



May 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Exams well underway, young people out on trips and visits, weekend Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, staff running last minute revision sessions and lots of planning for next year – all in all the usual summer term!

It has been a pleasure to return to my old role at Ripley and to enjoy meeting our wonderful young people again, looking very smart in their new ties. There have been many changes of staff over the last two years but it's great to see that our Christian ethos remains the glue holding together everything that we are and do.

I am delighted that Governors have appointed Mrs Gill Jackson (currently Head Teacher of Archbishop Temple School in Preston) as our new Principal. Mrs Jackson has been coming in regularly to meet with me and other key staff to prepare for her new role and ensure a smooth handover in September. We are also very pleased to report that we have recruited a new Subject Leader for Maths, Miss Emily Hirst; Emily trained to be a teacher with us and worked in the Maths department here before moving to Our Lady's Catholic College where she is now Head of Maths. We look forward to welcoming her back to Ripley.

Later this term on our new intake evenings and transition days we will be welcoming 280 Year 6 pupils who will be joining us for the great adventure that is Ripley in September. As in previous years they will all be given a book to read which the year group will explore together in September. This year our book is "The One and Only Ivan" – a great read on the very topical theme of animal welfare. This initiative, which we have run for several years now, gives the year group an opportunity to make new friends, one of the most important factors in a happy transition to secondary school.

Later in the term we have Open Evening on Thursday 4 July. I would just like to remind you that school will close at 12.30pm that day. A number of school buses will be available; we will send you more details nearer the time.

Visiting Ripley: We welcomed some visitors from a church in India linked to our local URC congregation to Ripley this week, and a number of visitors from The Greater Churches Conference to our Choral Evensong. Conference members represented some of the great historic churches in our country and it was great to be able to show off our chapel and our choristers. We have also greatly enjoyed having Dr Susan Salt with us over the last two weeks, undertaking a placement as part of her training to become a Vicar in the Anglican Church. A consultant in palliative care, Susan has been a great support in the chaplaincy during her time here.

Mandarin: As we announced earlier this academic year, Ripley St Thomas was chosen to join the Mandarin Excellence Programme. The programme, supported by the British Council and Confucius Institute, aims to see at least 5000 pupils in England on the track to fluency in Mandarin Chinese by 2020. Mandarin Chinese is thought to be the most important language for the UK's future prosperity. Twenty two pupils have almost completed their first year studying Mandarin. It has been a delight to observe the pupils enjoying their studies and making excellent progress in their comprehension, written and spoken Mandarin. As well as language development, pupils are also expected to develop their knowledge of the Chinese culture. As a result, pupils have had the opportunity to engage in Chinese Fine Art lessons, KungFu lessons, Chinese singing workshops at Leeds University and a drama workshop to celebrate Chinese New Year. In the coming weeks the participants will be visiting a Chinese restaurant to celebrate completing their hurdle tests. We are delighted that the programme will continue next year – we will begin to recruit our new cohort at the Year 7 induction evenings.

Morning Tea with the Senior Leadership Team: We have had the pleasure of welcoming some of our 'Ripley Stars' to morning tea over the past few weeks. Pupils in Years 7 – 11 were allowed out of lessons a little early and came to the Hive for hot chocolate, cakes and fruit as a reward for their brilliance. They were nominated by their Progress Leaders for a range of reasons: academic excellence, continued hard work, lots

of Ripples or for having made impressive improvements. It was a pleasure to spend time talking to them and hearing about what they are enjoying at school. We are proud to have such well-mannered and articulate young people in our school community and we're excited to see how they will continue to flourish in the coming years.

Sport: Our sports teams and competitors have been very busy and successful recently and we congratulate the following:

Rhys Ashton (Y10) who has been selected for the England Schools' Cross Country team for the home countries international in Dublin.

Lauren Helme (Y12) who has won Gold at the ITU World Cheerleading Championships in Florida as part of the Team England All-Girl Advanced Team.

Adam Densson (Y8) who travel to Croatia with the England table tennis squad for training and a competition.

Y8 Girls' Table Tennis team who are Lancashire champions, English Schools' Regional champions and English School's National champions.

Y9, 10 and 11 netball teams who are all district champions.

Y8, 10 and 11 boys' football teams who are all district champions.

6th form: Our Year 13 students enjoyed a celebratory week leading up to the Leavers' service last Friday. An ASPIRE assembly at the start of the week highlighted their contribution in the categories of Achievement, Success, Progress, Initiative, Relationships and Endeavour, recognising the many ways in which they have made a positive impact. The Leavers' service itself was a wonderful occasion; the Chapel was filled with the sound of our students enjoying the occasion and in particular the outstanding contributions made by some members of the year group who wanted to share their talents as they all came together to mark the end of their formal education.

This week Year 12 students are taking part in a day exploring themes around health and wellbeing as part of our PSHE programme in sixth form. Sessions include strategies to combat stress and improve mental wellbeing, alongside practical first aid training - all crucial life skills that students can take forward into their next steps.

Additionally in the final half term, we are running our 'six week enrichment challenge', an opportunity for Year 12 students to take up short term enrichments and engage in something new whilst developing their transferable skills and getting themselves 'application ready'. Enrichments on offer include debating, entrepreneurship, online learning and an introduction to Mandarin, to name but a few. We look forward to seeing the students take up the challenge!

On 17th and 18th June, we welcome students who have applied to join us next year to Sixth Form Induction. This is an introduction to sixth form life; students attend lessons in their chosen subjects and have the opportunity to meet teachers, tutors and students to help make a smooth transition into sixth form.

I wish you a relaxing half term, I am grateful to the many staff who are running revision sessions during the week, please do encourage your children to attend the relevant ones. Looking somewhat further ahead, our holiday and term dates for 2020 – 2021 are now available on the website.

Kind regards



Acting Principal