



WOLVERHAMPTON

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

September 2011

Dear Parents,

A very warm welcome back to the new academic year and a special welcome to the parents of students joining us this term.

Uniform

Naturally, the first thing I must do this term is to apologise for the dreadful service some parents have received from our uniform supplier Buxton and Bonnett. Following our visits to the shop and meetings with the Regional Director, parents will not be charged for the new school tie. I realise that whilst it is only a scant compensation for the frustrations and appalling customer service some parents endured it is at least a gesture. We have been promised that all outstanding items will be delivered in the next week or so but please contact Gail Evans in our Development Office if you encounter any more issues or require further information.

And, despite all the above, the vast majority of students now have the new uniform and I think everyone agrees that they look so much brighter and smarter than previously.

Examinations

Once again the summer results season brought excellent news for students at WGS. At A Level, 75% of examinations taken were passed at A* to B grade. Indeed almost half of the A Levels sat this year were passed at A* and A grade thereby ensuring that the vast majority of our students achieved places on the most competitive courses at the country's top universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

Our GCSE results were similarly impressive with over 90 students averaging 9 A* to C passes each and 63% of GCSEs taken were passed at A* and A grade. Our Year 10 students also did really well in their GCSE modules with a 71% A* to A pass rate promising much for next year's results.

GCSE results at WGS have improved significantly over recent years – moving up from an average of 58% A* to A grade between 2000 and 2008 to a 64% A* to A grade pass rate over the last three years. Ongoing improvement at A Level as well - last year's official Government figures showed that students at WGS achieved at least a grade higher than similarly able students in other schools and colleges placing the school at the very top of local independent and selective schools in the region in terms of valued added. We believe that this year's tremendous results will also be recognised in impressive valued added scores when the national tables are published in January.

Expeditions

Many of our older students also achieved a great deal on hugely enjoyable summer expeditions. Miss McAllister, her partner and Dr Edlin led a fantastic trip to Borneo. Miss Whittaker, Miss Hodgson, Miss Ward and Dr Hinchliffe led two teams on very enjoyable adventures to Morocco and Mrs Fogarty, Mr Tyler and Mr Hall took 19 students on the annual visit to the Lords Meade school in Uganda. I'm sure that you will join me in thanking all our teachers who offer so many opportunities for our students during both the school year and the holiday period.

New Staff

And speaking of staff this term WGS welcomes Mr Tom Smith as Head of Economics and Business Studies, Mr Nathan Burden to teach Physics, Mr Robert Short teaching Chemistry and Physics during Mr Owen's absence. A number of colleagues also take up new roles this term; Mrs Fogarty is Head of PHSE, Mr Millichamp has become Assistant Head of Years 10 and 11, Miss McAllister begins her first full term as Head of Girls PE and Games and Mr Wood is now in charge of peer mentoring. I have also found a new PA – Mrs Nicola Murphy, who is already doing a great job.

Reporting

Responding positively to parental comments about the timing of reports, we have looked closely at the nature and pattern of reporting in Years 7 to 9, Years 10 to 11 and the sixth form. As a result, Mr Benfield has developed a revised timetable and format for our reporting to parents throughout the year and across the key stages. Please find attached a copy of his paper which explains our thinking and how the new system will work. We are confident that this will improve the quality and consistency of our reporting of student progress.

WGJS

Of course this year will be an historic one in so many ways. On September 6th our new Junior School, WGJS, welcomed its first pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Head of the Junior School is Mr Andrew Hymer and his staff, Mrs Baker, Mr Cothey, Miss Cousins, Mrs Pawluk, Miss Wassell and the school secretary, Mrs Lofthouse received 87 youngsters – 100 years to the day after a Junior School last opened in Wolverhampton Grammar School, and what a marvellous way to herald the beginning of the school's quincentenary.

500 Not Out

And so it is that we begin the build up to the 500th anniversary of the founding of Wolverhampton Grammar School by Sir Stephen Jenyns, a local wool merchant who became Lord Mayor of London in 1509 who in return for his elevation to such high office, founded a school in his home town for the instruction of boys in "good morals and learning".

