

## Headteacher's Letter

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22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014

Dear Parent

As we settle back into another new academic year I welcome back all our pupils, staff and parents. I also extend a warm welcome to all those who have joined our school community this year.

I look forward to working with you all in the coming year and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support to ensure such a high standard of uniform by pupils on their return. The overwhelming majority of pupils are smartly attired in the correct uniform and we have only had to follow up a small number of concerns to date. We will continue to check uniform on a regular basis.

### GCSE Results 2014

I would like to congratulate our Year 11 pupils from last year on their GCSE results. This year saw a considerable rise in our results overall and we are delighted with the levels of progress made by our pupils. I am pleased to see the evidence coming through that the teaching and support pupils receive at our school is making the difference and thank the staff for all their hard work too. I share below some of the outcomes:

- 76% achieved five or more A\*-C grades (a rise of 11% on last year)
- 67% achieved five or more grades at A\*-C including English and Mathematics (a rise of 9% on last year)
- 31% achieved three or more A\*-A grades and 17% achieved five or more A\*-A grades
- 83% achieved A\*-C grades in Mathematics (a school record for this subject with 25% achieving A\*-A grades and 81% making three levels of progress)
- 74% achieved A\*-C grades in English (a rise of 10% on last year with 19% achieving A\*-A grades and 78% making three levels of progress)
- 69% achieved two or more A\*-C grades in Science

I am certain you will agree this is an excellent set of results at a time when there is much variation being reported by schools locally and nationally. However, as I always say, we are not complacent and the challenge is to keep moving forward and 'do it all over again' year on year. In the meantime we look forward to celebrating our pupils' success at our annual Presentation Evening on Thursday November 27<sup>th</sup>.

## Mrs Carol Beacham (SENCo 1994 until 2011)

Many parents will remember with much fondness Mrs Beacham who was our SENCo for a number of years. We were therefore very saddened to hear that she has recently passed away following a long period of ill-health. She was a very committed and hard-working member of staff who was passionate about ensuring children with learning difficulties should be given the best support to achieve in school. Our thoughts and wishes are very much with her family at this time.

## Diary dates for the Autumn Term

This week we have our Open Evening (Monday September 22<sup>nd</sup>) and Open Mornings (Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September) for prospective parents and pupils.

Monday 22 September 2014	Open Evening 6-8pm
Thursday 25 September 2014	Open Morning 9.15-10.30am
Friday 26 September 2014	Open Morning 9.15-10.30am
Friday 3 October 2014	<b>STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils</b>
Monday 6 October 2014	Year 11 Parents' Information Evening: 6.00-8:00pm
Thursday 16 October 2014	Year 10 Parents' Information Evening: Introduction to KS4 6.00-8.00pm
Tuesday 14 October 2014	Year 8 Parents' consultation workshop
Monday 20 October 2014	Year 7 Tutors Evening Main Hall 4.30-6.30pm
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2014	Headteacher's Coffee Morning 9.15 – 10.00am
Friday 24 October 2014	<b>School closes to pupils for half-term</b>
Monday 3 November 2014	<b>School re-opens to pupils</b>
Monday 10 November 2014	Year 11 Practice Examinations commence
Wednesday 19 November 2014	Year 11 Practice Examinations end
Thursday 27 November 2014	GCSE 2014 Presentation Evening Year 8 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 28 November 2014	<b>STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils</b>
Monday 1 December 2014	Year 8 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Friday 12 December 2014	Year 11 Pupil Monitoring Data and Reports published to parents
Monday 15 December 2014	Year 11 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Thursday 18 December 2014	Whole School PSHE Day Years 7, 9 and 10 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 19 December 2014	<b>End of Autumn Term</b>

## Staff Information

We welcome our new staff from September and do hope they will enjoy being part of our school community as they settle in:

- Ms Barnes – RE/Humanities teacher
- Mrs March – English teacher
- Ms Veale – PE teacher (maternity cover for Mrs Vaughan)
- Mr White – Cover Supervisor

We are currently re-advertising for the post of SENCo and hope to appoint shortly. If you have any queries or concerns regarding your child's learning needs in the interim please contact their Year Co-ordinator or Mrs Briggs (Deputy Headteacher) who is acting as SENCo this half term and working closely with the Learning Support Team to ensure all pupils receive any required support.

## School Site

During the summer holidays the Site Team worked hard to prepare the school site for the start of term with a large number of contractors also on site. I am pleased to confirm that the refurbishment of the girls' and boys' toilets on the ground floor of the Main Building has been completed. We have also had extensive replacement of the pipework supplying water throughout the Main Building with plans in place to undertake this in the Practical Block in due course.

