



SIR THOMAS RICH'S SCHOOL

Oakleaze, Gloucester

From the Headmaster

Learning and Teaching

In the midst of public examinations, I feel it is worth taking some time to expand on Learning and Teaching at School in order to give parents a clear idea of exactly how we continue to make progress in this area.

Over the last decade or so, we have seen a paradigm shift in what we know about, and how we implement, the craft of teaching. Teachers have gained a more sophisticated understanding of what it means to 'learn' and, therefore, have been able to tailor and focus their classroom activities to support knowledge acquisition and knowledge retention. This understanding of learning is grounded in a definition that involves a 'lasting change in pupils' capabilities or understanding', in which the word 'lasting' takes on a greater significance than has been the case previously. Teachers and school leaders are increasingly concerning themselves with how new knowledge is introduced, the long-term retention of knowledge and classroom practices which support effective teaching and pupil achievement.

At Rich's, we see learning as a complex process rooted in successful relationships. It involves the development of understanding through the acquisition and retention of powerful knowledge and metacognition. Powerful knowledge provides reliable explanations and understanding of key research and established orthodoxies as well as new ways of thinking about concepts which help learners go beyond their original experiences and enables them to envisage alternatives, think creatively and critically. I know that our new Headteacher, Matthew Lynch, is working intensively on this area and in particular thinking about how we can refine this critical aspect of our work. It is vital to us that we ensure we do all we can to enable individuals to develop an intellectual curiosity where they can navigate the dialogue between a full understanding of the established orthodoxies, methods and theories and their own creative and original thinking. Matthew Lynch will no doubt update parents early in the Autumn term.

Additionally, there is no doubt in my mind that in any educational environment worth its salt, high-quality classroom discussion is evident: dialogic teaching harnesses the power of talk to engage interest, stimulate thinking, advance understanding, expand ideas, and build and evaluate arguments. It empowers pupils for lifelong learning. I am sure the emphasis on discussion and debate will continue at Rich's long after I have departed.

Sports' Evening 4 July

Our annual Sports' Evening takes place on Thursday 4 July. A reminder that students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are expected to attend, along with competitors of field and track events in Years 7 to 12. The event starts earlier this year at 3.30pm to give plenty of time for people to vote in the General Election. The expectation is that boys in Years 7, 8 and 9 who are not participating in track and field events will be responsible for Form stalls to raise money and help create an enjoyable, festival atmosphere. I am grateful to the PTFA who hope to run a bar and Barbecue. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

INSET Day 28 June

A reminder that there is an INSET day on Friday 28 June, and the school will be closed to pupils.

Summer Concert 10 July

This year's Summer Concert takes place on Wednesday 10 July at beginning at 6.30pm with Jazz in the Quad. The programme will feature a wide range of musical styles and contributions from soloists, and ensembles. Please do keep the date free in your diary - tickets will be available to book online shortly.

Parent Gateway

I would also like to take this opportunity to ask parents to double check that their contact details are up-to-date on Parent Gateway. Communication with parents, either via phone or email, remains an integral part of our support for your son or daughter, but we do appreciate that contact details can change from time to time.

A reminder too that Parent Gateway allows you to easily report an unplanned absence for your son or daughter, whilst also providing key information such as lesson timetables, school notices, attendance data and Order Grades when they are published.

[Log in to Parent Gateway](#)

With best wishes for a relaxing weekend



Matthew Morgan
HEADMASTER

SIR THOMAS RICH'S

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