



From the Headmaster

After what has seemed like an especially long winter, the first signs of spring have been particularly appreciated. Spring is well named as it is all about growth, about hope, about fresh signs of life; indeed, it was originally an adjective, *springing* time. Equally, the word Lent, from the Old English word *lengten*, was connected with that invigorating sense of days getting longer and it is wholly appropriate that this time of year is associated with fresh starts, growth and change. In the context of the boys making a welcome return physically to school this week, these sentiments have felt particularly apt.

With clearer skies and fresher breezes, we as a community are inspired to continue to refresh and change. Inclusion is one of the School Values of which I am most proud, and yet equally I appreciate it is not a passive concept, rather something about which we need continually to be proactive and dynamic. International Women's Day at the beginning of the week was a case in point. With the *#ChooseToChange* hashtag, this campaign championed, "*A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change; so let's all choose to challenge.*" Raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, and celebrating all equally were fundamental pillars of this day and these elements are clearly key to every aspect of building an inclusive, tolerant community at the RGS, including our firm commitment to an anti-racist culture.

As a school we continue to reflect on the importance of our role and our responsibility in educating students to develop the tolerance, understanding and respect for others to become inclusive leaders and compassionate, measured members of society. While changing a culture is complex and takes time, I am proud of the start we have made on this journey and I am keen to maintain open lines of communication and to share our progress and plans with our wider community. Greater awareness of racial issues has been provided through an anonymous questionnaire of students and staff by *Flair*, a company which is leading the way in building a truly anti-racist culture. In addition, diversity and inclusion consultants, *All-In Education*, have assisted in the first steps to creating a meaningful and impactful strategy. Training and educating our community are of the utmost importance in raising awareness and bringing about positive change: all staff have now received training on unconscious bias and the power of language; we have joined the *Schools Inclusion Alliance* which provides further training opportunities; and senior staff are being trained specifically on how to create an inclusive organisation: recruitment and curriculum are just two of the areas where we are developing a clear strategy.

Flair's findings as a result of their questionnaire were enlightening. There were a number of positives, including our levels of racial inclusion; there were equally a number of areas for us to improve. A number of initiatives have already been introduced, including the new *#SpeakUp* email address facilitating open and honest communication, as well as changes to provide greater racial and ethnic diversity and perspective to our curriculum. I shall provide more specific details in a letter in next week's parental communications about all these elements.

Change does not take place over night and change is not limited to just one area. Our focus on diversity and inclusion also covers a number of other aspects including gender, sexuality, age and disability and our strategy will be a fully holistic one. This is still early days in our journey – indeed, with spring upon us we have only just started to sow the seeds of change – as we strive to nurture an environment in which every member of our community knows they fully belong and are each given the respect they fully deserve. We must continue to acknowledge that a challenged world is an alert world, that from challenge comes change, and that every single one of us has a part to play. Rest assured, we will.

Latest News

Chemistry: RGS students again obtained extremely impressive results in this year's Chemistry Olympiad. 7,160 elite students from 666 schools took part in the two-hour exam. **Alex Thow** (U6) achieved a remarkable score of 96%. **Salvatore Nigrelli** (U6) also made the top 36 in the country and will be joining Alex in the final selection process. The top four students in the final progress to represent the United Kingdom in the 53rd International Chemistry Olympiad to be held in Osaka, Japan. Other notable results included **Ellis Baker, Henry Benett, Alex Jones** and **Jackie Zhang** (all Lower Sixth Form) securing the Gold Award (top 8.9% of all the candidates). **Andrew Florescu** and **Nathan Page** had already obtained Gold while in the Lower Sixth Form. Other best performing Lower Sixth Form students were **Ishan Nathan** and **Aradhya Soneja**. In addition, Fifth Form student **Jan Czarnek** impressed, securing Silver.

Dacey Conference: The annual Dacey Conference, which inspires young people to debate topical issues and explore the balance between individual responsibility and the role of the state, was held online this year. Traditionally, two Sixth Form delegates from the RGS are invited to a residential trip at Trinity College, Oxford. This year, however, the organisers were so impressed that they have permitted all five of our Sixth Form participants to attend the residential trip: **Sebastian Dye, Freddie Edgecliffe-Johnson, Alex Mitchell, Oliver Robinson** and **Dominic Stagg**. The McWhirter Foundation, which organises the Conference, described all five students as "fantastic delegates and a credit to your school".

Mathematics: **Ben Watkins** (U6) attended the virtual prizegiving ceremony for the annual University of Lincoln Mathematics Challenge. The ceremony commenced with a historical lecture on Lincoln, then revealed the first, second and third place winners and concluded with a lecture on Algebra from Professor Khukhro. The challenge itself got students from all over the country to give answers to six Maths problems which were then marked by the Lincoln University Mathematics faculty. Ben came second overall which is a very fine achievement.

Staff: We bid a sad farewell to Lyn Robbins as she retires. Lyn has been the heart and soul of the School Office since 2001 and most parents will have spoken to her at some stage. Lyn has been an endlessly friendly, smiling and positive colleague and we wish her all the very best in her retirement.

Young Enterprise: RGS Young Enterprise Team *Firefly* Technology came joint third in the national YE Advert Competition. The brief was to create a one-minute advert which was viewed via Twitter at #YEAdvert. A combination of strong visuals and audio told the story of the product and demonstrated a clear need for the *Do Not Disturb* signs in lockdown.

Social Media

In the absence of physical school events at the moment to which we traditionally welcome parents and without the opportunity to stand on the touchline in all weather conditions (!), we encourage you to stay connected with the RGS by following us on one of our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Daily updates provide fly-on-the-wall insights into school life, as well as regular features of interest which celebrate the RGS from its history to its traditions, from the mainstream to the eccentric. Click [here](#) to scroll through recent posts on Twitter, including plenty of back-to-school photographs and stories!

