022 RGS students achieved a 100% pass rate at A level (Grades A*-E). 82.6% of grades were A* - B with 25.6% of all grades awarded being A*. Of the 157 students, 64 achieved 3 or more grade A*/A A-level grades. This represented an incredible performance from the students, who had approached the challenge with fortitude, diligence, and integrity. But what cannot go unmentioned is that, unlike many other schools, our results this year did not dip from the previous years; providing yet more evidence of the excellence in teaching and assessment from our staff team.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) continues to be highly valued by universities. This year 64 students completed the EPQ which involves students undertaking a piece of research of their choosing, followed by a report or essay of up to 5000 words. Graded on A*-E scale 87.5% of the RGS students who completed an EPQ secured an A*-B grade, with 73.2% achieving the A*/A grade. The performance of RGS students in this challenging assessment continues to be outstanding, and the results, under the supervision of our new EPQ coordinator, pay testament to her work.

The grading system for the GCSE examinations where the grading follows a grade 9-1 structure is now well established. In this system, grades 9-7 are equivalent to the previous A*/A and grades 9-4 to A*-C. These boundaries, accepted by Ofqual, the government's examinations regulator, provide a tool to enable some year-on-year data comparisons to be made.

RGS GCSE results compared extremely favourably to national results. This year, 97.2% of our students achieved grades 9-5, and 69.9% of grades were 9-7.

These excellent GCSE and A-level results again place RGS as one of the highest achieving schools, both maintained and independent, in the North of England.

The information below summarises the headline data for the current and previous years. Detailed information by subject is available on the school website. Governors would emphasise strongly that high achievement in public examinations is

only one aspect of the wide education that the school provides. RGS values all its students as individuals, irrespective of their ability, and strives to support everyone to achieve their maximum potential, through a love of learning. All achievements, not just those of the most able are celebrated. Governors are also acutely aware that, from time to time, students will face considerable health, family or personal difficulties. The impact of these cannot be overestimated, and the school remains utterly committed to work with parents and others to strongly support students through their education so that they can achieve their best with the highest amount of pastoral support.

Governors look at progress measures to assess how groups of students have progressed during their time at RGS based on exam data on entry and at GCSE. Progress 8 at GCSE, determined by the DfE for the full national cohort is one such measure. As a result of the exam cancellation in 2019 and 2020, the government announced that it would not publish school or college level results data in autumn 2020 or autumn 2021. This year data has been published, and the RGS Progress 8 score is 0.92 (compared to a North Yorkshire average of 0.04). This means that, on average, RGS students achieved nearly one grade better across all subjects than that expected from their prior attainment in Year 6.

		2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
A-level	Pass rate (A*-E)	100%	99.8%	100%	98.9%	99.8%	100%	100%	99.7%	100%
	Grades A*,A & B	82.6%	81.0%	82.7%	76.1%	79.7%	79.1%	76.2%	71.5%	75.9%
	Grade A*	25.6%	28.1%	29.1%	20.4%	19.4%	23.0%	20.5%	16.4%	20.8%
GCSE	Grades 9 - 4	97.5%	99.6%	99.6%	96.9%	97.0%	98.5%	97.4%	96.9%	98.2%
GCSE	Grades 9 – 7	69.9%	72.4%	67.7%	61.6%	65.8%	64.4%	60.7%	63.0%	68.5%

In 2017 revised grading on a 9 to 1 scale (where 9 is the highest and 1 is the lowest) was introduced in England for GCSE English, English literature and mathematics, followed by a further 20 subjects in 2018. At the same time the syllabuses and examinations for these subjects were made more demanding. Whilst the general intention was to align grades 9, 8 & 7 with the former A*/A grades and a grade 4 or above to be the equivalent of grades C or above, the regulator (Ofqual) advises that the results in subjects with the new grading should not be compared with previous years. However, to maintain some semblance of comparability, albeit with the caveat above, numerical grades have been compared with Ofqual's approved equivalences and these results should therefore be understood in that context.

Destinations of leavers

All Year 11 students proceed on to post-16 education, the majority at RGS, but some choosing other schools and colleges which offer subjects or courses that RGS does not.

Year 13 students continue to be ambitious in their career aspirations with the majority applying for university but others taking up prestigious apprenticeships, going directly into employment or taking a planned gap year. This year there are 23 students taking up this option. The Sixth Form Team supported 26 former students, of whom 23 were able to secure firm offers and have embarked on a university course this autumn. The careers staff and sixth form team provide support and expert guidance to all students, whatever their intentions, so that they can make fully informed decisions.

