



From the Headmaster

In 1994 BT launched a new advertising campaign, *It's good to talk!* The brand strategists had advised that rather than focus on technology, the campaign should highlight the importance of communication in increasing wellbeing, openness and relationships through, what they called, the reciprocation of confidences. The adverts particularly targeted men who, so consumer surveys identified, were far less likely to open up and talk honestly: hence the choice of Bob Hoskins to deliver the memorable strapline in his inimitable Cockney twang to appeal to the male audience.

It is not only talking, however, but also listening which remains at the heart of what all institutions must do if they are to be successful. As a school, we can only do the very best by our students if we keep their interests firmly at heart. Whenever we are planning strategically, we will always have in the forefront of our minds the question: how is this decision going to benefit the boys? We can only do this, however, if we know our boys well as individuals and have a realistic idea as to what makes them tick, what their hopes and aspirations are, and equally what concerns and anxieties occupy their thoughts.

An insightful article in the press recently discussed a landmark survey into attitudes of young people in the current climate: the headline being that they often felt a disconnect with the older generation who, they claimed, were out of touch. The survey of 16 – 24-year-olds revealed those topical issues which were uppermost in their minds and which they cared most deeply about; the rights of black and minority people as well as gender equality, sexism and sexual harassment were high on their priorities. These were closely followed by a concern for LGBTQ+ rights, for poverty and economic equality. In addition, the young people surveyed felt passionate about issues such as immigration, mental health, the climate and the environment.

An awareness of their concerns and giving our students a voice and an opportunity to openly and maturely debate issues which concern them, to challenge prejudice and ignorance, and to form measured, balanced opinions could not be more important in the 21st century. Appreciating that there are often many different perspectives and beliefs and being tolerant and receptive to the views of others are critical to a tolerant community. By giving our students the autonomy to follow their interests means the last few years have seen an emergence of a range of clubs and societies which are student-led and provide a forum for this openness irrespective of belief, outlook or stance: Sceptics' Society, Aquinas Society, Environmental Society, Hume Society, Pride Society, Quest Society, and so I could go on. Our weekly *Reflection* or *I believe* address at assembly further provides an opportunity where we listen to each other and reflect, even if we do not share the same viewpoint. Most of all, however, we nurture a culture in all areas of school life where each person's opinion is equally valued, where individuals have the confidence to speak openly, and where diversity is celebrated.

Our young men are going to be the leaders and the influencers of tomorrow and it is our responsibility to ensure that they have the skills, the perspective and the mindset to improve and transform the lives of others, to bring about positive change, and to open doors to equality for as many people as possible. This will, however, only be possible if as a community we continue to champion *It's good to talk* but equally, if not more importantly, *It's good to listen*.

Latest News

Field Day 1: Our first Field Day of the year saw the whole school involved in activities as the curriculum was suspended for the day. With increasing opportunities now available, trips included: the Army cadets developing marksmanship and rifle skills on the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer (a computerised, gas-powered system which simulates live firing via high-tech projectors and lasers) and learning how to use military-grade radio communications at the Army Training Centre in Pirbright; the RAF cadets visiting Tangmere Aviation Museum in West Sussex on the site of a Battle of Britain aerodrome; the Royal Navy cadets travelling to HMS Excellent on Whale Island in Portsmouth Harbour and experiencing two 52' Fast Motor Launches, a 49' Halberg Rassey yacht and a 38' Sigma yacht. Other highlights included the Climbing Group in Sussex to climb the sandstone cliffs at Harrisons Rocks; the Drama Group participating in a Victorian murder mystery, *The Last Gasp*; the Lifesaving and Surfing Group travelling to Mawgan Porth in Cornwall for surfing lessons while the wake boarders were at Thorpe Park; as well as a whole host of other activities which ranged from volunteering to rock music, from mountain biking to sports coaching. In addition, our First Form focused on teamwork and bushcraft skills at Penshurst Place, Kent; our Second Form travelled to Portsmouth for the day where they visited the Historic Dockyard including HMS Victory, HMS Warrior and the incredible Mary Rose Museum; while the Third Form experienced abseiling, climbing challenges, Jacobs Ladder and Team Building at Blacklands Activity Centre in Sussex.

Poetry: **Kiki Akin-Olugbade** (2R) attended the Chelsea against Aston Villa Carabao Cup match as part of his *Show Racism the Red Card* prize where he also had the chance to meet a number of ex-Chelsea footballers. Steve Goodsell, the SRtRC organizer, commented: "*Kiki was a wonderful Ambassador for the Royal Grammar School. His poem was loved by ex-Chelsea players Paul Canoville and Ken Monkou, by Stuart Lawrence and the Jo Cox Foundation who tweeted about it just a short time ago.*" Equally importantly, Kiki's team, Chelsea, progressed through to the next round after narrowly winning on penalties!

Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

Rugby: 18 RGS sides were in action in a competitive but successful block fixture against Wimbledon College winning all but one of the matches. The senior teams, buoyed by encouraging performances against Epsom College a week earlier, both registered their first wins of the season. The 2nd XV did this in some style, scoring 56 unanswered points as they dominated every facet of their game. The 1st and 2nd XVs maintained this progress the following weekend in a block against Emanuel School and Perins School with 47 – 10 and 52 – 0 victories respectively: the 2nd XV recorded back-to-back games without conceding a point. In total 14 wins were secured, including a number of encouraging performances by those teams being eased back into contact rugby.

Sailing: **Ben Mueller** (U6) competed at the 29er Allen Grand Prix 1, the first 29er event of the season and won the overall event. Ben also competed in August at the 29er World Championships in Valencia, Spain and finished 12th overall out of 189 boats. This was the highest a British boat has finished since 2016, a great achievement for Ben and his crew.

Swimming: At the ESSA National Relay Championships (Surrey Region), 26 boys represented the RGS. Highlights included the Under 15A team coming second in both the freestyle and medley relays, while the B team came a very impressive third place in the medley relay. The Under 13A team also came second in their Medley relay.

