

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

4 July 2019



Dear Parent

VALETE

Valete #1 is to focus on two of our support staff and our Graduate Trainees.

Sarah Jones has been an excellent LSA, offering great support to a number of boys with impediments to learning and I am delighted that she is going to train as a teacher. Kerry Holmes has been our Careers Administrator supporting the great work of a burgeoning department. We wish her well as she continues her career in the business world.

We are very pleased to be at the forefront of teacher training. My generation had little choice other than to spend a year on a PGCE course, in my case being trained by ex-teachers who'd had enough of being in the classroom. The Graduate Trainee programme is, in my view, much better and we have been privileged to support the following trainees as they enter an important and rewarding profession: Emilie Ashley; Evan Bett; Charlie Hubert; Elizabeth Herrera; Luke Hashman and Shazia Khaliq. We congratulate them all on their success and on securing a full time post for September. If you are, perchance, seeking a career change do get in touch with the Deputy Headmaster, Alex Wallace, who will be able to advise you.

TOUCH RUGBY/BEER AND GIN FESTIVAL

Both events were a great opportunity for boys, staff, parents and OWs to take part in an afternoon of fun rugby followed by an excellent social event of food and drink.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL (with your name on)

This is a good time to remind you to 'buy a brick' to support the funding of the Gym extension. Click [here](#) to buy one.

AND ALL THAT JAZZ...

The 'Jazz in the Quad' evening attracted a goodly crowd who, in fine weather, much enjoyed performances by various jazz bands, choral groups and Singers Ltd. Mr Wolton also made his 'swansong' with the staff band - I shall write more about this retiring, long serving teacher in my next letter.

COMING UP

Please keep an eye on the school calendar as we have a range of events taking place, including Senior and Junior Prize Giving, the Junior Concert, Junior Public Speaking, Sports Day - parents invited - prosecco tent. In the last two weeks of term, our senior cricket team taking part in the Royal Grammar Schools Cricket Festival (at RGS Worcester this year, RGS Lancaster next and here in 2021). We also have boys rowing at Henley Regatta this week - updates next time!

UNIFORM

My high horse has arrived. May I please remind you all to ensure that you refresh your memory of the [uniform policies](#) in the purchase of uniform items over the summer. The policy covers most things with additional instructions for, for example, shoes. If in doubt, check before you buy. The vast majority of boys conform and parents are supportive when they do not. We all remember school rules appearing 'petty' but schools that do not stay on top of these things find that their teachers are wasting an inordinate amount of time and energy dealing with infractions when their energies are better spent supporting learning and helping your son to achieve good results.

WHEN I SURVEY....

Many thanks to the 344 families who participated in the recent Parent Survey. It was a very positive response with almost all parents 'recommending RGS to another parent' or being 'generally happy with RGS'.

The responses to each question are converted into a score, so that we can spot trends over time. Anything over 4 indicates that there is a good level of agreement with the statement. The three starred statements have lower scores as 'don't know' carries a low weighting. Half of all participants said 'don't know' to the question about bullying, for example.

Question	2019	2018	2017	2016
I am pleased with the progress my son makes at RGS	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.2
Offered appropriate range of subjects/activities	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3
Satisfied with information given about son's progress	4.3	4.1	4	4
Son is happy and feels safe at RGS	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4
Very able pupils receive appropriate levels of support *	3	2.1	2.9	3.2
My son receives appropriate homework for his ability	4	3.9	3.7	4
My son receives an outstanding all-round education at RGS	4.1	4.1	4	n/a
My son is well looked-after at RGS	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.2
RGS achieves high standards of behaviour	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1
RGS deals well with any cases of bullying *	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7
RGS provides a good range of co-curricular activities	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2
RGS encourages me to be involved in events and other aspects of work	4	4	4	4
Information about RGS and its policies are readily available	4.6	4.2	3.6	4.4
RGS has handled well any concerns I have had *	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.9
RGS is well-led and managed	4.3	4.3	4.1	4
I receive timely responses to my questions	4	3.9	3.8	3.8
I would recommend RGS to another parent	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.4

There were many wonderful comments about the School which we were very pleased to see. I shared them with staff in our recent Common Room briefing where they were well received. Where specific areas or staff have been singled out, I shall of course ensure that they are sent to the right place. There were, of course, points for improvement. Please be assured that these will be carefully reviewed and acted upon where necessary.

Finally, I'd like to say that there were one or two comments which would be better put in a letter with greater detail so that the School can deal with the concern rather than awaiting an annual survey. I am immensely proud of RGS both in terms of staff, boys and what we offer. I do not, however, equate this pride with perfection and, as some of you noted, am restless for constant improvement.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Lukas Linhart (Year 12) - selected to play for the Czech U18 Rugby 7s team last week. The Czech team won the tournament.

Year 12 Chemists have done very well in this year's Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. The Challenge is a national competition in the form of a demanding 90 minute Chemistry exam designed to stretch top students taking A level Chemistry. This year RGS secured six Gold awards, five Silver awards and five Copper awards. The Gold awards were awarded to those students in the top 9.6% of over 9000 entrants from across 520 participating schools. The Gold Award winners were: Arun Atwal, Duncan Huntley, Saksham Kapoor, Alexander Lo, Hugo Overturf and Angus Whittam.

Cameron Stephenson - The Roentgenium Award (named after the synthetic element with symbol Rg) was awarded to the top 0.6% of entrants and these 56 students have won an invitation to a residential summer course at Cambridge University. RGS is delighted to be able to announce that Cameron won this prestigious award this year.

Alden Collier in Year 7, who over the past few months has established himself as one of the best young middle-distance runners in the country. Alden, who only took up running competitively when he joined Chiltern Harriers last September, has run 2.07 for 800m and 4.22 for 1500m – performances that have taken him to the top of the UK rankings in the U13 category and have broken not just the School record for Year 7 but the records for Years 8 and 9 as well. His current aim is to top the UK all-time lists for his age group in both events. He currently stands 6th for the 800m and 5th for the 1500m on the lists, which stretch back to the late 1970s. Alden is also hoping to see off the competition to win the 1500m on Sports Day next Wednesday. His rivals have their work cut out for them!

Philip Wayne