

Dear Parent

I welcome back all our pupils, staff and parents with this school year now well underway. I also extend a very warm welcome to those who have joined our school community this year. This letter has been emailed to all parents on our email database and all future Headteacher's Letters will now be sent electronically rather than printing copies. If we do not have an email contact for you, this letter will have been posted to you. Please do let us know if you have an email contact we may use. Copies will also be posted on our school website.

I look forward to this year ahead, and thank you for your ongoing support to ensure a high standard of uniform by pupils on their return. We have had to follow up a small number of concerns and pupils' uniforms are still being checked regularly. We would ask parents with any uniform/jewellery queries to check our uniform list on the school website in the first instance as we value working with you to resolve issues before sanctions for pupils become necessary.

Mrs Berry

It is with much sadness I share that Mrs Berry passed away in the summer holidays. Mrs Berry had been absent from school for much of last year due to a long and sustained period of ill health. She had been battling hard against this but sadly became much more seriously ill during the summer. We will remember Mrs Berry as an excellent teacher with a passion for teaching English, a supportive colleague and friend. We will certainly miss her at school and know many pupils over the years have benefitted from her care, support and teaching. We also think of her family at this difficult time. We hope to raise funds towards Macmillan Cancer Support to recognise and remember Mrs Berry. Activities are being planned by our Year 11 Charity Committee and staff linked to the national Macmillan Coffee Morning coming up next week. If any parent would like to contribute towards this collection, please do send this into school in a sealed envelope for my attention.

Celebrating our GCSE Results

I am pleased to report that many of our pupils achieved excellent grades, these were well deserved due to their hard work and effort. The headline measures schools report are different now, and you may recall I wrote to you last year following the publication of the national Performance Tables in the Spring Term. I explained how the new 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' measures were calculated with the results of all schools nationally analysed and compared. I will write to you when these are published for this year. In the meantime, here are some of the headlines, further results can be found on our school website:

- 73% of pupils achieved a standard pass in English (grades 9-4)
- 75% achieved a standard pass in Mathematics (grades 9-4)
- An increasing proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades 9-7
- 98% of pupils known to have successfully gone onto further education, training or apprenticeships

Staff News

We welcomed a number of new staff this term and hope they will enjoy being a part of our school community:

- Mrs Foulds: Maths Teacher
- Mrs Harry: Headteacher's PA
- Mrs Lowin: Librarian
- Mrs Thomas: MFL Teacher
- Mr Thomas: PE Teacher
- Mrs Thomsett: Cover Supervisor
- Mrs Taylor-Darke: Cover Supervisor

Mrs Speed and Mrs West are teaching more English this year. Therefore, I am pleased to confirm that we are currently fully staffed with qualified teachers in all subjects. We also congratulate Mrs Luckham on the birth of her daughter in August and Miss Williams (now Mrs Lynn) and Miss Attree (now Mrs Ewart) on their marriages. Mrs Knight has now started her maternity leave, and we hope to hear news soon.

Site News

The construction project for our ROSLA Building is now almost complete with the building contractors finally handing back the building to us at the end of the summer holidays. This external refurbishment was funded as part of a project across Hampshire schools by the local authority. The purpose was for the building to become more energy efficient going forward. It also included replacement windows and lighting throughout. In October half term, we are hoping to start the refurbishment of pupils' toilets in the building and carpets are due to be replaced.

New Behaviour and Rewards systems

One of our key priorities this year is to ensure all pupils are able to learn and make the progress they should in every lesson. This means being well taught and supported as well as able to learn without unnecessary distraction. Pupils are also expected to come to school fully prepared and willing to learn to the best of their ability. We have also listened to pupils and are not surprised to find that the overwhelming majority want the same. The staff have worked hard to revise our previous behaviour and rewards systems with effect from this term. The key changes include:

