



# WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## HALF TERM NEWSLETTER

May 2010

Dear Parents,

### **New Junior School**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010 will hopefully go down as a key date in the school's long and distinguished history because it was on that day that the Governors gave the go ahead for Wolverhampton Grammar Junior School to open in September 2011.

If all goes to plan, WGJS will provide education for pupils aged 7 – 11 and will be housed in the Hallmark building currently home to Modern Foreign Languages. Languages will be moving into new facilities in the 1910 Art/PE block which is due to be refurbished during the summer vacation.

The Junior School clearly takes Big Six to its logical conclusion and will endeavour to capture the unique qualities of that year group and the SPIRIT Philosophy which has helped to make it so successful. However, the Junior School cannot just be a mini version of WGS, it must develop its own character and identity – it will be part of, but separate from, the Senior School.

As such, the new school will have its own Head Teacher and Junior trained specialist class teachers and support staff. WGJS will also have its own uniform and its timetable will differ from that in the Senior School.

There will be no selection tests for entry at ages 7, 8 or 9 i.e. Years 3, 4 and 5. Thus, entry to the Junior School will not guarantee entry to the Senior School at 11 i.e. Year 7. However, using continuous assessment, we will be able to judge by the end of Year 5 whether or not a youngster will cope with the pace of learning in the Senior School. Those youngsters not offered a place at this stage will still have the opportunity to prove themselves by passing the 11+ test along with our external applicants. For youngsters who join us in Big Six, we will retain the Assessment Day, as now, which means that if they're offered a place in Big Six they will also qualify to transfer into the Senior School in Year 7.

Thus, with continuous assessment for our younger pupils, the Big Six Assessment Day and the 11+ entrance examination for external applicants, we are confident that academic standards will be maintained on entry to the Senior School. Moreover, the Junior School will not divert funding or resources from the Senior School, indeed, quite the opposite. Firstly, the project is self-financing and the Senior School will benefit immediately from the development of the new suite for Languages. Also, if the Junior School is as successful as we hope, then the revenue generated will benefit the entire school community.

In terms of numbers, we envisage approximately 60/70 students joining Big Six in the Junior School over the next five years. Thus we project a total school population of about 700 – the same as in 2004 when Big Six first arrived. The school clearly has the capacity to accommodate such numbers and since 2004 we have added the Hutton Theatre and Art classrooms to increase capacity further still.

Clearly, this is a very exciting time for WGS. Throughout our history the school has educated youngsters from the age of 6, most recently from 1911 to 1944 when WGS ran a Junior School for 8-10 year olds in a Victorian mansion which stood on the Sports Hall site. The success of Big Six also clearly shows that, with

the right people, an exciting curriculum and a creative approach, Junior School aged youngsters can thrive at WGS. So, I am confident that the development of a Junior School is a wonderful opportunity for WGS and how fitting it will be if we can reopen a Junior School 100 years after its last reincarnation. More importantly, as we approach the Quincentenary, our new Junior School will show the confidence and ambition WGS has for the future.

Naturally, I'm only able to sketch out the key aspects of our new Junior School at this stage, but I intend to keep parents and students updated with progress reports via half-termly letters and a new page on our website.

### **Parents' Forum – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June 7pm in Social 2, Sixth Form Centre**

May I also take this opportunity to invite questions for the Parents' Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Together with my senior colleagues, I welcome questions on any aspect of school life, including, of course, our new Junior School project.

Please submit your questions by completing and returning the form at the end of this letter to my PA, Jann Boss at school or email her on [headsqa@wgs-sch.net](mailto:headsqa@wgs-sch.net).

Hopefully, quite a few parents will be able to come along to the evening when we will endeavour to answer the questions sent in and any others raised by the audience on the night. Please confirm when you complete the form, whether or not you are able to attend so that we can organise seating and refreshments. As with last year, we will publish all questions and answers (without names) on the website.

Thanks to the Year 7 Parents who were invited at random to attend the recent information sharing event organised by the Friends. I hope to feedback to all Year 7 parents in due course. Thanks also to parents who completed the recent questionnaire on all aspects of school life. We shall have the results back from Kirkland Rowell once they've analysed the 250 or so responses we received.

### **Communication**

As you will recall, we have been trying to modernise and extend our communications with home.

Unfortunately, so far, our requests for up-to-date email addresses don't seem to be bearing much fruit. So, can I make a plea for your email address to be included when you complete the form.

The school also has the technology to use a SMS text messaging service which we feel will be a really useful way of contacting parents e.g. with updates about fixtures, snow, school events etc. So, if you wish the school to be able to contact you in this way, please include your mobile numbers when you complete the form.

### **School life**

Beyond all the above, life at WGS continues apace. The students are enjoying the warmer weather and are beginning to plan and revise for end of year examinations, particularly Year 10 who will face some GCSEs after half-term. We wish them and our Year 11 and Sixth Form students every success with these public examinations and the rest of our students good luck with the internal exams most of which will take place in the week of Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June. **(Please remember that Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June is a staff Training Day so students will not be in school).**

Our young sports men and women continue to enjoy a busy summer. Our cricketers, rounders players and athletes have been doing particularly well of late. Our young thespians have also been treading the boards in the Junior School production of *Dracula*, which was a triumph for all involved in the days leading up to half term.

We also wish the Year 10 Coast 2 Coast runners cool weather and a supportive westerly breeze as they attempt to run the annual challenge from St Bee's Head to Robin Hood's Bay over the Bank Holiday weekend.

### Key Dates

- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June Students return after half-term holiday
  - Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June Staff Training Day
  - Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June Exam week
  - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June Parents' Forum, 7pm, Social 2, Sixth Form Centre
  - Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June Summer Solstice Concert at Seisdon 6.00pm
  - Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June Year 10 Art trip – Group A
  - Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June Year 7 Camp to Snowdonia
  - Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June Sports Day – Field Events only pm
  - Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July Sports Day – Track Events am – finishes 12.45pm **No afternoon school**
  - Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July Year 10 Art trip – Group B
  - Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July Jazz Spectacular 6.30pm (tickets available from School Office)
  - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July Art Exhibition 12.00 noon – 3pm
  - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July Battlefields Trip departs
  - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July Lower School Music Concert, Big School, 7.00pm
- Walker Memorial Mile 1pm  
**END OF TERM 12.30pm**

Wishing you all a relaxing Bank Holiday weekend and please do take a few minutes to complete the details overleaf.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Darby  
Head

**INFORMATION REQUEST FORM**

Please complete the information below and ask your daughter/son to return it to her/his form tutor on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

I/We\* will/will not\* be attending the Parents' Forum on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June and the question I/we\* would like raised at the Forum is

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Name: Mother ..... Father .....  
Parent(s) of ..... form .....

Our email address for communication from school is .....  
or .....

Our mobile number(s) that the school can access to provide an SMS text-messaging service is/are  
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Thank you so much for providing this information.

**Note to Form Tutor: Please pass these forms to the Head's PA**