

July 2010

Dear Parents

This has been a very busy and successful school year. In the final week Years 7, 8 and 9 have their activities days to look forward to, Year 10 their work experience and Year 12 the “Challenge of Industry”. I would like to remind you that term ends at 12.20 p.m. on Friday 16th July. **All pupils** should ensure that their lockers are empty to enable cleaning to take place over the summer. I would also like to keep you informed of developments at the school between now and September.

1. **Staff changes**

This year we say goodbye at the end of term to five colleagues.

Mr. Peter Pickwell joined the staff in 1974 and has served the School with great distinction as a teacher of Chemistry and as Examination Officer. The quality of his work in both roles will be very much missed next year. We wish Peter a very happy retirement.

Mrs. Anne Hillier has been a stalwart of the Mathematics Department since 1991 working in a part-time capacity. Her deep knowledge of Mathematics has meant she has spent a lot of time teaching at A level. Anne has also led the Amnesty International Group for many years with great success. We also wish her a very happy retirement .

Mr. Jamie Alcock leaves after 7 years to become Head of PE at Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. We will miss his excellent contribution to both the PE Department and as Head of Year 9 and wish him well for this exciting promotion.

Ms. Alison Bartholomew has taught in the History Department for the past two years. Her in depth knowledge of many History syllabuses at GCSE and A’level has been invaluable to us.

Mr. Ishaq Ahmed has worked in a part time capacity in the Physics Department this year and returns to the Birmingham area to a promoted post.

Mr. Ged O’Connor has been a superb teaching assistant, having joined us from a senior post in industry. We wish him a very happy retirement.

Mr. Martin Cragg – Congratulations to Martin on successfully completing his teacher training year with us.

Next term we welcome back Deputy Head Master Mr. E. Hall who has been Associate Head Teacher for the past 12 months at another local school. He has had an interesting year and learned much which he will bring back to AGSB.

2. **Building Developments**

The construction of the Arts/Food Technology block began in May and should be completed by Christmas or soon after. The builders have faced interesting challenge so far whilst laying foundations but construction is proceeding well.

Over the summer holidays both boys’ toilets will be refurbished and we continue to replace windows and to re-roof the older parts of the building.

3. **Academy Status**

Following appropriate consultation Governors are proceeding with an application. However, the necessary legislation has been delayed and a number of significant issues remain to be resolved. I will keep parents informed as the situation develops during the Autumn term.

4. **Key Stage 3 results**

Our Year 9 pupils took KS3 tests again this year which we modified from previous years to make them a little more challenging than the previous National Tests. Congratulations to our current Year 9 on such impressive results.

In English 4 % of pupils attained Level 5
 45% of pupils attained Level 6
 51% of pupils attained Level 7

In Mathematics 2% of pupils attained Level 6
 19% of pupils attained Level 7
 79% of pupils attained Level 8

Science 11% of pupils attained Level 6
 84% of pupils attained Level 7
 5% of pupils attained Level 8

5. **‘Deep Learning Days’**

In the last few weeks of this term we have varied the usual diet of lessons for pupils in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 with days offering a special emphasis on cross curricular activities. We repeated a successful ‘Bee Day’ for Year 7, and Year 8 pupils experienced a day emphasising different approaches to emotional wellbeing – a SEAL day. Year 9 enjoyed two days, one of which introduced students, in depth, to the experience of the Holocaust and the other which explored the theme of Charles Darwin and evolution. Finally, Year 10 were given a taste of ‘Young Enterprise’.

These Deep Learning Days involve our own teachers and experts from outside school. They help to develop skills as well as knowledge. They enrich the experiences of the boys and they have received a positive response from them.

6. **Parents and Friends Association**

I would like to take this opportunity at the end of the School year to thank everyone on the Committee, everyone who has helped at PFA events or who has supported PFA events. It has been another very successful year for the PFA in terms of the organisation of enjoyable events and in raising funds for the School. The PFA always need more volunteers and anyone who wishes to become involved should contact the Chair of the Committee, Laura Evans on 07976894419.

7. **Exam Invigilation**

Every year for the past few years I have used this end of term letter to thank the superb team of parents who have volunteered to help us with exam invigilation especially during the seven week period. This year 35 parents (and sometimes grandparents) offered to give up their valuable time to help us in this way. In total they gave us 550 hours. In so doing they saved the school an estimated £8,000 which is the considerable sum we would have had to spend if we had employed outside invigilators. This is money saved which we can use to improve facilities for the boys at the School so thank you all for your support. There will be a meeting next term for those parents who may wish to support the School as exam invigilators during the next academic year.

In turn, the invigilators have asked me to draw the attention of everyone to the excellent behaviour of all those students from Year 10 to Year 13 who sat Public Examinations this summer. It is a great credit to them that they were so co-operative and businesslike at all times.

8. Pupil Fund – Years 10 - 13

This contribution of £30 is due at the beginning of the Autumn term. On the first day of term please send in your contribution in an envelope marked OSA Pupil Fund with your son's name and form. The contribution should be posted into the green box at reception. **This, of course, applies only to those parents who have not set up a standing order** – many parents lower down the school in Years 7,8 and 9 have done so or are members of the 'combined collections' system. Anyone who is not sure about this should contact Dianne Landsborough at the Bursar's Office.

9. Summer holidays and key dates

I wish everyone an enjoyable summer holiday. Below are some key dates for August and for the beginning of the next academic year.

Year 12 & 13 results – are published on Thursday 19th August

Year 11 results – are published on Tuesday 24th August from 9.30 onwards

Year 10 full GCSE results in Languages (for fast track students) are available between 11.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon on Tuesday 24th August.

Module results for Year 10 students will be available to the boys on their return to school in September.

Year 12 enrolment takes place on Monday 6th September 2010 between 9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. Students are asked to reports to Mrs. Williamson in reception between these times.

School term begins at 9.00 a.m. for Year 7 and 10.00 a.m. for Years 8-13 on Tuesday 7th September. From then on boys should be in school by 8.35 a.m.

The School entrance examination will be held on Saturday 18th September. This will involve staff and also large numbers of Year 12 students.

Best wishes to everyone for a lovely summer holiday

Yours sincerely

T. J. Gartside
Head Master