## Communication with parents

In my letter to parents in July I included the following information outlining the number of ways parents can be kept informed. I include this again for our new parents:

- many of our parents are now directly receiving more key information by signing up to our email database rather than relying on their children to bring all letters home. This will also ensure you receive my half-termly letters and the termly newsletter notification by email next year. To do this you need to go to [www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk](http://www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk), click onto 'Our School' and then 'Parent Contacts', complete the required fields and press 'make request'. An acknowledgment will then appear on the screen. I know that not all parents have access to a computer and some prefer a paper copy so we will continue to provide these as well
- the SIMS Learning Gateway provides a logon to access information on your child's progress. To request an account please email [SLG@testvalley.hants.sch.uk](mailto:SLG@testvalley.hants.sch.uk) stating your child's name and tutor group. There is also a link to SLG on the homepage of our website and account request forms have recently been posted to all new Year 7 parents.
- parents can also logon to Moodle (via the school website) to view the home learning tasks set. There is also a link on Moodle to request a logon.

## Revised Achievement Points System

We have just undertaken a review of our achievement points system and launched a revised system with all pupils from Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September. We have taken into account pupil and parent feedback on our previous system for awarding achievement points and hope this will address some of the concerns raised as well as keeping the parts that were working well. As with all new systems, however, we will keep this under review.

Below is a brief summary of how the new system will work but if you do have any further queries about this or your child's achievement points please do contact their tutor or Year Co-ordinator who will be monitoring these closely. You can check your child's points on the SLG:

- pupils will be awarded 30 points each week to keep, build upon or lose; tutors will record these on the system on Week 2 Wednesdays
- all staff are encouraged to award additional points to be added to a pupil's total e.g. excellent home learning, positive participation in lessons, helping at school events
- all staff can record negative behaviour points to be deducted from a pupil's total e.g. unco-operative behaviour, incomplete home learning
- at the end of each term the five pupils in each tutor group with the most points will be rewarded with a £5.00 gift voucher\*; the pupil in each year-group with the most points will also be awarded with a trophy to hold for one term\*; the tutor group with the most points in each year-group will be awarded with a trophy to hold for one term
- all pupils who achieve or exceed the termly points total will be eligible to take part in the end of term activities\*. This term the total to aim for is 360 by 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

\*Pupils should also have no less than 95% attendance for the term unless there are exceptional circumstances to be taken into account.

## Lost property

We collect a large amount of lost property during the school day and endeavour to reunite items with their owners as soon as possible. It is therefore essential pupils ensure that items of clothing and equipment have their names clearly written in them. If they have lost an item they should come to Pupil Services to check if it has been handed in as we often build up a large amount of unnamed and unclaimed items. Unfortunately we cannot store all of this indefinitely and do have to clear unclaimed items each term. We would appreciate your support to check your child's belongings have their names in and to remind them to look after these.

## Test Valley School PTA

Our enthusiastic and dedicated PTA continues to work hard to support the school and are already planning events for the year ahead. On Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup> from 9.00 – 1.00pm they are holding their first car boot sale at the school and further details are attached at the end of this letter. It would be lovely if you are able to join us at this event as a buyer or seller to support the fundraising for the school.

Alternatively if you would like to join the PTA or be involved on a more informal basis for some events you would certainly be welcomed aboard and are asked to contact Denice Wareham (Chair) [denice.wareham@btinternet.com](mailto:denice.wareham@btinternet.com)

## Extra-Curricular Activities Programme

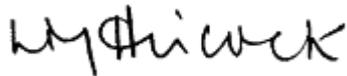
A programme listing the extra-curricular activities for pupils to join in at lunch times and after school during the Autumn Term will shortly be available on our school website. We would ask you to encourage your child to look at this and choose what they would like to attend. There is no doubt that getting fully involved in school life outside the classroom provides some wonderful opportunities to try new activities, enhances their enjoyment of coming to school as well as developing new skills and talents.

## Headteacher's Coffee Morning: Tuesday October 21<sup>st</sup>

**9.15 – 10.00am**

My first coffee morning for this year will be on the above date and I extend a warm welcome to all parents to join me. As always, this is an informal opportunity to join me for a cup of coffee to hear what is happening in the school and to share your views. At our last gathering we were joined by representatives from HC3S (our school catering service) who were pleased to receive feedback on the daily menu and food choices offered to pupils.

Yours sincerely



**L Hiscock (Miss)**  
**Headteacher**