



### From the Headmaster

The world our students inhabit is a complex and challenging one; young lives these days are acted out in a far more public way and it is hard to escape judgement by others. The stats confirm this, that the incidence of stress among young people, of not meeting the expectations of themselves and others, of feeling inadequate as a result, has increased significantly over the past decade or so, and it is due, in no small part, to the rise in perfectionism or, to be more accurate, the rise in the myth of perfectionism.

I spoke to the boys recently at assembly about this theme and encouraged them, of course, to aim to do the very best they can; with bright, committed boys who take pride in all they do, this is a given. The message equally, however, was that they should not reflect too harshly on themselves if they do not always reach their own exacting high standards: if they are not always the best player on the pitch; or if they do not get the best mark in the test; or if they forget their lines in the drama production. Sometimes, just being very good is good enough. It is clearly not a healthy obsession ceaselessly and doggedly to strive for perfection, especially if this results in increased stress or negative self-esteem.

The strength of the RGS community is that every individual is unique, and it is this uniqueness which gives each of us our innate worth and value. Innate qualities are by their very nature inherent, and do not have to be repeatedly earned; they persist regardless of fluctuations in achievement. As I said to the boys, every single one of us is a work in progress, never the finished article – since that would mean that no further improvement is possible, and there is always room for improvement. And since all of us are works in progress, we are, therefore, not perfect. Our imperfections add value and make their own unique contribution to the whole character.

So as we finish today for a well-deserved half-term break, I would urge the boys to take with them this message: don't always strain and labour desperately to be perfect – it will never happen. Try your best, work hard and play hard, but celebrate your imperfections, accept yourself as a work in progress, and be proud of who you are. As poet and singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen celebrated with this inspired lyric in a song called *Anthem*: "Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in..."

### Latest News

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**Art:** A group of Lower Sixth Form Art students helped run *The Big Draw Epsom* day for local Epsom schools. Eight local primary schools and two local secondary schools were guided around drawing stations where they met RGS boys and artists who helped them and inspired them with their drawings.

**Charity:** This year's Stand-Up Comedy evening raised well over £1,600 for cancer research and the School's charities. Hosted by Old Guildfordian Paul Kerensa, a stellar line-up of comics provided a great evening of comedy in front of a sell-out audience.

**Drama:** The GCSE devised drama piece saw the students locating their play in a fictitious country called Malacopus, a dystopian place eerily referencing North Korea and tin pot dictators throughout history. The boys did an excellent job both as performers and indeed as storytellers, with their tightly structured piece. The A Level students were inspired by the Stanford Prison Experiment which took place 1971 in the US. This was a social psychology experiment that attempted to investigate the psychological effects of perceived power, focusing on the struggle between prisoners and prison officers. The boys performed using Steven Berkoff as their practitioner leading to a darkly comic and stylistically grotesque piece.

**Independent Learning Assignment:** The ILA Presentation Evening showcased the work of the finalists as they provided seven-minute presentations. The ten presented on everything from German politics to the mathematics of candy, from the flight of javelins to the length of taxi journeys. The level of scholarship and quality of presenting were humbling, and the judges comprising three RGS governors, debated long and hard before awarding the Arts and STEM Awards to **Samuel Jones** (U6) speaking on *Method in madness: using religion to decipher Messiaen's music* and **Edward Ferguson** (U6) delivering a talk entitled *Can bioengineering and biomimicry be the solution to our medical and engineering problems?*

## Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

**Badminton:** The senior team, the Under 19As, beat Tiffin School 5 – 4.

**Chess:** The RGS finished second in the Millfield International Tournament. **Luke Nelson** (L6) and **James Golding** (L6) won Best Board 5 and 4 respectively. **Alex Golding** (4N) won Best Board 2 and Best Under 16. **Harry Grieve** (U6) won *The Stephen Joseph Award* for best overall player, Best Under 18 and Best Board 1.

**Football:** Highlight of the last fortnight was a 6 – 0 win for the 1st XI against Frensham Heights School with a brace apiece from **Javier León Ayarza** (U6) and **Nick Scott** (L6).

**Rugby:** In the National Cup Round 1 our Under 15A team made a confident start to the competition with a 37 – 19 victory against Howard of Effingham School. The block fixture against St John's School Leatherhead finished with the RGS just shading the day with eight victories and one draw. The Under 16 teams completed a clean-sweep of wins, with the Under 16As recording an accomplished 40 – 5 victory. Against the Judd School, 10 victories were recorded: the highlight being the six RGS teams, from A to F, which represented the Under 12s, including many boys making their competitive debuts both for the School and in rugby.

**Skiing:** Our Ski Team competed in the English Finals and then the British Qualifiers. The team of **Jack Weeks** (1R), **George Kemkers** (5A) and **James MacDonald** (L6), led by captain **Marcus Hinton** (L6) was placed ninth in the English finals to progress as one of 11 schools to represent England in the British finals.

**Tennis:** **Jamie Diack** (2P) has been invited to play for the Great Britain Under 14 tennis team in a friendly against France at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton.

## Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Wednesday 7 November	First Form Parents' Pastoral Evening in the Auditorium
Thursday 8 November	Fifth Form A level Options Evening in Great Hall
Saturday 10 November	Scout Family Quiz in Great Hall
Monday 12 November	RGS Parents' Association Meeting and AGM in the Staff Common Room
Tuesday 13 November	Junior Piano Concert in the Recital Room
Wednesday 14 November	Second Form Parents' Evening in Great Hall
Friday 16 November	Field Day 2

