**From the Headmaster**

21 July 2017

Dear Parents

**Re: End of term newsletter – Summer term 2017**

As I write my final newsletter, preparations are well under way for **Mr Webb, my successor,** to take over the reins from the end of term. I would like to wish him all the best in the role and I hope that he will enjoy it as much as I have. The last thirteen years have gone by remarkably quickly but I feel that the school is in very good shape. There is still much to be achieved, of course, and I am sure Mr Webb will formulate his plan to make Ripon Grammar School an even better school as soon as he takes over formally in September.

Both Mr Webb and I will be attending **examination results days** in August (Thursday, **17 August** for

A- level and Thursday, **24 August** for GCSE). These will be available from 9am in the school library for A2 and GCSE and 10am for AS results.

I hope that all the hard work of the students and staff will be recognised in the outcomes. There has been much in the news regarding potential grading turbulence as we enter a new grading system for GCSE in English and mathematics but I believe our students are well prepared and able to cope with the change as well as any students can be.

I was delighted with the outcome of the **boarding inspection** in May where all three categories were graded ‘outstanding’, including the overall judgement. This is a tribute to the hard work of the boarding staff and how well they work together as a team, as well as to the wonderful community of students who make up boarding. The inspectors were very impressed with the sense of commitment and ambition of the students and it is good to receive this accolade. Nonetheless, I have always maintained that it is important to do what is best for the students, rather than simply do something for the sake of what Ofsted requires. The new inspection framework clearly mirrored what Ripon Grammar School believes is important for our boarding students to experience. However, to establish an effective Boarders’ Council and an existing programme of weekend activities is now a priority; plans are already in place to achieve this.

There are fortunately **few staffing changes** from September. Mr Duckworth, previously head of art, and who has recently been teaching art part-time, has decided to retire after eleven years at Ripon Grammar School. He has been an outstanding head of department, achieving superb results at GCSE and A-level. Mr Duckworth achieved high academic standards in the subject and students enjoyed the challenge. Mrs Garmory, teacher of art and head of PSHCEe, will be going on maternity leave in September and she will be replaced by Mr Porteous who has a wealth of experience to bring to the department in her absence. Mrs Schofield will be overseeing PSHCEe until her return.

Mr MacMillan, teacher of Religious Studies, has been appointed head of religious studies at Thirsk School from September and his successor is Miss Jackson, currently completing her final PGCE school placement at St Augustine’s RC School in Scarborough. Mrs Prideaux has been appointed as a part-time General Teaching Assistant and Mrs Moon will join the Physics department as a science technician. Mrs Whitham will be retiring from her post as science technician in October after 20 years’ service. I wish them all well, both in their posts here and for the future.

I would like to thank all the parents who took the trouble to respond to my letter regarding the **proposed telecommunications mast** on the school site and, following a meeting with the Full Governors’ Board, it has been decided not to proceed with this project. The arguments put forward by parents were very thoughtful and well-balanced and I believe it is the right decision not go ahead with this project.

**The summer works,** overseen by Mr Hogg, our Premises Manager, will be quite extensive this year with a large amount of window replacement taking place on one elevation of the science department as well as the main windows near the Clocktower, namely the staff room and rooms N4 and N5. A number of windows in School House will also be upgraded and the fire escape on the side of the science block will be renewed.

I have enjoyed the **traditional events at the end of the summer term**, with Sports Day, the junior production of ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ and Lower School Prizegiving. I am very grateful to all the staff involved in organising these events which have been most enjoyable. My thanks also to Mr Seymour for his jazz evening, where Music Colours were presented to the following students for their services to the musical life of the school. It was a very relaxed, informal and thoroughly enjoyable evening and one of the best concerts in my time here.

**Recipients of Half Colours:** Barnaby Sladden, Benjamin Dearden, Jonathan Bennington, Alexander Peach, Katy Statham, Samyuktha Dasarathi and Mena Scatchard.

**Recipients of Full Colours:** Georgia Stuart-Mills, Sofia Robinson, Oliver Bowett, Hannah Pease, Megan Boase, Archie Sladden, Jack Stott and Mhairi Maxwell.

