

Headteacher's Letter

September 2015

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. I would particularly ask parents to ensure their child is not wearing non-uniform items to school such as hoodies as the weather changes. We believe our uniform is very practical and easy for pupils to get right and will continue to check uniform on a regular basis.

Celebrating excellent GCSE Results!

I am delighted to report that our pupils achieved excellent results. It is wonderful to see our Year 11 pupils from last year doing so well and I warmly congratulate them. These results build on last year's high outcomes and I am pleased that this enables our pupils to choose the next steps in their education and futures with confidence. I also thank the staff for all their hard work and support to make this possible. I share below some of the headline figures:

- **78%** 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
- **80%** achieved A*-C grades in Mathematics
- **71%** achieved A*-C grades in English
- **25%** achieved three or more A*-A grades and **14%** achieved five or more A*-A grades

I am certain you will agree this is an excellent set of results but, 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 26th.

Diary dates for the Autumn Term

You will have received with this letter one of our new Test Valley School Year Planners. We do hope you will find this useful to refer to for key school dates and to add others to during the year. Below is a summary of these key dates for this term.

HEADTEACHER • MISS L HISCOCK B.ED (HONS)

Roman Road, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 6HA — Tel 01264 810555 — Fax 01264 810173

Email: office@testvalley.hants.sch.uk — Website: www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk

Friday 2 October 2015	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Tuesday 6 October 2015	Year 11 Parents' Information Evening: 6.00-8:00pm
Tuesday 13 th October 2015	PTA Annual General Meeting – 6.00pm (Rm 2 Main Building)
Thursday 15 October 2015	Year 10 Parents' Information Evening: Introduction to KS4 6.00-8.00pm
Monday 19 October 2015	Year 7 Tutor's Evening Main Hall 4.30-6.30pm
Friday 23 October 2015	School closes to pupils for half-term
Monday 2 November 2015	School re-opens to pupils
Monday 9 November 2015	Year 11 Practice Examinations commence
Thursday 19 November 2015	Year 11 Practice Examinations end
Friday 20 November 2015	Whole School PSHE Day
Thursday 26 November 2015	GCSE 2015 Presentation Evening Year 8 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 27 November 2015	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Monday 30 November 2015	Year 8 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Friday 11 December 2015	Year 11 Pupil Monitoring Data and Reports published to parents
Thursday 17 December 2015	Years 7, 9 and 10 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 18 December 2015	End of Autumn Term

Headteacher's Coffee Morning

Tuesday October 20th 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.

Staff News

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

- Mrs Beards – Learning Support Assistant
- Mr Bennett – Mathematics teacher (covering Mrs Luckham's maternity leave)
- Miss Emms – Clerk to Governing Body
- Miss Jacobs – Mathematics teacher
- Miss McFarlane – Science teacher (Second in Department)
- Mr Page – Deputy Headteacher
- Mrs Speed – English 1-to-1 Tutor
- Mr Williams – English teacher (a return to our school, having previously taught here)

We look forward to also welcoming soon a new Cover Supervisor and Design Technology Technician. Finally, we are currently advertising for two vacancies coming up on our Site Team and further details are available on the school website.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs Luckham on the birth of her son and to note that Miss Barnes is now known by her married name of Mrs Smyth following her wedding at Easter.

School news

During the summer holidays the Site Team worked hard to prepare the school site for the start of term. I am pleased to confirm that a major project to install a new boiler system has now been completed. A new catering service Edwards and Ward started in September, offering a much wider menu with all food prepared freshly on site every day for break and lunch times. Pupils have been invited to feedback comments. In addition we also have a new school minibus.

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, 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 visit our website and fill out the SLG contact form. This can be found by scrolling down on the homepage and clicking on 'Request Access' under 'SIMS Learning Gateway' in the blue box
- 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 undertaken an annual review of our achievement points system, taking into account pupil, staff and parent feedback on our previous system for awarding achievement points. As with all changes, however, we will keep this under review.

Below is a brief summary of how the system will work this year 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 500 points at the start of each term to keep, build upon or lose
- 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

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

New Attendance Policy and procedures

We value the support of all parents to ensure their child's attendance at school and your recognition of the importance of high attendance. In my letter to all parents in July I outlined the changes to the above with effect from September 1st. These are in line with the national changes all schools are required to follow and particularly impact upon requests for leave of absence for pupils. Unfortunately my discretion with regard to exceptional circumstances is now very restricted. In addition parents should be aware of the introduction of the penalty notice procedures with regard to unauthorised absences above a certain number. We appreciate this may cause you concern and should you have any queries regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Collecting and dropping off children by car

As you will be aware if you bring your child to school by car the bus bays, Roman Road and school car parks can become very busy at peak times. The safety and well-being of all pupils using these areas remains our prime concern and I would ask all parents to support us to keep all pupils safe at these times:

- if dropping off your child in the mornings to drop them at the bus bays to walk along Roman Road due to the large number of cars trying to access this narrow road at this time. It is also difficult to turn in the school car parks with a large number of staff also arriving.
- if collecting your child at the end of school to be aware that the majority of buses are scheduled to leave by 3.35pm. If all buses are in on time it is very difficult to navigate through the bus bays until the buses start to leave and it would be helpful if cars wait until this time rather than blocking Roman Road. On occasions some cars have exited the bus bays on the wrong side and I would

remind parents that this area is a public highway and, more importantly, pupils will not be expecting cars from this direction.

We regularly remind pupils about how they should conduct themselves when waiting for their buses in the bus bay areas after school to ensure they remain safe when crossing to board their bus. All tutors have recently gone through a Code of Conduct to remind all pupils again of what is expected of them.

Late Bus

We have been fortunate for the last two years to secure additional funding for a late bus service two days a week for pupils staying for after school activities. We know this has proved very popular with our pupils living in the areas the bus was able to cover. Unfortunately this funding is not available again this year but we are currently exploring other possible funding. If we are able to run this service again we will let pupils and parents know.

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

We are sad to announce the resignation of our PTA Chair Denice Wareham who will be standing down at the end of this term. I would like to thank Mrs Wareham for her hard work, enthusiasm and endless energy in keeping the PTA motivated over the last four years. With this in mind we would like to invite parents both old and new to attend our PTA Annual General meeting on Tuesday 13th October at 6pm. This meeting will include nominations for positions on the PTA committee including Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. We need as many members as we can to ensure our PTA and Friends of Test Valley School can continue. If you would like to attend the meeting or would like an item added to the agenda, please email:

pta@testvalley.hants.sch.uk

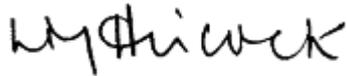
Extra-Curricular Activities Programme

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.

Staff Training Day: Friday October 2nd

Finally, I send best wishes for this term and remind parents that this coming Friday pupils should not attend school as it is a staff training day.

Yours sincerely



L Hiscock (Miss)
Headteacher