



From the Headteacher - 9 January 2026

Dear Parents

It has been great to welcome pupils and staff back this week after what was hopefully an enjoyable break over the Christmas period. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year.

Whilst there have been several weather warnings for the region this week, a reminder that should it ever be the case that the School needs to close, we would let parents know by email, post an update on the homepage of the School's website, and notify the County Council for inclusion on their [School Closures](#) page.

Responding to Feedback

As we begin the Spring Term, it is important to note that the Autumn Term ended with our first set of Order Grades, which give pupils and parents an overall indication of the effort, attainment and progress achieved in the academic year so far. As will also be explained on *Parent Gateway*, the Order Grades give both an 'approach to learning' grade and an 'attainment grade', which is colour coded to reflect the comparison to your son or daughter's current target grade (for Year 7, this will be the case from Order 2 onwards).

This term we will be reminding pupils that these Order Grades, alongside regular feedback in lessons, via homework, assessments and classwork, should not only be used to understand current attainment, but also to prompt pupils to respond to this feedback, to help ensure continued progress as we move into 2026.

Responding to feedback can take a number of forms, including:

- answering questions posed in teacher marking
- re-writing work (or parts of work)
- seeking additional support from teachers outside of lessons (or at appropriate times within lessons)
- attending relevant Department support sessions
- setting meaningful personal targets, either formally or informally.

Engaging in these regular responses to feedback forms an integral part of the development of independent learning skills within our *Behaviour for Learning* curriculum aim; such skills become increasingly important as we move towards the examination periods.

Trial Examinations

With the above in mind, the upcoming weeks mark the start of the first round of trial examinations for some of our pupils; from Monday, Year 11 students, along with Year 10 pupils taking the Religious Studies short course, will begin their assessments. These trial examinations are designed to reflect the conditions of the summer examinations, helping pupils not only to demonstrate their subject knowledge but also to build confidence and familiarity with formal examination settings.

We understand that preparing for examinations and managing revision schedules can feel demanding, and pupils have been encouraged to approach these assessments positively and to give their very best. As mentioned, the key value of the trial examinations lies in the detailed feedback students will receive, which will help them identify strengths and areas for improvement as they continue their preparation for the summer examinations.

Pupils are reminded that support is always available, and they should speak to their subject teachers, Form Tutor or Head of Year if they have any questions or concerns at any point before or during the trial examination period.

Our A Level trial examinations for Year 13 will take place after the half-term break, from Monday 23 February.

Careers Fair

Our annual Careers Fair takes place on Tuesday 27 January in various venues around the School, from 9.00am to 1.30pm. This event is a valuable opportunity for pupils in Years 9 to 13 to engage directly with a wide range of local and national employers across many industries. Pupils will be able to explore different job roles, understand routes into various careers, and learn about progression opportunities. We are delighted to be welcoming around 100 organisations, along with 30 higher education providers who will answer pupils' questions about options beyond the Sixth Form, including apprenticeships, college courses, and university pathways.

There will also be a series of talks for Year 12 pupils, delivered by higher education providers and specialist employers, covering routes into industries such as graphic design, electrical engineering, and more.

The Careers Fair forms part of our extensive Careers programme and supports our adherence to the Gatsby Benchmarks, which are a national framework that schools use to make sure we are providing high-quality careers

education. My thanks go to Mrs Manning and Mrs Morris for co-ordinating the organisation of this event.

Dropping off and picking up by car

As we begin the new calendar year, parents are respectfully reminded to be mindful of our local neighbours' access routes when driving near school, and not to wait or stop immediately outside the School, particularly between gates 1-4, when dropping off or collecting pupils by car. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated and helps to manage traffic congestion along Oakleaze at the start and end of the school day.

INSET Day

A brief reminder that we have an INSET day on Friday 30 January, where the School will be closed to pupils. Staff will be continuing with our CPD programme and, assuming it has been published by then, we hope to be able to reflect on the final OFSTED inspection report. As I mentioned in my email before Christmas, we expect the report to be released before the end of the month – I will let parents know as soon as this is the case.

Extracurricular

Despite having only been back in school for a few days, congratulations go to the many teams who played their first fixtures of 2026 this week. Despite a fantastic effort, our 2nd VII Netball team narrowly lost 30-34 away to Millfield School on Wednesday, while the 1st, 2nd and 3rd XV Rugby teams won against Millfield 52-26, 19-15 and 48-10 respectively. Continuing the winning streak, the U16A players won at Millfield 20-12, while the U15As showed great determination and grit, but unfortunately lost out to their tough Millfield counterparts 10-64.

The Extracurricular Timetable has been updated for the new term and is available to view in the [School Life](#) section of our website. My sincere thanks go once again to all staff who give their time to maintain and indeed broaden our extensive extracurricular programme, and to Mrs Garcia for overseeing this provision.

80 Years of Rugby Dinner

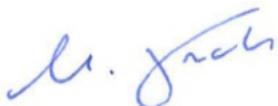
As you may already be aware, we will be hosting our *80 Years of Rugby Dinner* on Saturday 21 March. In preparing my speech for our Prize Giving evening in October last year, I noted that in 1946 the Headmaster at the time, Mr William 'Peter' Veale, said in *his* speech that 'this was the year that rugger gained its prominence'.

In order to celebrate this milestone, the day will include a variety of contact and touch rugby games between current students and alumni, concluding with a black-tie dinner featuring a three-course meal and live music; tickets for the event can be purchased via the link below:

[Buy Tickets](#)

I hope you have an enjoyable weekend.

Best wishes



Matthew Lynch

HEADTEACHER

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