

Headteacher's Letter

September 2019

Dear Parent

I welcome back all our pupils, staff and parents with this new school year now well underway. I also welcome all those who have joined our school community this term. As with previous Headteacher's Letters, this letter has been emailed to all parents on our email database. If we do not have an email contact for you, this letter will have been posted to you. Copies are also always posted on our school website.

We are all looking forward to this year ahead and thank you for all your ongoing support. Last year we faced the challenges presented by a number of staff changes and the difficulties of recruiting and retaining high quality teachers hit our school hard. I therefore start by confirming that we are fully staffed following an intensive period of recruitment. We are delighted to be joined by a number of new staff. We hope they will enjoy being a part of our new school community:

Mrs Adams (Science Teacher)
Mrs Brush (Drama Teacher)
Ms Griffiths (Cover Supervisor)
Mr Hughes (Mathematics Teacher)
Miss Mawson (Learning Support Assistant)
Mrs Payne (Head of English)
Mr Scott (Head of Science)
Dr Velica (English Teacher)
Mr Williams (Technology Teacher)
Mr Windibank (Science Technician)

In addition, Mr Langdown has also stepped up as Head of Technology. A full copy of our current staff list can always be found on the school website.

We have also been working hard on taking the school forward and reviewing what we had in place to ensure we can be the best possible school for your children to attend. This includes:

- **The Senior Team:** Mr Page (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs Watts (School Business Manager) and I are joined by Mr Murdoch-Smith, Mrs Osborne and Mr Whatley from this year. Having them on board to work with us means we have increased capacity to drive forward the school's key priorities. In particular, having a high quality curriculum in place delivered by high quality teaching across the whole school.
- **Pupil achievement and progress:** our primary goal is to improve our pupils' achievements and levels of progress overall. We have already reviewed how we

are monitoring, tracking, supporting and challenging our pupils to be able to make better than expected progress in Key Stage 4 (GCSEs). Further on we plan to review how we are tracking our pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 to support their journey towards starting GCSE courses. This will include reviewing the use of Age Related Expectations (ARE) and how we communicate and report this information so that you will be able to know if your child is where they need to be and what you can do to support them.

- **The House System:** we have changed our pastoral structure this year with the introduction of three Houses. We believe this will enable us to provide more focused support for pupils as well as creating a stronger, more cohesive school community. We want our pupils to be proud to belong and be happy at school in order to do well. As a member of Centaur, Griffin or Phoenix all pupils and staff will also be encouraged to take part in a variety of inter-house activities, events and competitions to earn house points for their House. This week sees our first major event with our whole school sports day on Thursday September 19th.
- **Behaviour management procedures:** we have reviewed our behaviour management policy and procedures to ensure we have the right procedures in place going forward to make the difference. We want the focus to be on pupils and staff being able to build positive working relationships in and out of the classroom to ensure high quality learning and progress is taking place. As summarised in my June letter:
 - The Test Valley P.A.C.T will continue as a clear statement of how we can all work best together and succeed as individuals.
 - Pupils are given two clear warnings in a lesson if not behaving as expected and time out for reflection with another teacher will continue when needed. If time out is necessary, pupils will be expected to attend a catch up session in their own time with the teacher and the teacher should inform you.
 - if a pupil continues to disturb other pupils' learning, or returns from time out for reflection and is still unsettled, he/she would expect to be removed to another teacher for the remainder of the lessons and set a longer catch up session with the teacher.
 - if a pupil does not attend a catch up session, the teacher will refer to the Head of Faculty/Subject Leader for a longer catch up session and inform parents.
 - if a pupil does not attend the above the Head of House will contact parents to arrange after school detentions, or in some circumstances, time in the isolation room.
- **Rewards and celebration:** we consider these no less important than the above and with the new House system will constantly be looking for opportunities to award house points to individual pupils and to celebrate their success in a variety of ways across the school.

GCSE Results

We are, of course, very proud of our pupils and many achieved some good GCSE grades this year. These are well deserved due to their hard work and effort supported by staff. The vast majority have now started their chosen post-16 courses and we wish them every success. We are, however, not complacent and recognise that our overall figures do not reflect where we want to be as a school. Many of the steps described above are to ensure that we can support all of our pupils to make the progress they should. The headline figures can be found on our school website.

Key Dates Calendar for parents

The full calendar of key dates for parents can be found on our website (search 'key dates for parents') or on Moodle. If you would like a paper copy, please contact our school office. Our first **Parents' Information Evening** for parents of Year 7 pupils is on Thursday September 19th. We look forward to welcoming you to this event to find out more about the school and how you can support your child.

On Monday 23rd September it is our **Open Evening** for prospective new pupils, followed by our **Open Mornings** on Thursday 26th and Friday 27th September.

The PTA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) Wednesday September 25th at 6pm

The Parent Teacher Association are holding their AGM in the Main Hall on the above date. Everyone is welcome to come along, find out what the PTA has been doing over the last year and hear about their plans for the future. Our PTA members are a very hard working and committed group who are undoubtedly working hard to promote and support our school. I am very grateful for all they do and hope many of you will be able to come along to this.

Home Learning Club: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3.30 – 4.30pm

This after school club is already taking place in the school library. Pupils are able to come along to complete their home learning tasks with support if needed from Mrs Breakspear (Learning Support Team). It offers a quiet place to complete work and use the library facilities, including the computers. If your child attends please arrange to collect them at 4.30pm.

The School Cafeteria

We hope you have been able to register your child for an online account to use our cashless system in the school cafeteria. We would be grateful if you could regularly check the account is kept topped up to enable them to always purchase food.

Headteacher's Coffee Morning Tuesday 15th October 9.15 – 10.00am

My first coffee morning will be on the above date and I extend a warm invitation as always if you are able to join me for this informal opportunity to meet.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Hiscock
Headteacher