

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

17 October 2019



Dear Parent

I thought I'd start with some upcoming events.

- The PA have several events including the Quiz Night which takes place on Saturday.
- The Autumn Recital takes place next Thursday in the Queen's Hall - this will be senior solos and ensembles including the Trad Jazz Band and the Close Harmony group. It will also feature the trebles and altos of the Junior Choir.
- There is a series of Mindfulness sessions for parents running this term - please see The Little Box Office on the website for details. A modest cost of £5 per session.
- Our Sixth Form Open Evening takes place on 20 November - this will be an opportunity to speak to departments as well as to hear more about our exceptional Sixth Form provision. We have already held an information session for external candidates, which was very well attended, but please be assured that we do ensure that our own boys, who qualify, will have priority over places within subjects. A letter with full details will be sent next week.
- For younger boys, our Open Mornings take place next week on Tuesday 22 and Thursday 24 October at 10.15am. These are timed to coincide with the transfer test results having been published. Please do let families with Year 6 boys know about this, and Year 5 if they are keen!
- We have not one, but two Comedy nights - one for Rugby, one for Rowing. I'm sure they'll both be a great laugh. Take your pick! I went to watch Wasps last week - they don't have a bee team. (Worry not - I'm not one of the acts!)

GB HONOURS FOR RGS FENCER LOUIS GOSLING

The RGS Fencing Squad has made an impressive start to the new year, with a win against Bradfield College followed by a draw with Winchester College. Our star turn so far, however, has been Louis Gosling in Year 12, who was selected to represent Great Britain at the U18 sabre competition in Godollo, Hungary last weekend – an event that drew together 278 fencers from 26 countries. Louis will be presented with Swan Colours (our award for national representation) in assembly soon. The quality of competition was high but Louis fenced well and only narrowly missed out on getting through the group stage of the individual competition. The team event on the Sunday proved tougher with the draw pitching them against a Russian side that won 45-19 and went on to finish third overall.

RUGBY

We have had an impressive set of rugby fixtures recently, with great performances and wins in the blocks against Brighton College and Hampton School. This weekend is the St Joseph's National Schools Rugby Festival and we are, as usual taking part. Please see the [Festival website](#) for more details and, if you're bored with the World Cup, watch our own boys in action in Ipswich on their live stream!

The gym extension is very near to completion - there have been a few bumps in the road but it will be well worth the wait as it is going to be a fantastic facility for our boys. Many, many thanks to FRORGS for their financial and 'moral' support of the project and, of course, to you who fund this and other 'Friends of' Groups.

MUSIC

The Friends of Music held their AGM, very sensibly disguised as a Jazz Evening. It was super to hear some great music from a range of ensembles including this year's incarnation of the Close Harmony Group and a new genre 'gypsy jazz'. We were delighted to welcome back Mr Bolton who played guitar during the evening. Mr Bolton was Assistant Director of Music here and now runs his own department in a North London School.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Parents' Association, essentially the 'Friends of Everything' held their AGM last night. It is good to see some new members on the committee and there was a good discussion about parental and student involvement in events. Many thanks to Catherine Wetherell who has stood down as Chair having served her two years with passion and commitment. We welcome Klaire Huddleston who has succeeded Catherine in this role.

PROGRESS 8

This year's GCSE results were very pleasing, with 71 % being awarded Grades 9-7, very competitive in Bucks and a nudge up the league tables of the 'boys' academic state schools' nationally. (Source BASS). For 2016/17 and 2017/18, we had to calculate our own Progress 8 figures since IGCSEs were no longer counted in the accountability measure, but this year our boys sat only GCSE exams. We have received early notification that our Progress 8 score is 0.7; the 'league tables' are not published until January but as a guide, this result last year would have put us in the top 7 % of schools nationally. This is particularly strong given that the selective intake in the 13 Bucks grammar schools covers the top 30 % of the Bucks annual cohort.

INSPECTION

You will have been aware that we had a visit from Ofsted inspectors last week, both in the School (academy) and our boarding provision. The framework under which the School was last inspected in 2008 is incomparable to the higher bars of the new 2019 framework which is five weeks into its inception. Many thanks to parents who completed the survey, the exceptionally positive results of which chime with our own summer survey. It will not surprise you to know that your sons were highly praised for their attainment, progress and courtesy during the inspection. I will let you know more when I receive the reports.

TEACHMEET

We were very pleased to host around 150 teachers for a 'TeachMeet', from a range of schools. Professional development is important in all careers and it was great to see a blend of experience and youthful rigour sharing good practice.

IF YOU LIKE A LOT OF CHOCOLATE...

It has been a delight to meet Year 7 boys around the time of their 12th birthday, something which I have done for many years. My gifts are not bountiful, but a Twix and a carton of orange juice seems to sustain them for their visit. They are settling in well and enjoying life at RGS, which is always good to hear. They also receive a little coaching in a handshake, firm grip and eye contact!

...JOIN OUR CLUB

Please click on the [link](#) as a reminder of our Clubs and Societies booklet.

PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS

Many congratulations to Cameran Johal who has won the Organ Scholarship to Magdalene College, Cambridge. Many of the country's finest musicians have held such positions in the past. This is also a good time to wish our Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science candidates well as they undergo their interview preparation at this time of year. I will, of course, extend similar good wishes to boys applying for other great universities closer to their application window.

The photograph above is of two former students (Callum Padfield and Ziggy Twine) who have just started their university lives at Cambridge.

Best wishes

Philip Wayne