Over recent years there has been a particular focus on ensuring that the careers advice given to students is neither narrow nor focussed entirely on university application processes, to ensure that all students are encouraged to be appropriately ambitious and are supported in achieving their ambitions, whatever they are. This year this has included students travelling overseas to pursue prestigious scholarships, university courses and apprenticeships, as well as supporting

students choosing to go straight into employment. We are hugely grateful to the support given to all our students by Sixth Form team.

University Destinations

This year 156 UCAS applicants (including 26 former students of the school who were making post A-level applications) applied to universities, with the Russell Group universities remaining very popular. Success rate at gaining offers to these very competitive universities was over 67%. However, students have also secured places at equally prestigious institutions, such as St Andrew's and Bath, and other students have secured overseas, highly competitive sports scholarships, apprenticeships and UK based choral and performing arts opportunities. There is still a northern bias in university destination but this is slightly less than previous years. Northumberland is still the most popular destination, with 34 of our students having ventured to the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria, but we have 17 students in Manchester, and 7 in Liverpool; 10 students have gone to University in Scotland. Travelling south, we have 8 who have gone to London; with 8 students to Bristol, 3 to Southampton and 2 each to Exeter and Bath.

Again this year we were delighted that many of our students were able to secure their first-choice university place. 117 of the 156 applicants achieved entry to their first-choice institution which reflects their careful work and well-prepared applications plus the very high academic standards that the RGS students reach.

Of those applying to read medicine, the 7 applicants who held offers all achieved their places, as did both applicants to veterinary science, who achieved their first-choice places. All 5 of those holding offers at Oxbridge secured their places.

We wish all our students moving on from RGS the very best of luck and send all our good wishes. Students leave RGS as alumni of the school, and we enjoy keeping in touch with them all, and hearing their news!

School Admissions

The school's main points of entry for both day and boarding students are into Year 7, Year 9 and Sixth Form (Year 12). North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) is responsible for administering admissions into Year 7. The governors' Admissions Committee closely monitors the entrance test arrangements to ensure that the potential applicants and the school are not disadvantaged in any way. In 2019 NYCC changed the testing format to one of a single day, which, based on the evidence the committee has analysed, did not impact significantly on those Y6 children sitting the test. This format has continued and this year record numbers of Y6 children took the test,

Admission into Year 9 is managed by the school and aims to provide additional places for able boys and girls who, for whatever reason, did not gain a place at age 11. The application deadline is late January with the test taken at the school in early February. This entry point again proved popular this year.

Every year the school admits many new students into the Sixth Form (Year 12) based on their achievements at GCSE. This year was no exception when 47 new students joined RGS. They quickly feel part of the school, contribute widely to school life and achieve excellent results. They also bring a wealth of experience and talent which enhances the school community, and often become school office holders when they move to Year 13. The Sixth Form Open Evening took place in November, which was earlier than in previous years to allow Y11 students more time to make the careful decisions regarding sixth form application.

Staffing

Governors are only too aware that the success of the RGS is a consequence of the expertise, dedication and commitment of both teaching and support staff. At the end of each academic year several governors usually have the pleasure of interviewing a group of Y13 students just prior to their departure from RGS. This is always an uplifting experience and, without exception, each year students describe the unending support they have received from the staff team who go that extra mile to ensure that students can reach their full potential.

Each year several staff leave RGS to pursue their careers in other schools, often in promoted posts, or through retirement. This year saw the departure of five members of staff, each of whom has contributed hugely to RGS over their time in school.

Miss Murray (Deputy Head Pastoral), Mr Griggs (Head of Physics) and Mrs Locke (Head of Careers) have retired after long and distinguished careers in the school. We thank them all most sincerely for their huge contribution to the life of the school and wish them a long and happy retirement.

Mrs Dunn and Mr Hamill have left to pursue careers outside teaching. We wish them well in their new endeavours.

We have welcomed several new staff to the team including Mr Johnson (Head of English), Mr Shovlin (Head of Physics), Miss Kizildagli (Geography), Miss Bentley (Mathematics), Dr Roberts (Biology), Mrs Satariano (Data Manager), Mrs Peach (Library Assistant), Mrs Parks and Mrs Harriman (School Health Workers), Miss Barron and Mrs Sala (SEN teaching assistants). Ms Kilson is providing maternity cover in biology.

Following Miss Murray's retirement, we were delighted that Mrs Keelan Edwards has moved into the role of Deputy Head (Pastoral). Mr Fearnley has joined the Senior Leadership Team as Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning).

