

Headteacher's Letter

March 2018

Dear Parent

I write as the Spring Term moves into its final stage before we break up for the Easter holidays on Thursday March 29th at 3.20pm. This term has been a busy and challenging term with much to celebrate. Our Spring Term newsletter is due out next week sharing the activities that make us such a thriving school. The staff are committed to seeking out as many opportunities as we can for our pupils to support their academic progress and develop their skills and confidence as young people. I encourage you as always to look at this on our school website. We can also provide paper copies if preferred. In addition our weekly blog also continues to be posted on our website providing another taster of the many activities our pupils and staff are involved in both in and outside the classroom to support and enhance their learning.

Below is brief checklist of key dates for next half term for your information:

Monday 16th April 2018	Summer Term commences for pupils at 8.50am
Thursday 19 th April 2018	Year 8 Parents' Information Evening 6.00-8.00pm
Monday 7th May 2018	School closed Bank Holiday
Tuesday 15th May 2018	GCSE Examinations commence
Wednesday 23rd May 2018	Year 8 Examinations commence
Friday 25th May 2018	Year 8 Examinations end School closes to pupils for half-term at 3.20pm
Monday 4th June 2018	School re-opens to pupils at 8.50am Year 7 Examinations commence

This week we had to close on Monday due to the weather conditions. I apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused but I am certain you will appreciate the decision to close the school for a day is never taken lightly. The key consideration is always the safety of our pupils and staff. I was very concerned about the conditions first thing for the journey to school and the need to make the site safe for all to move around. We were unable to delay the start time as a number of local schools could due to many pupils being reliant on school transport. Thank you for your support and understanding - hopefully warmer weather is not far away.

Our School Going Forward

I wrote to you recently regarding the publication of the School Performance Tables in January. Thank you for your feedback and support following this. It is reassuring to know that many of you recognise how hard we are all working to provide your child with the best education and continue to be assured that we are the right choice for your child. In turn we are not complacent about the trust you place in us and continue to review our practices going forward to ensure we are getting it right. Challenging our pupils to make no less than the progress they should, whatever their ability, will always be our key priority. We want our pupils, your children, to succeed now and in the future.

— HEADTEACHER • MISS L HISCOCK B.Ed (HONS) —

Our Year 11 pupils are certainly on course at this stage to achieve and make no less than expected progress in their GCSE examinations coming up next term.

Parents' Coffee Morning on Wednesday March 28th

After such a busy term and early Easter I realise I have not had the opportunity to host another coffee morning for parents. I therefore extend an invitation to all to join me for a cup of coffee on Wednesday March 28th from 9.15am until 10.00am. As always all are welcome for this informal opportunity to hear about what is happening in school and share your views.

The Refurbishment of the ROSLA Building

The contractors are working hard to keep the project on time for an August completion. There is considerable work being undertaken both inside and outside the building to upgrade it and we are delighted the local authority has made this significant investment in our school to improve our facilities for our pupils.

The building works have inevitably resulted in some disruption and the need to move teachers and teaching groups to temporary classrooms whilst the work is undertaken. We are trying to manage this with the contractors to ensure minimum disturbance for all and keeping focused on the significant improvement for staff and pupils next year. This is not always easy and I am grateful for the patience of the staff particularly affected and how well the pupils are responding to the restrictions this has placed in and around the building.

Staffing News

The recruitment and retention of school staff, particularly teachers, is a challenge for all schools at this time. We are working hard to manage this, especially in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, where there is a national shortage of qualified teachers. Currently Mr Darragh (Science) and Mrs Berry (English) are away due to long term absences. In addition Mrs Jones (Science) has been absent on maternity leave and recently confirmed that sadly she will not be returning after Easter due to a family move. We wish her well for the future. We realise the impact of these absences and our priority has been to ensure specialist subject teachers to cover as much as possible. We have been able to do this in Science to a large extent with the subject team also stepping up to support our pupils by sharing and rotating additional teaching groups to give them the best learning experience we can. This is also the case in English with the team stepping up again. I am grateful for their commitment and hard work to provide this level of support.

I am pleased to confirm that Mrs MacDonald joined us as a part time Mathematics teacher in January and we have already appointed an experienced Science teacher to join us later in the Summer Term. We have also at this very early stage already appointed new teachers in the core subjects for the start of the Autumn Term to ensure we will have full teaching teams going forward.

We have welcomed a number of new support staff to our team during this term:

Mrs Frost-Langley (LSA)

Ms Gillard (Cover Supervisor)

Miss Wallace (AV Technician)

Mrs Watts (School Business Manager)

Miss West (LSA)

Mr Wylde (Assistant Site Supervisor)

We have sadly also said goodbye to some staff and send them our best wishes for the future: Ms Soutar (LSA) left in January to seek a new venture outside education whilst Mrs Gandy (LSA) has started a promoted post in a larger school.

Charity Fundraising Activities

The Year 11 Charity Committee are working hard this year to organise activities and raise as much money as they can for the charities they have chosen to support. Last term they raised over £1100 for Children In Need and organised a Christmas gig to raise funds for Diabetes UK. They also held a Christmas Jumper Day which raised £490 for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance and Headway Southampton. These are great achievements and generously supported by the wider school community.

This week they are supporting Sports Relief with a **non-uniform day on Friday March 23rd**. All pupils who would like to participate are asked to bring in a contribution of at least £1.00 to take part. They should ensure their choice of outfit is appropriate for a normal school day and are reminded not to bring in any cans of glitter, colour hairspray or similar products on the day. There will also be a cake sale at lunchtime to support. In addition, on Thursday March 22nd a staff football match in wellies is planned (weather and field conditions permitting) and pupils are invited to watch for a small donation to Sports Relief.

The Future of our Swimming Pool

In January I wrote to all parents asking for a donation toward the annual costs of running our swimming pool for the 2018 swimming season next term. I am delighted to report that this has raised £2660, just over a quarter of the annual costs. I am very grateful for the generous support of all who donated enabling us to certainly cover some costs as we go towards a new swimming season. I extend many thanks on behalf of our school community for your shared commitment to retain this special facility of our school. It is also not too late if any have not had an opportunity to contribute.

We are also grateful to the school's PTA for their commitment to further fund raise towards this year's annual costs. Looking further forward the challenge is to increase the pool's use. The working party set up last term is addressing how this could be developed through greater community investment and use and I will keep you informed of the progress made.

The Home Learning Club

We have run a Home Learning Club after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays for some time. Recently fewer pupils have taken up this opportunity to stay after school to complete their HLTS with the help of support staff. We hope this is because our younger pupils feel able to complete their HLTs independently or have the support and a place at home to undertake these. We are therefore reviewing whether to continue to offer this facility next term.

Finally, I send you best wishes for the Easter holidays. We look forward to the start of the Summer Term with all pupils due to return on Monday April 16th at 8.50am.

Yours sincerely



L Hiscock (Miss)
Headteacher