



WOLVERHAMPTON

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

September 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the new academic year and I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing summer even if the barbecue weather we were hoping for failed to materialise. I can see now why we use the term climate change rather than global warming!

A special welcome this week to our new students – a record number in *Big Six*, lots of new faces in Year 7 and a sprinkling in Year 9 and the Lower Sixth. All appear to be settling in well and we're very much looking forward to getting to know our new recruits over the coming term.

Uniform – can I say at the outset, how smart everyone looks. The blazer badge and new jumper really brighten up the uniform and the decision to let the Sixth Form determine their own dress code has worked really well. I understand that one or two parents faced some delay/difficulty with our supplier and we are looking into this as a matter of urgency.

New Staff

As ever, we welcome new staff:

Mr Hall	English	Miss Harris	English
Mr Sutherland	History	Mr Simpson	D & T Technician
Miss Longstaff	Librarian	Mr Tuck	Theatre Studies pt-time

This term sees some new Heads of Department, with Mr O'Malley taking the helm in Design & Technology and Mrs Mahey in ICT.

We also have three new Heads of Year – Miss Jones with Year 7, Miss Munden with Year 8 and Dr Hinchliffe with Year 9.

Mr Anderson joins the Senior Management Team as Deputy Head, alongside Mr Hills, and WGS also welcomes Mr Jones as our new Bursar.

Examination success

A level: Results were very good – 100% pass rate with 77% of passes at grade A and B. 17 students achieved grade A passes in all their subjects – a tremendous achievement.

GCSE: Congratulations also go to last year's Year 11 who averaged 9A* - C passes each with almost 60% of passes at A*/A grade. 8 students achieved 8 A* or better.

More Student Successes:

Aaron Rai (Year 10) finished runner-up in the U14 British Boys' Championship. He also excelled at the British Par 3 competition but unfortunately, as an amateur, did not qualify for a prize in the professional competition.

Playing off a 2 handicap, Aaron is hopeful of selection for the England U16 squad.

Elizabeth Forrester (Upper Sixth) jumped two clear rounds in the British Show Jumping Association Championships over the summer. This tremendous achievement qualifies her for the National Championships and she also hopes to compete in the European Championships in May 2010.

Summer Adventures

Special thanks to Dr Hinchliffe, Miss Ward and Mr Davies who led 13 students on the expedition to Peru – an unbelievable experience for all involved. (see more detailed report attached).

Special thanks also to Mrs Fogarty who took a party of senior students to Uganda and did the groundwork for three of last year's Upper Sixth to spend part of their gap year working in the Lords Meade College which WGS supports.

Summer Projects

As usual, a considerable amount of work was carried out over the summer break.

- The replacement of the windows in the Merridale building has been completed
- A number of rooms and corridors have been painted
- New chairs have been provided for the Merridale and Derry classrooms
- Tarmac has been laid behind the John Roper Room
- A new Sports Hall floor has been fitted

Autumn Term Events

Please find attached the calendar of activities planned so far for this term. As always, this will be a hectic Autumn but may I take this opportunity to highlight:

- Junior Prizegiving - Friday 25th September at 7.00pm – invitations have been sent to Prize winners and families
- The Friends' AGM – Monday 28th September at 7.00pm in Social 2
- Open Day – Saturday 3rd October from 10.00am – 4.00pm*
- The Friends' Quiz night - Friday 16th October at 7pm
- Two week half term break Monday 19th – Friday 30th October
- Founder's Day – Friday 6th November (see below)**
- Christmas Concerts – 7th and 8th December at 7.30pm

***Open Day** – we hope that a large number of students will volunteer to help as guides and supporters for subject areas on Saturday 3rd October.

****Founder's Day** will be on Friday 6th November at St Peter's Church, Exchange Street at 11.00am. Your son/daughter should be available for collection from the church around 12.30pm. There will be no school that afternoon.

Berlin Trip – October

A reminder that there is an information evening about the Berlin trip on Wednesday 7th October, at 7pm in Social 2 (Sixth Form centre). All pupils taking part should attend with a parent. Please can they bring along their passport (check that it is valid) and an EHIC. These can be applied for on the NHS website.

