



September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the new academic year is now well underway, and the summer break well behind us, I am writing to update you on a number of school matters. We have had a positive and productive start to the year, with 283 eager and keen Year 7 pupils joining us from over 60 feeder primary schools. They have settled in remarkably well and are enjoying life at Ripley.

Can I thank all parents and carers for their support in making the start of term so smooth, particularly with regard to uniform, punctuality and homework.

Examination results

I am delighted to inform parents that our results at GCSE and A Level were, yet again, superb and showed a significant improvement on results the year before.

For the majority of subjects at GCSE, this was the first time new courses have been examined. For maths and English, this is the second year of the new qualifications. The new GCSEs are more challenging in terms of content and there have been significant changes to assessment methods and grading, including a significant reduction in coursework in many subjects. This has entailed a great deal of disruption and turbulence for pupils and staff alike and it is tribute to the professionalism and diligence of staff that results have actually improved in many subjects this year. Whilst the government is yet to release the official figures, we are cautiously predicting a substantial improvement in the key measure of school performance at GCSE, the 'Progress 8' measure, which reflects the academic progress that all pupils make between Year 7 and GCSE. This is largely due to our excellent results in maths and English, but also significant improvements in subjects such as science and history this year. It is also great to see an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving a 'strong' pass (grade 5 or above) in both English and maths. Results in maths are particularly strong and deserve special mention. Indeed, in one class in maths there were 25 grade 8 or 9s, the highest of the grades under the new system.

At A-Level, our Sixth Form is in the top 25% of sixth forms and colleges in the country for the progress students make between GCSE and A Level. This is a fantastic achievement and rightly continues to mark Ripley out as a centre of excellence at A-Level. Due in part to our outstanding results at A-Level, the sixth form continues to grow, with the recruitment of 212 new students into Year 12 taking the overall number of students towards 400. Many of our students have succeeded in achieving places at the country's top universities and on very competitive higher apprenticeships.

Governing Body

The end of last summer term saw the retirement of Professor John Crewdson as Chair of our Governing Body. Professor Crewdson has served Ripley with distinction for over 25 years, the last 15 as Chair. We are all deeply indebted to him for his outstanding service and support for our school and for his wisdom in leading the Governing Body so skilfully. Professor Crewdson's legacy will remain very strong at Ripley, not least through the 'John Crewdson Library' named in his honour. He will also remain an influential figure through his involvement at a senior level in the Bay Learning Trust. I am delighted to announce that Mrs Jackie Garnett was elected unanimously by her fellow governors to be our new Chair, with Mrs Val Wilson elected as her Vice Chair. We wish them well in these important roles.

New staff

We welcome a number of new staff to Ripley this September:

Teaching staff

Mr P Wilson	Assistant Principal / PE
Mrs L Inglis	English
Miss A Leak	English
Dr V Rogan	English
Mrs C Marsh	Sociology
Mr J Scott	Technology
Mrs K Beeden	Maths
Dr P Allcock	Head of Academic Music
Miss A Bradshaw	Geography
Miss S Huddart	French and Spanish
Mrs H Robb	RE
Miss A Montgomery	Maths

Support staff

Miss L Flynn	Receptionist
Mrs C Wilson	HR and Payroll Assistant
Mrs L Winston	Trust Administrator
Helen Brocklehurst	Catering Assistant
Jacqueline McLeavy	Catering Assistant

Additionally, we have three new 'Ripley Scholars' this year: Ellie Consadine in the Chaplaincy, Matthew Park supporting the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Alex Peters in Music.

Ripley Teaching School Alliance – Teacher Training

After a highly successful last academic year, which included our 'outstanding in all areas' grading by Ofsted, we have recruited another 25 high calibre trainee teachers onto our programme for this year. We look forward to helping them develop into the great teachers of tomorrow.

Front Car Park by the main entrance

Can I remind parents that the small car park at the front of school must not be used for the purposes of dropping off or picking up pupils. With over 1700 pupils entering and leaving the site at the start and end of the day, it is simply not safe to have cars moving around.

Farm news

Last week saw the birth of 10 piglets on the school farm (pictured below). Proud mum Gertie is doing fine. It was one of my highlights of the week to accompany Mr Gomersall and his Year 7 Ag and Hort class when they went to see them. It is not a lesson any of the pupils will forget in a hurry!



Privacy Notices

As part of our duties under the data Protection Act / General Data Protection Regulations, we regularly update our privacy notices. Privacy notices explain how we will be using your data. The latest privacy notice for pupils can be found on the school website at <http://ripleystthomas.com/parents/policies>

Drop-in Clinic

Can I remind parents that I do have a drop-in clinic on a Thursday morning from 9:30-11:30am if there are any urgent issues you would like to discuss.

South Africa 2018

In July nine pupils from years 11 to 13 took part in a mission trip to Bloemfontein, South Africa. They were joined by 11 young people from the wider Diocese of Blackburn. The Diocese of Blackburn and the Diocese of the Free State, South Africa have the oldest serving link of its kind in the Church of England.

The purpose of the trip was to see, share, and serve; to allow our students to experience a different culture, to share in their Christian faith with each other and the people they came into contact with, and to serve some of the poorest communities in South Africa. During the trip, the young people worked with three charities: Mosamaria, a charity supporting families affected by HIV/AIDS and increasingly TB; Sunflower House, a children's hospice; and Towers of Hope, a charity supporting the homeless on the streets of 'Bloem'.

In addition to the mission aspect of the trip, pupils had the opportunities to go on a game drive, learn about apartheid and the Boer War, and go quad biking through the South African countryside. This was a fantastic, but emotional, trip which allowed plenty of opportunities to reflect on the way we live our lives and the priorities we may have. I am sure it will be a trip that stays with the young people for a long time.

So, we look forward to another exciting year at Ripley. It has been my pleasure over the last week to speak to all year groups and remind them of the wonderfully rich heritage that we are a part of here and how indebted we are to the generosity and philanthropy of our founders. The Ripleys' legacy of faith, dedication and service to others, handed down for 154 years and inspired by the Gospel, continues to guide us this year and into the future. May God continue to bless our school and guide our work this year.

Yours faithfully



Mr M Wood
Principal