

Dear Parents

I hope you are looking forward to a relaxing Easter break. For most of us at WGS, the school holiday provides an opportunity to pause briefly during what has been an incredibly busy term. Exactly a year ago, I predicted an imminent inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). When it finally came in January we were both ready, and relieved. A rating of 'excellent' in all areas was fantastic – it was a rating as good as it can be. We are rightfully very proud, and you should be too.

You may have read that Tom Bennett, the Government's "behaviour" tsar, has recently prepared a report stating that across the country "in any school, at most times, behaviour is largely civil and co-operative", so damning with faint praise those schools who work hard, in sometimes very difficult circumstances, to create a good working environment. The abiding implication, however, was that many schools fail to create strong working conditions. In stark contrast, ISI found our pupils to have a highly developed sense of right and wrong and that they behaved with exemplary levels of courtesy. Mr Bennett recommends the implementation of behaviour tracking and anonymised surveys in schools, both of which WGS already does. He placed the emphasis on school leaders, and whilst I don't disagree with him in essence, he failed to recognise that the whole school community, in which I include parents, has a role to play. I truly am grateful for the clear lead and support you always give with regard to your children's behaviour. It helps our partnership work powerfully.

On that note, now is probably a good time to reissue my invitation to our next Parents' Forum on Tuesday 9th May at 5.30pm in Big School. We will talk through some of the results of the parents' survey and highlight areas we hope to improve in the near future. In particular, Alex Yarnley, Assistant Head (Curriculum), will outline some proposals staff and students have been considering to make assessment here in the Senior School more effective. Please let my PA, Caroline Harris, know if you are able to join us so that we can make arrangements for refreshments etc. You can contact her by emailing cah@wgs-sch.net

I should bring you up-to-date with our proposed infant school development, too. Its progress through planning has not been smooth, and after several deferrals Wolverhampton City Council have now rejected our application. The rejection is based on potentially increased traffic flow near the school. In short, the opinions of our traffic consultants and those of the Council differ. The decision to branch into Early Years education was strategic. It makes no sense to start our offer for children aged seven – they are already settled in a school then, and we are confident we can provide excellent schooling to younger children. We are now considering our next steps: I will keep you posted.

There is much to look forward to in the forthcoming Summer Term including the usual trips, lectures and concerts; an abbreviated version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, our middle and lower school production in May is billed to be brilliant. Please come, even if your children are not in it: the plays are always fantastic and an inspiration to the community. From such acorns grow the brilliance of our senior drama, as those of you who were

fortunate enough to have been at the Lower 6th Theatre Studies exam performance this week will know. The calibre of acting and design was astonishing: well done to all involved.

Another highlight of next term's calendar will be the annual Jazz Spectacular - always a sell-out and a much loved permanent fixture in the School's calendar. This year *Expresso Bongo Orchestra*, the band that our former Director of Music, Andrew Proverbs, was a member of, will join us. Playing under the memorial window in Big School, installed in Andrew's honour, they will help us to celebrate the life of a man who gave so much to our community.

Finally, I want to wish all our Year 11 and Sixth Form students well in their forthcoming exams. If your child is sitting GCSE, AS, A Level or, indeed, any end of year exams over the coming months, please do encourage them to take full advantage of all the support available here in school - whether that's additional academic tuition, revision lessons or pastoral support to help them manage their workload. Your children work hard and give so much to our school; I am always proud of them.

For now though, enjoy the Easter break. This term's successes wouldn't have been possible without the support of every member of WGS, whether students, parents, directors or staff. As we end the term still basking in the glow of ISI's endorsement of all we are doing here, I can but thank you, your children and my colleagues once again for all you have done and continue to do. I am very proud to be Head of a great school.

With all good wishes,

Kathy Crewe-Read
Head