Art Trip to Amsterdam

The next Art and Culture trip will be traveling to Holland, to visit the wonderful museums of Amsterdam. The proposed itinerary includes a visit to The Van Gogh Museum, The Rijksmuseum, Rembrandt's House, The Anne Frank Museum, De Efteling Fairy Tale Theme Park. The tour duration is 5 days/4 nights– the proposed dates are 5th April to the 9th April 2010 but these are subject to confirmation. Letters will be available from Mr Millichamp or in General Office. This will be a fantastic opportunity for your child to experience the breathtaking beauty of some of the world's finest works of art in this bustling city in the heart of the Netherlands

Sixth Form Leadership Weekend

In the next few weeks the lower sixth form will begin a course of lectures and practical sessions on Tuesday afternoons designed to support them in their capacity as role models for others and as student leaders. Head and senior prefects, sports captains, student parliament members and other lower sixth form students with a significant leadership responsibility will also be invited to attend a weekend training course on the **27-28 March 2010**. We politely request that lower sixth form students pencil this weekend into their diaries and keep it free. All cost including accommodation and meals will be covered by WGS and sports fixtures have been arranged to avoid these dates. This will be the second time that we have offered this course and it is once again shaping up to be a very useful and enjoyable experience.

School Self Review

Central to the ongoing success of WGS is our commitment to continually review how we operate and to try new ideas in an effort to improve the quality of education we provide for all our students. In that vein, we are launching a new approach to the marking of work. Although cognisant of the specific needs of different subjects, the new system should provide a more consistent approach within and across departments.

We are also introducing work sampling whereby a handful of students, selected at random, will be asked to bring their exercise books to a senior colleague at the start of the day. The books will be looked at during the morning and, at lunchtime, the student will meet the member of staff to discuss how they feel their work is going, whether they understand the marking and, crucially, how they are guided and supported to improve. This process will help

us obtain an up to date perspective of the students' experience of learning and it will be a good way of monitoring the consistency of expectation, quality of work and assessment.

As requested at the Parents' Forum, a class average will be published with each test mark. Colleagues will also briefly outline to students the topics due to be covered during the term and publish this information on their departmental section of the website.

Incorporation

During the past two years the Governors of Wolverhampton Grammar School have been working with the Charity Commission to incorporate the school as a limited company. Most leading independent schools have followed this path because it frees the Governors from personal liability, without changing the aims or practice of the school in any way.

Put very simply, Incorporation will see the creation of a Wolverhampton Grammar School Foundation with a small board of trustees who are responsible for the school property. In turn, the Foundation will allow Wolverhampton Grammar School Limited to pursue the business of education in the school buildings and grounds. The school will still be known as Wolverhampton Grammar School and will remain a registered charity. In due course, the Chairman of Governors will be writing to all parents with fuller details and the names of Trustees and Governors.

Swine Flu

Although the spread and severity of the Swine Flu virus has reduced significantly over the summer, the authorities fear that it may return with a vengeance during the autumn and winter months. Clearly, we hope that this does not happen and the latest scientific advice is that school closures are now of limited benefit in stopping the spread of the disease. However, it is still essential that children (or adults) with flu-like symptoms should stay at home until they are free of those symptoms. If your child is showing such symptoms, please contact us and the National Pandemic Flu Service 0800-151 3513 or www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk.

Dropping off/Picking up students

We hope that parents will cooperate to help ensure the safety of their children and others when they drop off or pick up their youngsters from school.

Clearly, we can't accommodate parents' cars on the school site until after 5.00 pm and there are restrictions on the Compton Road, especially at 4.00 pm when our school coaches are boarding. Cars parked outside the school merely add to the congestion and, with some cars blocking driveways to houses and businesses, we've already received a number of complaints this term. Indeed, one or two parents still insist on parking/stopping on the zig-zag lines outside the school gates which is an offence.

So, we are hoping that parents will park a little way from school when they're dropping off or picking up their sons and/or daughters. This would make the beginning and end of the school day, in our view, less fraught for all and, more importantly, far safer.

