



Ripon Grammar School

25 October 2024

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents

We are coming to the end of what has been a very busy half term with a most successful Charity Week, in support of the vital work undertaken by Medecins Sans Frontiers. I would like to thank the Sixth form School Officer team for their hard work in organising a superb range of break and lunchtime activities which reaches its climax with the staff pantomime at lunchtime today.

This term started in earnest with 941 students, our largest number in history. We welcomed 118 new starters into Year 7, 13 into Year 9 and a record 67 into Year 12 which takes that year group to its largest at 163 and it has been pleasing to see how quickly our new students have settled and been integrated into the life of the school.

November's edition of RGS News will be out soon which, as usual, charts the varied opportunities available to students at the school. It has been a term notable for trips and activities beyond the school gates.

Over the summer we were able to celebrate with our Year 13s and 11s their A Level and GCSE results. It was pleasing to see so many of our leavers securing their first choice of University or embark on successful apprenticeships or gap years and we look forward to welcoming them all back to our leavers' reunion and prize giving evening on Wednesday 18 December.

Last term we said goodbye to two members of our teaching staff; Mr Long as head of history departed for a teaching post in Dubai and Mr Mann retired after 22 years as a teacher of DT. Mrs Fell has been internally appointed to the post of head of history and Mrs Stevenson has returned to RGS to teach DT. Mrs Mortimer has joined the PE department this term and in January we will welcome Mr Jones in the MFL department and Mr Owen as head of DT - Mr Rudland will finally be able to retire in January after 22 years of distinguished service to the school. We have also welcomed the following non-teaching staff to the school this term: Mrs Hare as Welfare Officer, Dr Mulligan as science technician, Mrs Davies as library assistant, Mrs Naish as a general teaching assistant and Mrs Savage as deputy housemistress resident in School House.

During the summer holidays we were able to complete some important estates work ready for the new academic year. We completed the re-location of the staff room using funds provided to the school by the Jepson Trust, an educational charity whose origin lies in 17th century Ripon and which has long established ties with RGS. In the old staff room's space we have created two new classrooms using funds generously donated by an external source. This has created a suite of four refurbished classrooms for

Founded in Saxon Times, re-founded in 1555

Headmaster: Mr Jonathan M Webb, MA

Address: Clothholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DG

Tel: [01765] 602647 **Email:** admin@ripongrammar.com

Website: www.ripongrammar.co.uk



Ripon Grammar School

the English department, alongside a new departmental office. In addition, we have also used external funding for new science fume cupboards, electronic doors into the foyer and an extension to the pastoral centre. We are currently embarking on the development of the new fitness suite, an upgrade to one of the two main geography classrooms and a replacement of the art department's kiln with funds generously donated by The Friends of RGS.

We are also midway through our three-year IT development programme which so far has provided laptops to 100% of the teaching staff, 40% of classrooms with new TV displays and 60% of the planned wi-fi upgrade to ensure each teaching space can support IT access for multiple devices. We plan to complete this phase of the digital strategy by next year to allow a student device strategy to be implemented. Thank you again to those parents who donated £20,000 to this project via the Development Fund last year and also to The Friends, whose ball at the Old Swan in Harrogate on 16 November is in aid of this project. The Friends have issued roughly 20,000 raffle tickets which you should now have via your son/daughter. Please do support The Friend's events or buy/sell as many tickets as you can. Their work is vital to the funding of the school **and the ball is a very enjoyable evening so please do consider organising your table as soon as possible!**

As you have read, we have been able to undertake a large amount of estates development work using over £120,000 of external funding. Core funding from central government continues to fail to cover the costs of the school despite three years of internal budget reductions which is why parental support via the Development Fund is so important and so greatly appreciated.

In boarding we continue to invest in fabric improvements in School House and these will continue into next year and hopefully beyond. Our recent Ofsted boarding inspection noted the improvements made across the two houses and gave us a grading of Good overall, praising the strength of relationships within each house and the safeguarding provisions in place. The report left us somewhat baffled by the inspectors failing to find any area they thought required improvement or additional attention. That said, we will continue to ensure boarding at RGS remains a strong and secure provision for our resident students.

Finally, thank you to all parents who contributed to the Kirkland Rowell survey last term which gave an excellent overall performance score for the school benchmarked against other schools. That said there are areas, as always, to focus on and I will write to you soon with more detail on the survey's main conclusions and the areas of school life we will continue to focus on.

I hope all students, parents and staff have a restful half term.

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

Founded in Saxon Times, re-founded in 1555

Headmaster: Mr Jonathan M Webb, MA
Address: Clothholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DG
Tel: [01765] 602647 **Email:** admin@ripongrammar.com
Website: www.ripongrammar.co.uk