I'm sure that our founder would have been immensely proud of how Wolverhampton Grammar School has not only survived to become one of the oldest schools in England (and the world!) but has blossomed into one of the finest co-educational independent schools in the country. It is fitting, therefore, that our year of celebration will begin at our annual service at St Peter's Church on Founder's Day, 21st October, when almost 700 students from the Junior and Senior Schools of the Wolverhampton Grammar School Foundation will gather to give thanks to our founder and the many thousands of local people who as students, teachers, parents or Governors have helped to make WGS the outstanding school it is today. Details of the key events during the year are on the website but do make a special note of the OW Sports Festival next weekend (the 17th) and the Friends Yuletide Ball on December 10th.


So, WGS begins its' 500th year in rude health – numbers of students are increasing, exam results are improving, we have a superb inspection report under our belt and are looking to the future with real confidence and tremendously exciting plans for our development beginning over the summer with the first phase of our improvements to the sixth form centre. I will be providing more details about our vision for the future over the coming months, but the title of the new history of WGS captures the essence of the school's vision to reinstate its place as Wolverhampton's Grammar School, building on its long and distinguished history, its outstanding reputation and its traditional place alongside the country's top schools.

Final Word

As you can probably tell, I'm extremely proud of WGS and I'm very excited and optimistic about 2011/12 and the school's future. I'll close, as always, by inviting any thoughts, ideas or comments you, as parents, have for the school and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the year. Please see the attached calendar for key dates and the new reporting structure.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Darby', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vincent Darby

New Reporting Structure 2011-12

We are implementing a new reporting structure this year for years 7-11; the pattern for sixth form reporting is unchanged. We believe the changes improve on the procedure used by the school in recent years. The new structure will mean that feedback on student progress will be both more frequent and, we feel, more clear. The new reporting structure comprises a combination of regular short reports, long written report(s) and parents' evenings: the reporting process is designed in such a way that these three elements should be seen as forming a mutually complementary trinity.

Reporting for Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8, 9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) follow slightly different cycles; the latter is built around the pattern of the two year GCSE cycle.

Principal Changes

Years 7, 8 & 9

- 4 short reports, one at the end of each half term in autumn and spring terms. Each successive report will show the prior reports' grades to show the track of a student's attainment.
- A full written report just after half term in the summer term. This will allow time for parental feedback before the end of the academic year should it be necessary.
- End of year: a short report detailing end of year exam results only.
- One parents' evening per year.

Years 10 & 11

- **Year 10:** 3 short reports and 2 long reports (long report at end of the Autumn term instead of short report, and just after half term in the summer term, as above).
- End of year: a short report detailing end of year exam results only - for those subjects where GCSE modules have not been sat.
- Parents' evening mid-year: 1st of three spread across the two year cycle of GCSE.

- **Year 11:** 3 short reports and 1 long report at end of the Autumn term.
- Parents' evening (2nd of 3) early in Autumn term (in part to discuss implications of modular results, where taken); 3rd Parents' evening shortly after results of Mock Exams.

Reports

- **Short reports** will be letters and grades only with no comments. They are only intended to be snapshots of progress, not full analysis. Accompanying descriptors have been designed to offer more objective evaluation than those used in recent years. They are produced below.
- There is a scale of 6 grades available instead of the 5 historically used. The reason for this is to tackle 'grade creep'. We (and many parents) have felt that the traditional 'C3', which ought to have been the default grade for good progress, had become debased, thus leading to an over use of A and B, 1 and 2.
- We regard A* - C for 'Approach to Work' and 1 - 4 for Attainment as 4 levels of good, D and/or 5 is to be regarded as a warning of problems and E/6 indicates real concern. In terms of traffic lights, there are 4 shades of green, 1 amber and 1 red.