Our staff team is pivotal to the work and culture of our school. As part of the Governor Action Plan for the year, staff wellbeing is a focus of our attention. The dedication and commitment of our staff is unshakeable and the Board is committed to delivering our Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

Governance

At the end of the academic year Mr Steve Williams retired as a co-opted member of the Board. Steve chaired the Finance and Personnel Committee, and we are grateful for his expertise and service.

Our constitution deliberately makes provision for a large governing board, principally a mixture of parent-elected and co-opted governors. Each year there are vacancies which we try to fill matching the needs identified from our skills audit. We would encourage all parents to consider putting themselves forward either for election as a parent governor when vacancies arise or making their interest known to the Chair of the Governors in an email.

Governors' Committees

This is a snapshot report giving an overview of the work undertaken within our governor committees. Accepting the limitations of this, below are synopses of governor priorities for the last year.

a) Boarding

The primary focus of the Boarding Committee remains to ensure that boarders are happy, safe, and secure within the school community. To achieve this, the Committee has continued to apply a high level of scrutiny to all aspects of boarding at Ripon Grammar School throughout the academic year. There have been termly reports from Caroline Day, Assistant Head (Boarding), on the well-being of boarders, reviews of maintenance and catering requirements, and updates on relevant policies. In addition, the Committee considers issues relating to both Safeguarding and Health & Safety at each of our termly meetings.

Last academic year saw several important developments. A successful OFSTED inspection saw boarding provision rated as 'Good' in all areas. The report found that "Children enjoy boarding at this school. They make new friends and enjoy socialising with children of all ages. ...Children feel they are fortunate to board at this school. They believe that the experience helps their overall development." The Boarding Committee feel that these positive findings reflected the hard work that Caroline and her team have put into developing Boarding provision at RGS. Several maintenance projects have improved boarding provision in both Houses, including the creation of a fitness room in School House, improvements to the showers, and installation of additional CCTV cameras to increase security. Further projects will be implemented over this academic year. All these improvements take place against a backdrop of an increased number of Boarders in both Houses, with this academic year seeing the

largest ever cohort. It remains the Committee's ambition to continue this growth, expanding and improving upon the already excellent boarding facilities, whilst always maintaining the defining focus that is the well-being of all within the boarding community.

b) Curriculum

The committee meets each term and calls upon the Headmaster, Deputy Head (Academic) and Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning) to give evidence and answer questions, and calls other senior staff as necessary.

The committee regularly monitors student progress and attainment in all year groups, as well as analysing GCSE and A Level exam performance. This year, we have paid especial attention to our SEND students. The Inclusion Manager, Samina O'Brien, gave us a detailed presentation on what she has done to enhance the organisation, quality and consistency of provision for SEND students. This has included refining the accuracy of the SEND register, which, in turn, allows the committee to access accurate progress and attainment data for SEND students in each year group. She has assisted departments in developing an appropriate graduated approach to SEND for their subject. Helen Stiles, Governor for Inclusion, meets regularly with Samina. Governors asked several questions to reassure themselves that the provision for SEND students was effective. Our monitoring of their progress and attainment in each year group confirms that their learning is on a par with their peers'.

Our examination of GCSE and A Level results in both 2021 and 2022 gave much cause for celebration. Governors were particularly pleased to note that 2022 results did not show a slump from 2021, as has been experienced nationally, affirming the school's and governors' determination to uphold standards when awarding Teacher Assessed Grades for the exams missed in 2021 because of Covid. In such a highly performing school, our eye is naturally drawn to outliers and governors relentlessly enquire about subjects where the results are not quite up to the usual standards and receive regular reports about remedial action.

We have a duty to assure ourselves of the quality of teaching and learning at RGS. While the excellent GCSE and A Level outcomes indicate no significant cause for concern, it is important that mechanisms exist to monitor the learning experiences of students. To this end, we receive detailed reports of Learning Walks and Departmental Reviews conducted by the school's Senior Leaders and can question them about details.

All governors have a duty to ensure the safeguarding of students and this committee's particular focus is on lesson time. We want to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are taken in practical subjects and that students' attendance at lessons is recorded. We ask for data printouts each meeting.

The school has always made a wide range of interventions to assist individual and groups of students who for one reason or another are experiencing difficulties with their learning. The list has grown, especially in the aftermath of Covid. It seems that some of our students have found the return to the norms of school routines and behaviours very difficult and governors are both immensely appreciative of the special efforts made by all teachers and support staff and concerned that the level of additional work is unsustainable in the long term.

c) Finance & Personnel (F&P)

One of the major responsibilities of the governors is careful oversight of the school's finances with much of the detailed monitoring work delegated to the F&P committee.

