

achieved 5 A*-C grades. An astonishing 53 pupils achieved nine or more A* and A grades, and five (Bidly Briggs, Jack Harrison, Katie Haywood, Rachel Nichols and James Scott) gained 10 straight A*s.

Building Developments

I am pleased to report that all the changes I described in my end-of-term letter in July have been completed successfully. Access across the site has been radically improved, new changing and locker areas for boys and girls have been created near Cobham Hall, the Dance Studio is ready for use and the Art Department now occupies most of the space of the former AO science block. The kitchens, servery and food storage areas have been completely refurbished, and the heating system for Britannia House and Main Hall has been renewed. The RGS science block has been refurbished and enlarged to a very high standard and the Biology Department now extends into the first floor of Clock Block. All departments with the sole exception of Music are now co-located in specialist facilities. There remain only some minor finishing works to the former boundary wall which will be finished over the next couple of weeks. I do hope that you will come and take a look at the changes to the site on our Open Morning on Saturday 27 September 2008.

New Staff

We welcome two new members of the teaching staff. Mr Richard Houchin is our new Head of Economics and Business Studies, and Mr Stuart Davis will be teaching PE and Biology, as well as becoming our first teacher i/c. Hockey.

I am pleased to announce that Mr Chris Townend is our new Marketing Director. Chris was formerly in the marketing department of Worcester Warriors RFC. Mrs Sue Johnston who has done so much excellent marketing work over the past few years has moved across to become the Registrar.

ISI Inspection

Parents will wish to know that the Independent Schools Inspectorate will be carrying out inspections of RGS AO and Springfield in the week beginning Monday 19 January 2009. The Grange was last inspected in 2007 and will not be covered on this occasion.

Communications

As you will know, we ceased sending routine circular letters via pupil post earlier this year. Instead, such communications are posted on the school public website each Friday and parents are invited to view them online and print them off if they are relevant. We believe this to be the most efficient, cost-effective and environmentally responsible way of conveying such large amounts of information. To improve this service, we aim to set up an e-mail alert system to remind parents when to check the website and what the new communications are about. In order to do this, we need your permission to use your e-mail address. So, if you would like us electronically to alert you to circulars and items of school news, please could you send an e-mail to newsalert@rgsao.org which will enable us to include you on the circulation list.

5 September 2008

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your family have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday. The new term has begun and pupils and staff are in buoyant mood as they catch up with each other's news, and view the changes to the site completed over the summer break. I summarise below some items of news which may be of interest.

Examination Results

At A Level, RGS AO pupils achieved a sound set of results. The pass rate was 99.5% and 68% of A Levels taken were graded A or B. 28 of our pupils gained three or more grade As, and all eleven of our Oxbridge candidates achieved their required offers. Our 2008 Oxbridge results are the best in Worcestershire. The vast majority of the U6 got into the universities of their choice. At AS Level, the pass rate was 96.3% and 57% of grades were A or B, an improvement on the previous year. We are optimistic about the chances of our new U6 in 2009.

At GCSE, we again had a very good year indeed, especially considering last year's Year 11 was the largest ever RGS or AO year group, with 161 pupils. 58% of GCSEs were graded A or A*, the pass rate was 96.4% and 99.4% of our pupils

Sports

I know that many of you followed the progress of our South American rugby tourists with great interest either via 'Miguel's Blog' on our website or via the series of articles in the Worcester News. For the record, our teams played ten games in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina, winning eight matches, drawing one and losing one. The highlight was the defeat of the Uruguayan U17 team by the first XV! I congratulate the organiser, Mr Mike Ridout, the other accompanying staff and the wonderfully supportive group of parents who made the tour possible.

Our annual 1st XV rugby fixture against The King's School will be held at Sixways Stadium on Wednesday 26 November.

We are hosting the Senior Midlands Lacrosse Tournament at The Grange on Saturday 1 October from 1000, an event which promises to be exciting to watch. Spectators would be welcome.

The culmination of last term's very successful Athletics season was the appearance of our Girls' U14 team in the National Finals of the ESAA Cup in Hull on 7 July. Having proved themselves to be the best team in the Midlands a few weeks before, they ended up in fourth place overall nationally, which was a magnificent result. One of the highlights of the meet was the 4 x 100m Relay, which we won convincingly. Three of our older athletes were selected for the English Schools Athletics Championships, as County Champions in their events. Nat McDonald (Discus), Steve Ndumbe (Triple Jump) and Adam Damadzic (Shot) all

performed well, and Adam was placed third in his event- a very impressive achievement indeed.