- **Approach to Work:** we are now using this title of instead of 'Effort' because it is a more precise (albeit still subjective) description:

- A* Exceptional, Outstanding: working at, or close to, best of potential
- A Excellent, Very Good: working ably in relation to potential
- B Good, Proficient: working well, but scope to do even better
- C Competent: working solidly but plenty of scope to improve
- D Problematic: working inconsistently; evident lack of application at times
- E Weak: working poorly; significant concerns about work ethic

- **Attainment:**

- 1 Exceptional, Outstanding: work consistently fully understood; exhaustive content
- 2 Excellent, Very Good: assured understanding of work; very full, thorough content
- 3 Good, Proficient: understanding of work is secure; full content
- 4 Competent: broadly secure understanding; core content ok, gaps elsewhere
- 5 Problematic: understanding often inconsistent, insecure; content often incomplete
- 6 Weak: much (most) work not understood; thin, little content

It should be understood that these criteria are specifically internal to WGS. Students regularly gaining grades A* - C and 1 – 4 can be confident that they are safely on target, ultimately, for strong GCSEs.

- **Long Reports:** these will no longer carry any grades. We believe it is the considered formative opinion of the teacher that is important here and often the presence of grades obscures the nuances of the judgment made. In instances where reports highlight material concerns, the new timing of long reports should ensure that there is time for parents to discuss issues arising with teachers, form tutors or Heads of Year as necessary, and allow for remedial action to be put in place before the end of year.
- **End of Year Exams:** these will be reported in a simple format for years 7 – 10 at the end of the summer term.

Parents' evenings

- The schedule for the year is as follows -

Year 7: Thursday 10th November

Year 8: Monday 21st November

Year 9: Monday 27th February

Year 10: Tuesday 24th January

Year 11: (1) Monday 26th September (2) Thursday 15th March

L6: Thursday 2nd February

U6: (1) Tuesday 13th September (2) Thursday 22nd March

None of the above, of course, means that parents should not contact the school at any time they may have a worry or concern, nor that we will not contact you where an issue arises that needs quick communication with you. Overall, though, we believe this new framework will improve communication with parents about their children's progress.

**FORTHCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
AUTUMN TERM 2011**

September

Sun		Week 1: Assembly theme: <i>Being part of 'us'</i>
Mon	5 th	Staff Training, Social 2, 9.15am
Tues	6 th	Term Begins L6 Induction – Baggeridge
Wed	7 th	L6 Induction, Art Centre, am
Thurs	8 th	L6 Parents' Information Evening, Big School, 7.00pm
Sun	11 th	Week 2: Assembly theme: <i>Being challenged</i>
Tues	13 th	Student executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am U6 Parents' Evening, Big School/John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Wed	14 th	Opro (mouth guards), John Roper, 9.30am
Thurs	15 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45m Year 11 Trip to Birmingham University, all day L6 visit to Cambridge, all day
Fri	16 th	Sixth Form visit to Oxford University, all day
Sat	17 th	OW Sports Festival, all day OW's Sports Dinner/Big Band reunion, Big School/John Roper, 7.00pm
Sun	18 th	Week 3: Assembly theme: <i>Being responsible</i>
Mon	19 th	French Exchange Film Premier and 2012 Information Evening, Hutton Theatre, 7.30pm
Tues	20 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Mid Yis Testing for Year 7
Wed	21 st	Junior Prize Giving, Big School, 7.00pm
Thurs	22 nd	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am HPV for Year 8 – girls, John Roper Room, 9.30am
Sat	24 th	D.O.E Expedition to Long Mynd
Sun	25 th	Week 4: Assembly theme: <i>Being scholarly</i> D.O.E Expedition to Long Mynd
Mon	26 th	Individual students school photos Year 11 Parents' Evening, Big School/John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Tues	27 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am
Wed	28 th	Navaratri (start) Whole school screening, Year 7, Hutton Theatre, 9.15am New entrants form Year 8 – 12 screening, Hutton Theatre, 2.05pm
Thurs	29 th	Rosh Hashanah Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am
October		
Sat	1 st	OPEN DAY for prospective parents, 10.00am – 2.00pm Art Exhibition – A Quincentenary Celebration
Sun	2 nd	Week 5: Assembly theme: <i>Being prepared</i>
Mon	3 rd	GCSE Information evening for Year 10 Parents, Hutton Theatre, 7.00pm
Tues	4 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am
Thurs	6 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am Rhine Valley Parents' Information Evening, Sixth Form Seminar Room, 7.00pm
Fri	7 th	School photos for siblings missed students
Sat	8 th	Yom Kippur D.O.E Expedition to Long Mynd
Sun	9 th	Week 6: Assembly theme: <i>Being recognised</i> D.O.E Expedition to Long Mynd
Tues	11 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am
Wed	12 th	Year 8 Art visit to Tate, Liverpool, all day
Thurs	13 th	Sukkot Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am
Sat	15 th	Junior School, OPEN Day, 10.00am – 2.00pm
Sun	16 th	Week 7: Assembly theme: <i>Being part of history</i> Organ Fund Concert, St Peter's Church, afternoon
Tues	18 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Uganda Concert, Pearl of Africa, Big School, 7.30pm
Thurs	20 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am Student individual proofs sent to school Siblings proofs to be posted to parents Half Term Grades to parents, Year 7 – 11
Fri	21 st	Founder's Day Service, St Peter's Church 11.00am No afternoon school

