13th September 2017

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the start of another academic year - I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer in spite of the weather!

There has been much in the media about this year’s examination results with suggestions that results nationally are lower in the new GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics. I am pleased to report that, in both English and mathematics, results have improved, with 90% of students achieving a standard pass (grade 4 and above) and 85% a strong pass (grade 5 and above) in English and 78% and 52% respectively in mathematics. 72% students achieved 5 GCSEs at A\*-C including English and mathematics at grade 4 or above. Post-16 results also saw the majority of students achieving their targets across both academic and applied qualifications. I should like to congratulate all students on their achievements and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of their teachers and thank you as parents for your support and encouragement.

This term we welcome a number of new staff:

Mr Adderley – Site assistant

Ms Alavudeen – Teacher of Computing

Ms Davies – Teacher of Business Studies

Mr Dhanda – Premises & Health & Safety Development Office

Ms Prokic – Teacher of Science

Ms Ramdewor – Teacher of Art

Ms Purewal - Catering assistant

Ms McLaughlin – Catering assistant

We wish them a happy and successful association with the school.

Work on the sixth form block and sports hall has continued over the summer holidays and progress appears to be being made, albeit slowly! The tender process for the artificial football pitch has also now been concluded and we will know later this month when work will start on this. If you have to come into school for an appointment during the day, please follow the signs indicating the pedestrian access for your safety.

Earlier this year, many of you responded to the survey which is co-ordinated by the national company, Kirkland Rowell. Kirkland Rowell compare parents’ views on a range of areas against both outcomes from surveys nationally and earlier surveys for the school. We carry out a survey of parents, students and staff every two years and I have summarised below the key points arising out of the 2017 survey:

* Overall performance score was significantly higher than 2015 survey
* 93.2% parents would recommend school to another parent
* Strengths:
  + School security
  + Exam results
  + Truancy control
  + Teaching quality
  + School discipline
* Priorities for improvement:
  + School facilities
  + Developing potential
  + Developing confidence
* Areas receiving higher scores than the 2015 survey:
  + School communication
  + Teaching quality
  + Celebrating & rewarding achievement
  + Looking after pupils well
* Areas receiving lower scores than the 2015 survey:
  + School facilities
  + Choice of subjects
  + Out of school activities / clubs

We will be discussing issues arising out of the survey at the next Parents’ Forum on Thursday 16th November at 3pm. This year we are alternating the timing of these forums to try and enable more parents to attend. With regard to school communication, you will be aware from last term that we are trying to improve home-school communication and will be introducing ParentMail this term. A separate letter is being sent out regarding this.

This year also sees the start of *The Lordswood Challenge* for all students in years 7 and 8. This scheme is designed to broaden students’ learning experiences as they tackle the different challenges across six areas. Throughout the year, there will also be a range of activities run by staff on a Wednesday from 2:20 – 3pm and all students in years 7 and 8 are expected to take part in at least one of these sessions. The scheme aims to provide a good foundation for progression to the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme which we are now offering in year 9 and which we hope will extend to post-16. The Applied Learning period from 2:20pm -3pm has therefore been re-designated as ‘extended learning time’ to reflect the way in which this time has developed since its introduction. Extended learning time allows students to participate in enrichment or extension activities in school or to deepen their learning through wider reading at home. Students may also use this time to develop their skills in a particular sport or on a musical instrument or to take up a new hobby.

I look forward to seeing you at the different events in school during the year and to working with you to achieve the best possible outcomes for your daughter.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs Jane Götschel**

**Headteacher**