I am delighted that the following students received Gold certificates in the **UK intermediate mathematics challenge**: in the third form it was Simeon Mitchell (also best in year), Oliver Dimbleby and Megan Bannister. Well done also to the Junior team from the second and third year, who came second in the regional final of the Team Maths challenge. The team members were Shen Jie Yaw, Simeon Mitchell, Amy Burgess and James Arcidiacono. In the UK Junior Mathematical Challenge, Shen Jie Yaw received the certificate for the best in school and best in year whilst Kate Rushworth was best in year too. There were gold certificates for Shen Jie Yaw, Ellie Brown, Archie Heap, Grace Marczak, Nicholas Hart, Oliver Binks, Sophie Pointon, Chloe Stringwell, Anna Millions, Isabel Kelly, Zoe Williams, Maddie Penny, Edwin Dant, Lucy Cox, Mia Smallman, Brooke Kendall and Kate Rushworth.

It has been an outstanding year for **sporting achievement** which was acknowledged in Lower School prizegiving. I thought it would be appropriate to recall the year in summary**:** The U14, U16 and U18 girls' **hockey** teams all qualified for the County round of the National Schools competition. The U14 and U16 teams qualified as winners and the U16 and U14 teams both qualified for the North East finals. The U16s are county champions having beaten St Peter’s in the final while the U14s qualified as beaten finalists. **The U16 girls’ indoor hockey team** also competed in the national finals against an array of independent schools and, although they did not win, they acquitted themselves remarkably well at a much higher level. Given that this is their first year of playing indoor hockey at school, this is an outstanding achievement. Unfortunately the team lost the play-off in the outdoor hockey to qualify for the national finals, losing a very closely contended match against Trent College. Moreover, the U14 hockey team are area and county champions. Hetty Simenacz, Penny Baker, Helena da Costa, Molly Disbury, Sophie Pointon, Georgie Borchard and Marnie Scatchard represented North Yorkshire in hockey whilst Olivia Borchard is in the Durham Performance Centre for hockey. Poppy Lawson has represented Yorkshire at hockey in the year above and was selected to represent the North East region at the National Finals; she took a penalty in the final and successfully scored to ensure victory for the North East. Angus Ison and Jacob Stamp play hockey for Durham.

The **Yorkshire Cup rugby** finals took place in Wakefield and featured three teams, the U14s, U16s and 1st XV. It is a significant achievement to get three teams through to the Yorkshire Cup finals. There was more good news also on the **rugby** front, with the U14, U15, U16 and 1st XV all qualifying for the White Rose finals, with the U12s qualifying for the ‘waterfall’ tournament, where they were undefeated. The U14s finished runners-up in the White Rose, whilst both the U15 and 1st XV were crowned champions. Will Barrett, Oscar Lees, Harry Williams, Toby Boyce have all played rugby for North Yorkshire. The U18 **girls’ rugby** team, not to be outdone, were also crowned North Yorkshire champions and they then competed in the Yorkshire round where they finished runners-up.

The U13 girls’ indoor **cricket** team finished second in the regional round of the Lady Taverners’ competition, well done to the team of Polly Mallon, Isabella Royston, Bella Weston, Georgi Houseman, Agatha Scott, Poppy Lawson, Molly Crowther, Millie Lock and Abi Knowles.

Congratulations also go to Harry Cosham who competed in the English **Alpine Ski** Championships in Italy in March. He also took part in the British Alpine Skiing competition in Holland where Harry came first overall of all male competitors. Harry will also compete against 5 other European countries in September representing England.

Ben Statham recently competed in Sheffield for the Yorkshire U13 **badminton** squad against all the northern counties in the ‘north midway badminton league’. Only 10 boys are selected from the whole of Yorkshire so he has done extremely well. Bertie Wood also plays badminton for Yorkshire as does Simeon Mitchell. Marijke Booth represented GB in climbing after finishing third in the nationals whilst Imogen Vollans does trampolining for Yorkshire. Ella Suleman plays for the Teesside and Leeds United football centre of excellence

The U14 **girls’ gymnastics** team took part in the Yorkshire Floor and Vault championships in Hull and the team won overall Bronze, while Isabella Weston won individual Gold in the vault.

