



# Ripon Grammar School

19 December 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians

As I listened to the carols sung so beautifully by the school's choirs on Tuesday evening, amidst the splendour of Ripon Cathedral, I reflected on the fact that the students were standing directly above a crypt built in the seventh century. From that early monastic foundation, a tradition of education and music has stretched over 1350 years – a rich heritage of which the school should feel rightly proud and perhaps a little awe inspired. As the Dean said in his welcome address, we should never take these things for granted, so thank you to all parents and guardians who came to support such a wonderful occasion. In addition, this week we launched our new organ scholarship which provides boarding fee assistance, organ lessons and musical leadership, in partnership with Ripon Cathedral, for a new Year 12 student to start in September. This is a further example of how these ancient foundations have worked together.

As ever, the Autumn term has been a busy one and no doubt all of us are looking forward to a well-deserved Christmas break. The last few weeks have been as hectic as ever with events such as a successful House Drama won [once again] by De Grey, a leavers' reunion and prize giving, the boarders' Christmas Ball, careers and A Level fairs, a carers afternoon, biology trips to Newcastle and English trips to the panto and Haworth, a winter concert and the full range of sporting fixtures. As ever my thanks go to the staff who continue to organise and arrange all the additional extras which make the school such a special place. Full details can be found in our monthly RGS News bulletin.

This term we were also pleased to receive recognition in the *Sunday Times Parent Survey*, regaining top spot in the North not just for academic excellence, rising 75 places to 71<sup>st</sup> in the country - after a slight blip last year - but also claiming the double award of *State Secondary School of the Year* in recognition of all the wonderful things our students achieve as part of the strong school community. No doubt our Year 11s and 13s will be aiming high this summer with their minds focussing on next term's all important mock examinations. This week and last it was also a great pleasure to help hand out certificates for student progress and attainment to students in all year groups as part of our end of term celebration assemblies.

We started this term welcoming several new permanent members of staff including Mrs Davidson as housemistress of Johnson House and assistant head for boarding, Mr Davies-Taylor housemaster in School House and teacher of English, Mrs Craven in the music department, Mr Turner as teacher of history and boarding house tutor and Mrs Clarke to teach psychology. Mrs O'Brien has been appointed to our Senior Leadership Team in her capacity as SENDCO and Inclusion Manager and in the library we welcomed our new Librarian in Mrs O'Donnell. All the new staff have played an integral part in the life of the school and we wish them well for the future.

*Founded in Saxon Times, re-founded in 1555*

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Sadly, this term marks the departure of Mrs Stevens after 23 years distinguished service as a teacher of French. I am sure many students over the years will remember Mrs Stevens for her passion, enthusiasm, commitment to teaching excellence and above all else warmth and care for her students. We wish her every happiness for the future.

As we say goodbye to 2025 we will welcome 2026 with hope and optimism. At 958 students we are the largest the school has ever been and numbers are projected to grow further next year. Demand for places remains fierce and we are seeing an increased number of applications to study in the Sixth form next year.

As pressure for places builds we will continue to explore with NYC what infrastructure investment we can obtain to improve our facilities, while in the short term the authority has committed to work next term on rather more mundane yet vital matters such as wholesale boiler replacement and the re-roofing of parts of Bishopton House.

Your donations to the school through the Development Fund continue to be ever more important at a time of severe underfunding, so once again a thank you to all parents and the Friends of Ripon Grammar School who support the school in this way.

Wishing the whole RGS community a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Jonathan Webb**  
**Headmaster**

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