Contact Us

As I close, the sun is shining, the school is in full swing and, as always, I end my letter with an invitation to all. If you have any thoughts, comments ideas, or observations about anything at WGS, please do not hesitate to contact me by letter, telephone, email or by coming into school to talk things through. WGS needs to go on developing and improving and we need your help and advice to ensure that it does.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Darby
Head

Autumn Term 2009

September		
Sat	12 th	OW Sports Festival, am OW Sports Dinner, Big School, 7.30pm
Sun	13 th	Week 3: Assembly theme: <i>Being responsible</i>
Tues	15 th	Launch of Independent Learning with Year 8 OPRO, John Roper Room, 9.15am – 12.15pm *
Thurs	17 th	Year 11 Nottingham University Visit, all day Work Experience Evening, Derry Hall, 5.30pm
Sun	20 th	Week 4: Assembly theme: <i>Being scholarly</i>
Mon	21 st	School Photos, Big School/John Roper Room, 9.00am – 12.45pm
Thurs	24 th	Whole school SpLD screening
Fri	25 th	Junior Prizegiving, Big School, Derry Hall, 7.00pm – 9.30pm
Sat	26 th	Duke of Edinburgh Weekend
Sun	27 th	Week 5: Assembly theme: <i>Being prepared</i>
Mon	28 th	Year 10 Art trip to Black Country Museum, all day Friends AGM, Social 2, 7.00pm
Wed	30 th	Big Six/Year 7 Language Evening, Hutton Theatre, 7.00pm
October		
Fri	2 nd	Non-Uniform Day for the County Air Ambulance
Sat	3 rd	Open Day for prospective parents, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Sun	4 th	Week 6: Assembly theme: <i>Being recognised</i>
Wed	7 th	7P/7Q Art visit to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, all day Berlin Trip information evening for parents, Social 2, 7.00pm
Thurs	8 th	HPV/BCG immunisations, John Roper Room, all day
Fri	9 th	HPV immunisations, John Roper Room, am 7R/7S Art visit to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, all day
Sat	10 th	Duke of Edinburgh weekend
Sun	11 th	Week 7: Assembly theme: <i>Being brave</i>
Tues	13 th	Big Six Parents Evening, Library, 5.00pm
Wed	14 th	Big Six Art visit, the new Art Gallery, Walsall, am
Fri	16 th	Hockey Tour departs to 19 th , Newcastle Friends' Quiz Night, Derry Hall, 7.00pm
Mon	19 th	Half Term to Friday 30th
Tues	27 th	Berlin - German Language and Cultural Trip to 31st
Wed	28 th	Play rehearsals, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Thurs	29 th	Play rehearsals, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Fri	30 th	Play rehearsals, Hutton Theatre, 10.00am – 4.00pm
November		
Sun	1 st	Week 8: Assembly theme: <i>Being yourself</i>
Tues	3 rd	Ski Trip information evening, Derry Hall, 7.00pm
Thurs	5 th	Senior Maths Challenge, am Year 11 Parents' Evening, Big School and John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Fri	6 th	Founder's Day Service, St Peter's Church 11.00am No afternoon school
Sun	8 th	Week 9: Assembly theme: <i>Being aware</i> Remembrance Sunday
Mon	9 th	An evening with Big Six, Big School, 7.00pm
Wed	11 th	Armistice Day OpAL Seminar, Hutton Theatre, 1.00pm – 4.15pm
Thurs	12 th	Middle School Soloists Concert, Big School, 7.30pm
Sun	15 th	Week 10: Assembly theme: <i>Being involved</i>
Mon	16 th	Year 8 Independent Learning presentations
Thurs	19 th	Year 8 Parents' Evening, Big School and John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Sun	22 nd	Week 11: Assembly theme: <i>Being honest</i>
Tues	24 th	Year 7 Parents' Evening, Big School and John Roper Room, 5.00pm
Sun	29 th	Week 12: Assembly theme: <i>Being inspired</i>
December		
Tues	1 st	Rehearsal for Christmas Concert, Big School, 4.00pm – 6.00pm
Thurs	3 rd	Rehearsal for Christmas Concert, Big School, 4.00pm – 6.00pm
Sun	6 th	Week 13: Assembly theme:
Mon	7 th	Christmas Carol Concert, Big School, 7.30pm – 10.00pm
Tues	8 th	Christmas Carol Concert, Big School, 7.30pm – 10.00pm
Wed	9 th	School Christmas Lunch
Fri	11 th	Reports issued to Years 9/10/L6/U6 Short Reports Big Six
Term Ends		

***OPRO gum-shields** - The dentist will be coming in to school on Tuesday 15th September at 9:30am to fit **OPRO gum-shields**. Any parent who wishes to know more about these gum-shields should speak with Mrs Dalzell or contact the General Office to get a leaflet: if you then wish your child to see the dentist please fill in the form or access their website.