Ella Foster has qualified for the indoor **athletics** UK finals and Joe Westgarth has been selected to represent North Yorkshire at **cricket.** Nick Cunningham, Luke Dobson and Oscar Lees played Taverners’ cricket.

The U12 **netball** team entered the National Cup, getting to the third round losing to the eventual winners of the competition. They look smart thanks to sponsorship from Mrs Hartas, a parent who runs the Ripon Uniform Shop. Isabella Binks has played county netball whilst Amelia Reed has played netball for North Yorkshire. We wait to hear the outcome of County Trials for Isabella Binks for Yorkshire and Amelia Reed, Libby Wilson, Annabel Sharp, Hetty Simenacz, Felicity Strachan, Connie Burkham and Marnie Scatchrd for North Yorkshire. The U12s have a challenge matching the standard of the Under 16s who are the current county champions.

Well done to the junior and inter-girls’ **cross country** teams who gained success when they finished second in the North of England Championships in Manchester. Alex Glegg and Marnie Scatchard represented North Yorkshire in the English Schools’ cross country championships. The junior girls, inter girls and inter boys qualified for the regional finals. There were some excellent individual runs, the highlights of which were Mena Scatchard, 2nd and Ella Foster, 4th. Mena Scatchard and Marnie Scatchard have both reached the National finals. Further congratulations go to Mena Scatchard who became Yorkshire Champion in the 3000m, a fantastic achievement as well as to Helena da Costa who won the Junior Girls’ 800 metres at the North Yorkshire Athletics champioships. Mena, Helena and Isabella Binks have competed in the inter girls’ national cross country finals.

Particular congratulations go to Isabella Royston who won the 90cm One Day Event at Northallerton Equestrian Centre and to Eddie Henson and Isabella Royston who came second and third respectively in the regional Area Eventing at 95cm and 105cm. Isabella and Eddie both qualified for the national finals at Hickstead. Congratulations to Mia Barnett, George White and Charlie Warne who came second in the regional **equestrian** show jumping competition, narrowly missing out on qualifying for the nationals.

Well done to David Blyton who represented England in **petanque** and to Ella Jamieson who won the North Yorkshire schools’ **cyclocross** championships. Ella has subsequently finished as the first girl in the National Under 12s road race in Milton Keynes, as well as winning the Under 13s girls’ Yorkshire Schools Time Trials Championships in Leeds. Jhapin Shahi has been selected for the England **VX** squad and Christa Wilson has qualified for the European Youth Olympic trials in **swimming**. Christa has also qualified for British swimming championships in the 200fly, 200IM, 100fly. She has also qualified in the 400IM for English Nationals. Ben Dearden competed in the national finals in sailing whilst Catherine Garnett did the same in diving.

Well done to the U13 boys’ **tennis** team who are area champions; they now represent Harrogate and Craven in the next round. Joe Scarratt plays tennis for North Yorkshire.

Students have competed at the English School **track and field** cup competition and there were some outstanding performances, including from Helena Da Costa. Both the junior girls and inter-girls finished second and qualified for the regional finals in Middlesbrough, where the Junior Girls finished first in the Regional B track and field national finals and the Inter Girls second, a tremendous achievement.

I am extremely grateful to **Mr Nick Chester,** Technical Director of Renault F1 Sport and Old Riponian, who kindly gave up his time to address the lower school students at Lower School Prizegiving. It is wonderful to hear how well former students are getting in in their careers and it was very kind of him to take the trouble to organise a Formula 1 car to be on show for the day, which was clearly the centre of attention during the afternoon!

I am also extremely grateful to Mrs Julia Whitham and her excellent team of parents who run an extraordinarily successful **Parents’ Association**, who work tirelessly and willingly to help raise funds for the school. The Midsummer Masked Ball was a wonderful evening and raised over £9,000 – a superb achievement and a true accolade for all their hard work. I would like to thank them also for marking my retirement on the evening which I much appreciated.

I would like to wish all parents and students every success and happiness in the future. I have valued the support, encouragement, kind words and the many farewell cards and gifts from parents in the last few weeks; thank you for taking the time to write to me.

I will certainly follow the successes of the school and students in the future and it has been a privilege to serve such a wonderful community.

A fond farewell to you all.

Yours sincerely

**M L Pearman
Headmaster**