



From the Headmaster

Values – and school values are certainly not exempt – can be regarded as rather quaint, dusty, old-fashioned concepts: nice to have but hard to pin down in terms of their modern-day relevance. By their very nature, values are intangible and abstract, hardly the thing required to equip people for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Yet, conversely, it is at these very times of tribulation that to me values truly come to the fore.

We are, undoubtedly, in a period of great uncertainty and concern; our thoughts go out to every single person and family affected by COVID-19, and to all those working so hard in the light of this virus. With a rapidly-changing global landscape, the degree of apprehension is certainly unsettling for us all. My first duty of care remains, and always will be focused on, the health, safety and wellbeing of the students, my staff, and all those in our community. I would like to reassure you that we do take the current situation extremely seriously and have planned accordingly. We will continue to liaise closely with the authorities and local schools; we will continue to take advice from Public Health England; however, we will also continue to err on the side of caution. Please rest assured that we are reacting daily to professional advice to plan and ensure appropriate strategies are in place, so that we can minimise disruption and allow education to continue as smoothly and effectively as possible, irrespective of what is around the corner.

This week a number of our students were involved in the filming of a message of empathy and support for those who are in our new community at RGS Guildford Nanjing in China. With poignant messaging in Mandarin, the RGS students went out of their way to convey their heartfelt affinity and compassion. This is just one such way that our values can take on a more concrete form. It is not so much in times of success and happiness that values are important; rather, it is times such as the present where, as a community, our ability to showcase kindness, resilience, perspective, partnership, and collaboration – to name but a few – will be tested. I have every confidence that, as always, the RGS community will rise to the challenges ahead.

Latest News

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Biology: In the prestigious national Biology Olympiad, **James Miller** (U6) secured a gold award. Overall RGS boys were awarded six silver, six bronze, 13 Highly Commended and six Commended awards.

Chemistry: In the Cambridge Chemistry Race, a new competition hosted by Cambridge, 24 teams nationally tried to solve progressively more difficult Chemistry problems and points were awarded according to the time taken. Our Lower Sixth team, *Triene our best but diene inside*, consisting of **Henry Benett**, **Andrew Florescu**, **Salvatore Nigrelli**, **Alex Thow** and **Jackie Zhang** took second place: an impressive achievement in the face of stiff opposition.

Drama: Our GCSE Drama boys expertly delivered three extracts from *The Arsonists* by Max Frisch, a challenging play exploring the ability for evil to spread when good men turn a blind eye. This was all the more impressive as the audience contained their peers, teachers, and also the examiner who was observing

with a critical eye. Polished, slick performances which ably demonstrated development of character, physical and vocal skills, and a sensitivity to the content of the piece were all very much in evidence.

Music: A typically busy fortnight for the Music Department has included the monthly Market Day Concert in Holy Trinity Church which included a fantastic jazz finale from Lower Sixth Form students **Stan Lawrence** and **Henry Forrest**. In addition, the joint Guildford High School and RGS Joint Chamber Choir sang Choral Evensong at St Albans Cathedral; the choice of repertoire, aptly chosen to suit the imposing interior of the building and the solemn period of Lent, included William Byrd's stunning second setting of the evening canticles and Henry Purcell's *Remember not, Lord, our offences*. Finally, the Senior Piano Concert showcased some of the School's finest pianists. An evening of astonishing musicality included poised performances of Haydn by **Solomon Poole** (L6) and lyrical Brahms by **Ruben Berstecher** (L6).

World Book Day: With this year's theme of *Reading Aloud*, lessons focused on the value of the spoken word. We also welcomed author Jon Robinson, the author of the *Nowhere* trilogy, about a group of young people imprisoned for crimes that they did not remember committing. Jon led a dynamic creative writing workshop, an informal *Meet the Author* session, and finally delivered a lively presentation.

Sports News

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Chess: Our 1st VI produced a solid performance against Winchester College with a 6 – 0 victory to secure their place in the regional final of the National Schools' Chess Championship. In addition, our 3rd VI beat Kingston Grammar 1st VI by 8½ – 3½, a reverse of the result earlier in the season.

Cross-Country: **Will Barnicoat** (L6) won the Under 17 Men's National Cross-Country Championships in very muddy conditions in Nottingham; his club also won the team medal. The trophy was held by none other than Mo Farah in 1999 and 2000: big shoes to step into!

Fencing: **Leo Kamstra** (5B) won the British championship qualifier at Whitgift School to become the South-East Fencing Champion.

Football: The 1st XI beat Wilson's School by 4 – 1 with two goals apiece from **Daragh Brown** (L6) and **Nick Scott** (U6).

Hockey: A return to action after a well-deserved half-term break saw the RGS take on one of the strongest hockey playing schools in the country, Whitgift School, in a full block of fixtures. With the gap in standard between the two schools narrowing, there were a number of impressive results. The first-ever Under 17A game, under a revised National Competition structure, took place with the game ending in a 2 – 2 draw; Whitgift equalised just before the final whistle. Undoubted highlights, however, were the Under 16B and Under 13D teams who dominated all areas of the pitch to secure convincing wins. Individually, **Oscar Lee** for the Under 14Cs and **Navin Sivayoganathan** for the Under 13Ds both scored hat-tricks for their respective teams. The 1st XI advanced to the last four in the country of the England Hockey National Tier 1 competition after beating Peter Symonds College in the quarter finals.

Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Monday 9 March	Careers Seminar, <i>The Third Sector</i> , in the Auditorium
Wednesday 11 March	Digital Natives Parents' Pastoral Workshop in the Auditorium
Thursday 12 March	Friday Timetable Ensembles Concert in the Auditorium
Friday 13 March	Field Day 3
Wednesday 18 March	Joint Schools' Parents' Choir Concert at <i>G Live</i>