We must also congratulate the rowers, who produced our best ever performance in the Princess Elizabeth Cup at the Henley Regatta back in July. They beat Shiplake College and King's Canterbury to reach the quarter finals, where they were defeated by Australian champions, Scotch College, from Melbourne. We can gain some idea of the scale of this achievement when we consider that only four other British crews made it to the last eight: Eton, Abingdon, Shrewsbury and Latymer Upper. Much of the credit for this magnificent achievement goes to Mr Mike Vetch, who will step down from his position as teacher i/c. rowing at the end of this year after 20 heroic years.

Music and Drama

Any requests for instrumental and vocal tuition for new pupils are being processed by the Music Department. If you have not requested individual tuition for your child but have since decided that you would like to, please email the Director of Music, Mr Hamilton, (mh@rgsao.org). Our music concerts are listed in the school calendar but I would particularly like to draw your attention to our main School concert on Thursday 20 November in Perrins Hall and of course the Carol Service in Worcester Cathedral on Tuesday 9 December.

The Drama Department will be staging a wide range of comic and dramatic pieces by 46 Year 8 drama students on Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 October in the Godfrey Brown Theatre. The artistic climax of the term will be a fully-staged version of the most

successful musical of all time, *Les Misérables*, on Tuesday 2 – Saturday 6 December, featuring 50 student performers. Judging by the size of the audiences for last year's *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, tickets for both these productions will be much sought-after. They will go on sale from Monday 22 September from Whiteladies reception, and application forms will be available on the school website.

Open Day

This term's Open Morning is on Saturday 27 September. We will be asking pupils to volunteer to be guides at a later stage. Any existing parents or family members would be very welcome to come and look round the campus. Tours may need to be self-guided, and maps of the site will be provided.

Traffic and Road Safety

I would be grateful if you could reinforce our message that pupils must only cross busy roads such as Upper Tything and Little London using the controlled crossings and special, narrowed crossing areas, and certainly not near to junctions or through stationary traffic. I would also remind pupils not to wear personal stereos while crossing roads or while cycling for obvious safety reasons. I also ask parents to take particular care when dropping off or collecting children from school. Little London can become very congested and dangerous for pedestrians in the mornings and evenings. We are unable to allow vehicular access for parents to any part of the site and especially via the Alice Ottley main gate in the

mornings. Our priority is pupil safety and we wish to minimise comings and goings.

Lost Property and Valuable items

While we will do our best to return named property to the rightful owner, any items not claimed within fourteen days of notification will be passed to the school second hand uniform shop or otherwise disposed of as appropriate. I seek parents' help in discouraging children from bringing into school expensive personal items such as IPODs, jewelled watches and top-of-the-range mobile telephones. They are tempting targets for thieves and it can be embarrassing both for you and for us if such items are lost or stolen. Please ensure that your children only bring in essential and basic items, and we would advise you to take out insurance for their personal belongings. I am advised by the Bursar that where there is a justifiable claim against the school, we limit our liability to £50 per item.

Internet Access Policy and Data Verification

If your child is new to the school he/she will soon be given a copy of our Internet Access Policy. I would be grateful if you could discuss with your son or daughter the importance of sensible computer use and return the acceptance form to the School Office, duly signed. Later in the term we will be sending to you a copy of the data we hold on our electronic database for you to check. We are particularly keen to have accurate contact details, including mobile phone numbers and e mail addresses.

School Photographs

The whole school photograph which was taken last term is still available for purchase via the photographer's website (www.htempest.co.uk). The RGSAO password is Walden. Prints of last term's Lower School photograph are also available; order forms may be obtained from Mrs Matthews in the School Office.

Important Dates

September

Tues 9 and Thurs 11
L6 Parents' Evenings

Tues 23
Yr 7 Parents' Evening

Sat 27
OPEN MORNING

October

Thurs 2
Yr 7 Parents' Evening (also for new parents in Yrs 8, 9 and 10)

Sat 4
Senior Midlands Lacrosse at The Grange

Wed 8
Chamber Choir: Choral Evensong at Hereford Cathedral

Wed 15 and Thurs 16
Drama: Year 8 Sketches

Fri 17
RGSA AGM and Lower School Disco

I look forward to seeing many of you at school events over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely



Headmaster