Sun	23 rd	Rhine Valley Trip to the 28 th
Mon	24 th	Half Term to Friday 4th November
Fri	28 th	U14 Rugby Tour to 31 st , Devon
November		
Wed	2 nd	School Play Rehearsal, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 5.00pm
Thurs	3 rd	School Play Rehearsal, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 5.00pm
Fri	4 th	School Play Rehearsal, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 5.00pm
Sat	5 th	
Sun	6 th	Week 8: Assembly theme: <i>Being committed</i> Eid-UI-Adha
Mon	7 th	Common Room meeting, Social 2, 4.15pm
Tues	8 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Senior Maths Challenge
Thurs	10 th	Ski Trip Parents' Information Evening, Sixth Form Seminar Room, 7.00pm Birthday of Guru Nanak
Fri	11 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am Year 7 Parents' Evening, Big School/John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Sat	12 th	Armistice Day Wolves Civic Choir, Big School, 7.00pm Year 11, Lord Mayor's Float, London Wolves Civic Choir, Big School, 2.00pm – 10.30pm
Sun	13 th	Week 9: Assembly theme: <i>Being yourself</i> Remembrance Sunday
Mon	14 th	Last date for ordering student photos via internet
Tues	15 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Soloists Concert, Big School, 7.30pm
Thurs	17 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am Year 8 HPV, Round 2 – girls, John Roper Room, 9.30am Year 11 transition evening
Fri	18 th	Ghost Walk, 7.30pm
Sun	20 th	Week 10: Assembly theme: <i>Being aware</i>
Mon	21 st	Year 5 – 7 'Tempest' Workshop Year 8 Parents' Evening, Big School/John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Tues	22 nd	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am
Wed	23 rd	Year 10 School Leaver Booster, John Roper Room, 9.30am
Thurs	24 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am
Sat	26 th	Al-Hijira
Sun	27 th	Week 11: Assembly theme: <i>Being involved</i> Advent Sunday
Tues	29 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am
Wed	30 th	St Andrew's Day
December		
Thurs	1 st	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am
Fri	2 nd	Estimated student photo delivery
Sun	4 th	Week 12: Assembly theme: <i>Being honest</i>
Mon	5 th	Orchestra Rehearsal, Big School, 4.00 – 6.00pm
Tues	6 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Choir Rehearsal, Big School, 4.00 – 6.00pm
Thurs	8 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am Senior Wind Band Rehearsal, Big School, 4.00 – 6.00pm
Sat	10 th	Friends' Yuletide Ball, Big School, 7.00pm
Sun	11 th	Week 13: Assembly theme: <i>Being inspired</i>
Mon	12 th	Christmas Carol Concert Rehearsal – all day
Tues	13 th	Student Executive, OpAL 1, 8.45am Christmas Carol Concert, Big School, 7.30pm – 10.00pm
Wed	14 th	Christmas Carol Concert, Big School, 7.30pm – 10.00pm
Thurs	15 th	Student Parliament, Hutton Theatre, 8.45am U6 Theatre Studies Devised Play, Hutton Theatre, 7.30pm
Fri	16 th	Grades to Year 7/8/9 Long Reports to Years 10/11/L6/U6 Term Ends 12.30pm