Just like in many other areas of the school, over the last academic year the major challenge has been dealing with the effects and consequences of the pandemic and its adverse impact on the school's financial position. Unlike many other State Secondary Schools, RGS ordinarily benefits from two additional and sizeable sources of revenue – its boarding proposition and its letting income.

During the summer of 2020 and the spring of 2021 there was effectively no boarding in school – due to the constraints of the pandemic. This meant that over £430k of originally budgeted fees were not received. To compensate the school managed down variable and other discretionary costs and where possible negotiated deferrals of other commitments.

Similarly, Lettings (capable of more than £150k pa) were severely and adversely impacted by both the pandemic and by an ongoing noise planning dispute (now resolved) restricting the letting of the 3G Pitch. Therefore, the school's financial reserves were eroded.

We had anticipated that the return to normality, with the associated prospects of optimising both boarding and lettings income, significant in-year surpluses would be achieved which would enable the school to look forward with confidence to further developing early feasibility plans for major estate capital projects that were understandably deferred at the onset of the pandemic.

However, the current financial climate and the unprecedented rises in energy costs have caused significant financial concern, with the real chance of the school running into deficit by the end of the 2022-23 year. Capital projects have been put on hold, and the premises team are working hard to implement energy efficiency measures within the school.

By far the biggest expense in the school budget is staff pay, and governors are proud to demonstrate their commitment to maintaining the excellent staff team within RGS who, as previously described, are the key to the success of the RGS community. We are working hard to ensure that the financial controls we put in place mitigate the cost challenges of this.

The F&P Committee also monitors staff appointments and staff performance. In a climate where the recruitment and retention of teaching staff nationally is challenging, governors remain very pleased with the appointments made during the last year, a reflection of the reputation of the school in attracting strong applications. The appraisal process for all staff in RGS is robust, and governors are again pleased to note the very positive outcomes for staff because of this.

Governors are grateful for the expertise of our School Bursar, Mrs Alison Balsdon, and Mr Graham Livesey, our Director of Strategic Operations, who both ensure careful and prudent management of financial resources.

d) Pastoral

The Pastoral Committee has an overriding responsibility to ensure the highest standards of care and welfare of students in the school including their safeguarding. The wellbeing and safety of the RGS students and the RGS community is the focus of our meetings. The committee meets with and receives reports on pastoral matters from the leadership team within the school, including Heads of Years, Head of Sixth Form and the Senior Leadership Team. The committee has focussed on the wellbeing and behaviour of students and has been able to triangulate the evidence received from staff, students, and parents with the data reports we now receive from CPOMS and BROMCOM.

We have spent a lot of time reviewing how are students are coping as they return to normality following the pandemic. We have heard individually from each Head of Year on the issues facing form and year groups. We had reports on the extra levels of support to students who need this and on efforts to support the whole school community.

The Pastoral Committee prioritises safeguarding and has, at each meeting, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and ensured that our response to the safeguarding review has been timely and robust.

The PSICHE curriculum is now delivered across the school both in lessons and tutor time. The whole school approach to this and strong leadership have been well received.

e) Premises

The creation of a new Director of Strategic Operations (DSO) role within the school has provided much needed capacity to support the development of more strategic approaches to future development of the premises and estate. Unfortunately, progress on priority projects identified as part of the long-term school estate development plan has been challenging against a rapidly deteriorating financial position, driven principally by huge increases in energy costs. This has necessitated a pause on most planned capital projects for the foreseeable future (apart from critical ones related to health & safety and safeguarding issues).

Some limited progress has been made this year, including replacement of the assembly hall floor (funded by NYCC) and continuing improvements to the security of, and safe access to, the school. This year has also been the first year following the transition to a new arrangement for a range of maintenance and servicing work following the restructuring of the NYCC Maintenance and Servicing Scheme (MASS). The school has subscribed to a limited range of specialist services under the replacement Property Services Scheme with the remainder of maintenance being brought in-house. This transition has been managed very effectively by the school and the new arrangements are working well.

Progress on the major project to develop a new assembly hall/performance space and a related enhancement of dining facilities has been slower than hoped but outline plans are now complete. The project is now able to progress to the next stages of securing planning permission and fundraising. However, taking this project forward in the current financial climate will need careful consideration.

The Committee extends particular thanks to Graham Livesey (DSO) and school premises manager Andrew Hogg, and his small team, for all their work to deliver continuing progress this year despite the hugely challenging financial constraints.

