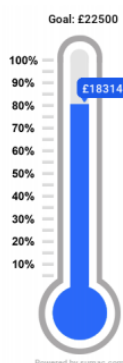


HEADMASTER'S LETTER 22 March 2021



Dear Parent

Welcome to Mr Nicolas Carr who is covering maternity leave for Miss Clare Gibbs. Mr David Robertson has now left RGS and we wish him well in his future endeavours. We are delighted to welcome back Mr Wyncoll who will be with us until July.

As you can see from the thermometer, the RGSPA CrowdFund has been a huge success, rather quickly – thank you for your generous support.

The stats are as at Sunday 9pm: 236 supporters; £18314 (81 % of the raw target); gift aid £4124; 23 days to go. There is a further business donation of £500. If you have not yet supported this, I hope you will join me and the other supporters in doing so. This has the potential to make a significant improvement to the experience of all boys at RGS. If you wish to donate either through your own business or through corporate giving opportunities, we can arrange for the transfer of funds to the PA account. Whilst it cannot be done through the Gift Aid website, we will add the business donations at the end of the campaign and recognise them along with the personal gifts. Thank you all so much for such great support.

It has been wonderful to see the boys and staff back in action. I have, once again, enjoyed my 'walkabouts', observing excellent teaching and learning as I go, and seeing the vibrant purposefulness of both the day school and a full boarding house. I remain aware of the challenges faced by Years 11 and 13 at this time. Senior staff have told me that both year groups have had an excellent approach to the March assessments which are, of course, only a part of the picture that will be built around a student to award a grade. I have also been made aware of some of the teething problems with the 'remote assessments', due to some Year 11 boys isolating, necessitating invigilation over Teams. It required considerable agility to make this happen quickly but I hear that the iron of the Exams Office smoothed the creases, including an extension to the exam period. The Chairman of Ofqual spoke at a Heads' conference last week and made some important comments about this year's process, the validity and integrity of the grades. The transcript is [here](#) (recommended reading).

As I am sure you appreciate, all teaching staff are keen to know what the boys have learnt during lockdown and where any gaps in understanding might have occurred. However, please be assured, with non-exam year groups our staff are gently easing the boys back into School life by using assessment of their understanding during lessons, rather than a series of formal tests. The wellbeing of the boys in their return to School life is of paramount importance in these early weeks.

There was a quite a hoo-ha before Christmas when the Government announced that Lateral Flow Testing was to be conducted in schools. I find it best to leave the politicians to do the arguing and for the School to just get on and do what is asked of us. Most other Heads I know well enough to ask feel the same. I cannot sufficiently thank the testing team at RGS - this includes busy staff who have taken hours out of their usual duties, senior staff, support staff, Heads of Year (monitoring the queue – benign, as the boys were so good - if you remember Granny queuing at the Post Office to collect her pension, it was that good) and parent volunteers. Most teachers were teaching most of the time, but some were able to support us when they were not. Even the Clerk to the Governors threw her hat in the ring. I must thank parents too, for their support in giving consent. We see examples in the media of disappointing levels of co-operation and it simply is not helpful. Please know, parents, that it is appreciated. The Drama Studio is no longer a field hospital. Well done to all!

Education is, for most, a very rewarding career. We are fortunate to have a passionate and committed staff team in both support services and teaching. I was very pleased to be on the selection panel to appoint the Principal for a new Teaching School which will be run alongside the Astra Alliance. This will be a real benefit to the area in supporting aspirant teachers. We have a strong partnership with Astra and Mr Wallace ran a training day for trainees last week. I did not teach straight after university - I was a freelance musician - and whilst the PGCE route was fine in its day, the 'Grad Trainee' route alongside the new Early Careers Programme is more aligned to the commercial world and offers a broader, more realistic training. Career development is essential and I am always delighted to see professionals progress. I predicted in my letter of 18 January that there would, most probably, be a busy 'transfer season' this year. I will focus on this in a future letter, but we have retirements, relocations and promotions in equal measure. We have made some excellent appointments, including two Old Wycombiensiens (the joy on the faces of the Department at appointing 'home grown talent' was great to see).

I was delighted to see some of the 133 boys taking part at the Duke of Edinburgh Award practice expedition this weekend. This took place, with all the Covid restrictions in place. Much praise, as ever, for your sons from the staff leading the weekend.

Some things you'll be in 'oar' of - the RGS Friends of Rowing Treasure Hunt (Heaven knows what you'll find), 'bowled over' by the cricket camp and hypnotised by Mr Zair's meditation techniques. Click for details:

- [Rowing](#)
- [Cricket](#)
- [Mr Zair's meditation](#)

It's been quite a weekend: a visit to the DofE practice expedition, Ireland v England, the FRORGS St Patrick's Quiz Night, Wales v France, mowing the lawn, Villa v Spurs, a cycle ride and family time. The reason for the chronicle - the next step is getting back to normal and we are all very nearly there. Stay safe and thank you all for helping us to build this fantastic community.

Yours sincerely

Philip Wayne