

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 6 June 2019



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Dear Parent

I'm fairly sure that half term was busy with exam revision, whatever year your child is in. I've been very impressed to see the focus around the school. I'm writing this letter, while supervising a revision session and it's clear that all boys are taking the process very seriously. Let's hope that the results are commensurate with the effort put in – there will always be something to learn from this experience. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with the School if you have concerns following the release of results.

PARENT SURVEY

We are very keen to receive feedback and you can, of course, write in at any time. There are a couple of important components of the 'feedback loop' taking place this half term. Mrs Forster is organising a 'Parent Voice' seminar on June 28. This will be a particular focus on the 'Reputation of RGS in the community' and our Parents' Evening system. Please see the letter on the website or in your 'InTouch' mail for further information.

There will also be an electronic parent survey coming out on Friday 14 June. The tick boxes are more or less the same as previous years (to aid measurement) but there is also the opportunity to comment on various aspects of provision. I cannot stress how important your help is with this and would urge all parents to take part. As an employer we seek staff feedback along similar lines and, as a school, we are building a growing culture of student voice.

MORE TEA, VICAR?

Although we use All Saints' Church for our Carol Service, the School is in the Anglican Parish of Terriers - there has been a closer connection with St Francis Church in the past as the School's roots are a Christian foundation. They are 'instituting' a new Vicar, the Rev Joanna Gallant at a service, on Tuesday 11 June during which some of our musicians will be participating. Joanna is keen to build links with the School.

IFTAR

We held an Iftar just before half term. This celebration has grown in popularity in recent years to the extent that we had around 250 participants - parents, boys and staff of all faiths and none. It was quite moving watching Muslim families, stretching across three generations in some cases, praying together before the meal. We are very grateful to Right Start for sponsoring the event. We were joined by local politicians and the MP for Wycombe, Steve Baker, who was, I'm sure, grateful to talk about something other than Brexit.

OLD WYCOMBIENSIANS

I am aware that a good proportion of you have an OW as a son (or father, brother). I'd be really pleased if you could point them in the direction of the [Alumni part of our website](#). We have made great efforts to engage with our alumni in recent weeks and any help that OWs can give to the Careers Department by offering mentoring, expertise or giving a talk can be registered on the OW website and would be appreciated.

CAREERS

I am very pleased with the extent to which Careers Education has developed at RGS. Although there is a certain amount of 'leading the horse to water', many boys do participate in the various symposiums and lectures which take place throughout the year and it does, of course, become more important to do so as your son progresses through the school. Schools are expected to reach eight 'Gatsby Benchmarks' (this is the Gatsby Foundation, not F Scott Fitzgerald). It is all fairly recent with a set of hoops to jump through, many (though not all) of which are relevant to our school. When the self-assessment was conducted we scored highly in many of the areas:

1. *A stable careers programme*
2. *Learning from career and labour market information*
3. *Addressing the needs of each pupil*
4. *Linking curriculum learning to careers*
5. *Encounters with employers and employees*
6. *Experiences of workplaces*
7. *Encounters with further and higher education;*
8. *Personal guidance*

They are testing criteria. We are now achieving 100% in four of the benchmarks and an average of 80% in all 8 (in 2017 only 23% of schools met even one benchmark, so this is great progress). We continue to develop provision in conjunction with external agencies, staff, students and you! Please do consider supporting our efforts by:

- Sharing your knowledge and expertise in a lunchtime talk or contributing to an event (just email your contact details, the area and how you might contribute, to ias@rgshw.com) (Ms Sowah)
- Discussing your son's Kudos profile (Y10 and above). You can also review pathways and LMI (Labour Market Information) on this platform.
- Ensuring your son calls the National Careers Service, so he can access independent guidance from a professional career's advisor (Tel: 0800 100 900)
- Helping students gain work experience in Y10/11 and Y12/13 by offering placements at your workplace or simply helping your son to gain a meaningful workplace experience.

TRIP - Reports from Mr Rose

On Wednesday 15th May, Mr Rose and Mr Hammons took 13 budding Year 12 historians to the National Archives for an introduction to archival research. They were able to access primary source documents from the archive about Old Wycombiensians who had served during the First World War. This led to a fascinating discovery of scandal and cover-up which shrouded the memory of those Old Boys who had volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces during that conflict. This trip will give valuable evidence of independent research for those wishing to go on and take History at university.

On Saturday 18th May, Mr Rose and Mr Hammons took 18 Year 12 boys to Bisley National Shooting Centre ranges to shoot firearms from the period c.1790 to 1918 which is the period of study for the popular 'Experience of Warfare' A level module. The boys all had the opportunity to shoot the Brown Bess musket, 1853 Enfield Rifle and the service rifle from the First World War, the famous SMLE. A small competition shoot was held with the highest possible score being 50. Matty Walsh shot superbly well with a score of 42 which earned him the coveted 'RGS History Department - Sharpe Shooter Trophy' (in reference to Richard Sharpe, the famous Bernard Cornwall character from the fictional tales of the 95th Rifles). The day enabled the boys to understand the practical developments in British small arms technology, which will be useful for their studies of the technology that contributed to Britain's success in wars between 1790-1918.

FUTURE PROJECTS

We are constantly striving to improve the school estate balancing reputational aesthetics with inspirational facilities for our students. Over half term, our groundsmen have turned their attention to landscaping as well as developing the, previously ramshackle Estates Office just outside School House. Thanks to the work of FRORGS, through your kind donations, an extension to the gym/fitness centre will take place over the summer holiday. This exciting project which will enable the gym to support more boys with more equipment was given planning permission by Wycombe DC a few weeks ago. Hot on the heels of that, our plans to build a new Sixth Form Centre and Library are now with Wycombe DC for planning. The current provision for Sixth Formers is inadequate and our aim is to build a 21st century centre with a range of formal study spaces combined with a more informal commercially run café. The aim is a Sixth Form Centre in the 'heart of the school' to prepare students for university. The new Library will be modern and practical with plenty of study space for all years. The project will have the added benefit of moving the outposts of Maths into the current mezzanine, with the other Maths classrooms. We are awaiting final figures, thus the plans may be subject to some amendments over time. It will be fantastic and, if approved, we'll need the support of the school community to get it built. Watch this space.

Philip Wayne