School Publicity and Marketing

Mrs Ruth Savage continues to work extremely actively in her role of Marketing and Publicity Manager for the School. Ruth has been instrumental in the online publication of RGS News which is emailed out monthly and well received by current students, alumni of the school and our Community. Over the course of the year there has been a presence associated with RGS on social media with regular updates and advertisements on Facebook and Twitter. Since August 2018, the RGS Twitter Reach has continued to increase exponentially to over 450,000 in July 2021. These platforms are now being utilised as main areas for marketing our school, and in particular the boarding facilities, and are being used in addition to 'real' open evenings to provide information (and experiences) to new students.

Co-curricular Activities and Achievements

The breadth of co-curricular activities on offer at RGS continues to increase, and Governors are extremely grateful to staff who undertake these voluntarily to ensure an excellent educational experience for all at RGS, with the key focus being on helping all our students develop as all round individuals. We have enjoyed being able to attend concerts, plays and musicals. Beauty and the Beast, performed at the end of the Spring term, was a huge success. Performances of a professional level, with talent displayed from all involved yet again demonstrated excellence. A relatively small cast, supported by an incredible orchestra and crew held sell out audiences on every night. It was incredible.

Sports fixtures are now well and truly up and running again, and the profile of RGS as a centre of excellence for sport is increasing with extremely strong team and individual performances. Equally important to note is the increasing level of participation across the school. The heatwave in July forced the postponement of the 'Sports Award's Evening' but the rescheduled event, held in September, was unforgettable. With over 120 students receiving team or individual nominations for awards, not just for achievement but also progress and team working, the sporting opportunities at RGS are ever increasing.

Governors are incredibly grateful to the staff team who go the extra mile and give their time to support students in co-curricular activities. Without the talent and commitment of staff, this offering would not exist.

School trips and educational visits have thankfully gradually returned to a normal part of school life. The Pupil Premium funding the school receives enables all students to access these opportunities. World Challenge, skiing trips, adventure holidays to France, in addition to trips supporting the curriculum, are now part of the school calendar. Such is the appetite from students, several have been oversubscribed. Last year again saw high numbers of students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. We are very grateful indeed to Mr Highton and Mr Higson for supporting this very important and worthwhile programme.

Last year, the usual Charity Week, held before the Autumn Half Term Break, raised funds for the Survivors Trust, an umbrella organisation supporting victims of abuse. Raising over £8400, despite the Covid restrictions at the time, was hugely impressive. Receiving the cheque, Fay Maxted OBE, chief executive of The Survivors Trust, said she was astounded at how much students raised during the pandemic, when victims and survivors of abuse needed help more than ever.

Within the Headmaster's half-termly newsletters, RGS News and our social media presence, the wide range of opportunities plus the exceptional commitment of staff and students to the co-curricular life of the school is detailed. Governors are delighted at the strength and success of the co-curricular life at RGS, and the value that the school places on the array of wider curricular engagement and success. It has been wonderful to see that the Covid pandemic and the associated restrictions has not 'damped down' enthusiasm for this and that the participation in activities outside the classroom remains as popular as ever.

The financial situation facing the school means that the funding of the co-curricular activities is vulnerable. The School Development Fund, which relies entirely on donations from parents, supports these additional activities which are not funded out of central government grants for education. The fund exists separately to the work of the Friends of RGS and ensures that every student benefits in some way by enabling the school to deliver a rewarding and varied programme.

Sports costs alone last year exceeded £16k and are likely to rise. The current donations into the fund are much less. We fully appreciate the financial challenges families face. However, any donations would be hugely welcomed. A donation of £2 per month per parent would allow us to continue the current operations. Donating is straightforward – and can either be via ParentPay – or via the school website [here](#).

Communication with Parents

The school website continues to be developed. The implementation of 'My child at school' – an electronic record of an individual student life at RGS, along with the website, means that communication with parents is now paperless. All letters which are sent home are hosted on the website as a matter of course but are now emailed out to parents using the IT platform Bromcom. This means that letters from school will feature in your email inbox from bromcom@ripongrammar.com. We would ask parents to check the website - and their inbox - on a regular basis to ensure they are fully informed.

Given that e-mail communication is routinely used, **it is of course vital that the school has an up-to-date email address.** Many parents follow the school's achievements via social media. RGS news is published monthly, updating parents and students on the activities taking place within school. The Headmaster writes a newsletter half termly to ensure that events of importance are communicated with parents. Governors therefore hope that parents do feel that they are fully informed about all aspects of school life. If this is not the case, please do let us know.

Despite the huge challenges we have all faced, governors are delighted to report another exceptionally successful year for Ripon Grammar School. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Headmaster and the

staff team for their professionalism and commitment to the education and care of the students, and all parents for their continued support to the school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EJ' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Elizabeth Jarvis
Chair of Governing Board
October 2022