

Our Ref: HTSAletters/BRE/JOD

Date: July 2015

Dear Parent / Carer

As yet another academic year draws to a close, I feel very concerned that life is passing us by too quickly!

Ofsted Inspection June 2015

First, as always, I am writing to thank you for your support. Ruskin has had an extremely busy but positive year and the icing on the cake has undoubtedly been the Ofsted Inspection! To have been graded 'good' in all four areas (Leadership & Management, Quality of Teaching, Behaviour & Safety and Achievement) is wonderful, and is testament to the drive and hard work of all students, parents, staff and governors. It is also justly deserved: one of our students commented that we already know we are good so why do we need Ofsted to tell us! Whilst I understand the sentiment, as adults we also recognise that an official rating is worth so much!

We now start the journey to outstanding and, in due course, I will be sharing plans with you. Of absolute critical importance will be the focus on attitudes to learning. We must continue to build our students' confidence, self-esteem and self-belief. We have plans in place to address this even more strongly from September 2015. We are going to need your support and I thank you in advance for this.

Attitudes to learning

In terms of this focus on attitudes to learning, please ensure that your son/daughter returns to school in September with the right uniform, the correct equipment, a decent school bag and with the intention of working hard. There will be no excuses accepted because all of our young people are very capable of this.

Thanks to staff who are leaving

As with all schools at this time of year, we say farewell to some staff as they move on to pastures new. First, a massive thank you to Mrs Jane Spencer and Mrs Jane Hopley who both retire after a combined service of 70 years. Both have had senior positions in our school and both have taught generations of families.

Their legacy is clear to see and I would like to, personally, thank Jane Spencer for her continued support as an Assistant Headteacher.

Thank you to Mrs Willis, who has spent a year with us and who moves to teach RE in a local school.

This year, we have been so fortunate to have had some temporary support from Mrs Hill and Mrs Burke-Jackson in English. Both have helped us out immensely at a time when sickness absence has affected English. We hope that both will support us in the future.

At the end of the year we also say goodbye and thank you to Mrs Beech and Mrs Needham who move on to a promoted post; to Mrs Smith who has decided to pursue a career in journalism, to Mrs Grant-Miller and Mr Morrey who are both moving to schools in other parts of the country; to Ms Carvell and Ms Lee who are also moving to pastures new. In addition, thanks to Mr Brewin who has decided to move to Yorkshire to enjoy semi-retirement.

New Staff

We will be welcoming new staff to Ruskin in September. Some parents will already have had the opportunity to meet a few of our new staff at recent events, but I will formally welcome and introduce them in early September. At a time when teacher recruitment nationally is difficult, I am privileged to say that we have strong staffing in place for September 2015.

Uniform

The usual reminders about uniform, please! Do refer to the school planner for clarification and do check with your son/daughter as they are all well aware of the expectations. I will also be arranging for reminders to be circulated via our Facebook and Twitter sites as I recognise that more and more parents rely on social media. From September, please note that **ONLY** clip on ties may be worn. Every year group should now have converted to clip on following a phasing in period of two years. Some students have been 'handing down' old style ties. We will not be accepting traditional ties from September 1st. Please, be reminded that the clip on tie can be purchased during the holidays from school at a price of **£5.75**.

Attendance

Nationally, the bare minimum expectation for attendance has now shifted up to 90%. Anyone falling below this percentage will be classed as a persistent absentee and receiving intervention from the Local Authority. We regularly remind students and parents about the crucial link between attendance and results so please support your son/daughter by insisting on excellent attendance.

Assessment

Please, be aware that, from September, there are some key national changes in terms of both assessment and in the expectations in terms of exam results. As a school, we have been working to review the way we assess. We will be trialling a new system with Year 8 students next term. More information to follow in due course.

Open Mornings and Open Evening 2015

Key dates for open events are listed below. Please, don't think that the open events are merely for prospective new parents. Existing parents are also very welcome to attend. I would thoroughly recommend that parents consider joining us for an open morning, where you will be able to see our school on a normal, working day.

Open Evening: Tuesday 8th September 5.30-8.30

Open Morning: 23rd/24th/25th September 10.15-12.15

Open Afternoon: 23rd/24th September 2.00-3.00

What a great school!

You will have received the school magazine by the time you read this letter. You will also, hopefully, be following school on Facebook and Twitter. Through these various means, I hope that you enjoy reading about all of the successes, opportunities and highlights this academic year. They are too numerous to mention here, and that is a good sign! Well done to each and every student who has represented the school: at Open Evenings, Parents' Evenings, Dance, Music, Sport, Public Speaking and School Council. The list is endless. Thank you, also, to the staff who, as always, have worked tirelessly and selflessly this academic year to ensure that our students get the best experience of school life.

For now, I would like to thank you again for your support and to wish you all a sunny summer. I hope that everyone manages to get a well deserved break.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely



E S Brett (Mrs)
Headteacher

Please note: School returns for students on **Wednesday 2nd September** – Week 1 of the timetable.

The term 'parent' refers to parent and carer throughout this letter.