- The introduction of **The Test Valley P.A.C.T.** This is an agreement to show all of the following as members of our school:
 - Perseverance (to keep trying and not give up)
 - Ambition (to aim high and try your best)
 - Courtesy (to be polite and think of others)
 - Teamwork (to work together and help each other)
- The introduction of a new rewards system with achievement points going towards certificates, awards and entry into a new competition for 'Pupil of the Month' in each year group; it will also include new half termly Headteacher's Awards to celebrate excellent achievement
- The introduction of revised behaviour procedures with individual pupils given two clear warnings in lessons if not behaving as expected. This is to enable them to make the right choice for the remainder of the lesson. If, however, they are still unable to behave as expected they will report to another member of staff to reflect on their choices and a decision made

about whether they return to their lesson. Further consequences will be 'catch up' sessions being set by their teacher and parents informed

- The introduction of a dedicated Isolation Room and 'on call' system run by middle and senior members of staff. Pupils still not behaving as expected when the above procedures have been followed will work separately in this room for a set period of time
- A revised form for pupils put on report called the Commitment to Learning Report. Parents will be contacted if their child is put on this report, and are asked to read and sign it each day.

We are currently trialling the above and will update our policies and procedures on the website once we have had an opportunity to review the new systems as a staff and governing body. The message we want to get across to our pupils is clear: lessons are for learning and any pupil not acting as expected cannot be allowed to disrupt the learning of others. I would also like to emphasise that we recognise the overwhelming majority of our pupils continue to get it right and unlikely to be subject to the new behaviour procedures themselves.

New structure to the school day

In addition to the above changes, we have also changed our school day to six lessons of 50 minutes each (previously five lessons of one hour each) and only have a one-week timetable. This does not change the start and finish times of the school day.

Home Learning Club: Tuesday and Thursday 3.30 – 4.30pm

This after school club will start from Tuesday, September 25th in the school library. Pupils are able to come along to complete their home learning tasks, with support if needed from Mrs Murdoch-Smith and Mrs Breakspear (Learning Support Team). It offers a quiet space to complete work and use the library facilities, including the computers. If your child attends, parents are asked to arrange and ensure transport home at 4.30pm.

Headteacher's Coffee Morning: Tuesday October 9th (9.15 – 10.00am)

This will be my first coffee morning for parents this year. I extend a warm welcome to those who have attended before and new parents to our school. As always, this is an informal opportunity to join me for a cup of coffee to hear about what is happening in school and share your views.

Easyfundraising.org.uk

We would be grateful if more parents would consider registering for Easyfundraising.org.uk if shopping on-line. There are nearly 3000 retailers involved who will donate a percentage of the amount you spend to our school to say thank you for shopping with them. It is easy to register (there is a link on our website homepage), does not cost you anything and there are no hidden charges. It does, however, provide a great opportunity for the school to raise additional funds we can use to buy resources and equipment to support your child's learning at school. It is a while since we reminded parents of this and a parent emailed me this week to say 'I have just signed up for this in time for Christmas as I did not realise it was there. I wish I had, as I could have been raising money for my daughter's school without costing me a thing.' Therefore, I send this out as another reminder and thank you in anticipation of your support.

Diary Dates

This year our **Open Evening** is on Monday, September 24th from 6pm as an opportunity for prospective pupils and parents to visit our school. Our **Open Mornings** follow on Thursday, September 27th and Friday, September 28th from 9.15-10.30am. We also look forward to welcoming back last year's Year 11 pupils and their parents to our **Annual Presentation Evening** on Tuesday, November 20th.

Election of Parent Governors

We have two current vacancies on our Governing Body for parent governors. I will shortly write to all parents inviting applications and would therefore ask whether you would be able to support the school by becoming one of our governors. This is a voluntary but very important role in our school, and you would be joining a committed and hard-working team. If there are more than two applications received, an election will be held with all parents given the opportunity to vote.

Finally, I do commend our **Summer Term Newsletter** to you again if you have not had an opportunity to view it yet. This can be found on our school website and provides a lovely summary of the many activities and experiences our pupils and staff were involved in last term. In addition our **weekly blog** is up and running again on the website.

Yours Sincerely

Miss L Hiscock
Headteacher