



From the Headteacher - 16 May 2025

Dear Parents

When I last wrote to parents on Friday 2 May, I commented on how short this particular half-term would be; it has certainly felt that way, with this being my second and final fortnightly update before we finish for the break next Friday. Despite this term being a mere 3 weeks and 4 days in length, much has still happened and been achieved across the School.

Marking VE Day

Last week, pupils across all year groups marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day in Tutor Time with an exploration of history and remembrance. Using a soundscape titled *Voices of War*, they listened to first-hand accounts from the Imperial War Museum archive, reflecting the diverse experiences of people who lived through the war. Voices included an army nurse who served in Egypt, a Jamaican aircraftman who later arrived in the UK aboard the Empire Windrush, a Jewish man who survived six weeks in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself. Pupils also explored creative responses to VE Day through poetry and art. Key learning focused on the complexity of VE Day: that it was not the end of global conflict; that the political, social, and economic repercussions lasted long after the war; and that while many celebrated, others faced grief, hardship and uncertainty. Many thanks go to Mrs Garcia for organising this commemoration.

Year 11 and 13

As you will no doubt be aware, the external examinations are now well underway. Last week, we paused to mark the beginning of study leave for both Year 11 and 13. Mr Daniell (Head of Key Stage 3 and 4) led a year group breakfast assembly to wish Year 11 all the very best for the examination period. Mrs Downes (Head of Year 13) and Mr Williams (Head of Sixth Form) also oversaw the Leavers' Assembly for Year 13, with the traditional giving of awards, shirt signing and farewell buffet. For both groups, it was made explicitly clear once again that, just because the examinations have started, their time at the School is far from over. Whilst we hope to see many of our Year 11 pupils back with us in Year 12, support remains in place for all those moving on from the School in August.

Once again, we all wish Year 11 and 13 students, and those in Year 10 taking Short Course RS next week, all the very best for their examinations.

Ten Tors Success

Huge congratulations to the team of Year 12 students who tackled the Ten Tors challenge on Dartmoor last weekend. This is the first time the School has taken part in the notoriously tough event. Our team started at 7.00am on Saturday and completed the challenge at a very respectable 3.30pm on Sunday, having walked a route which totalled over 53 miles. Congratulations to Ben, Clover, George, John, Joseph and Will on an incredible achievement; photos can be viewed on our website and social media channels. My thanks to Mrs Rigby-Smith for all her hard work organising and preparing for the challenge, and to Mr Kendry and Mrs Atkinson, whose support was also invaluable over the weekend.

County Athletics Medals

The Gloucestershire County Athletics Championship also took place at the weekend, with two members of the School achieving fantastic accolades, along with improved personal bests. Owen in Year 7 became a three-times County Champion in U13 high jump, 200m and 4x100m relay; Owen also achieved 2nd place in the shotput. Harry in Year 9 also ran in the 800m final, winning a silver medal. Congratulations go to both Owen and Harry for their achievements.

Kickboxing Champion

Before Easter, Jago in Year 10 competed at the ISKA English Kickboxing Championships at Oxstalls Sports Park in Gloucester. I am delighted to report that he was crowned double English Champion, winning the Kick Light and LC - 50kg Junior Male categories. He also claimed silver medals in the Junior Tag Team event and Points Fighting -50kg categories – Jago's impressive wins mean he has qualified for the 2025 England Youth Kickboxing Squad, a phenomenal achievement.

Parliament Visit

On Monday 12 May, Year 12 Politics students travelled to London to enjoy a tour and workshop in Parliament, followed by a Q&A with Cameron Thomas MP. The tour included walking through the House of Commons and learning about the history of Parliament. Mr Thomas spoke to the students about the realities of being an MP, his priorities for legislation and difficulties with work-life balance. Students then visited the Supreme Court to learn more about the separation of powers and how the court was established. Our grateful thanks to Mr Thomas and all the

staff in Parliament who made the visit so enjoyable.

Mental Health Awareness Week

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and it has been heartening to see staff wearing green in support of this year's theme: celebrating the power and importance of community. A special thank you goes to Miss Bond for organising a range of staff activities to mark the week and raise awareness. You can find out more about the Mental Health Foundation's work at www.mentalhealth.org.uk.

Cheltenham Performing Arts Festival

I am delighted to share that Archie in Year 10 has been shortlisted as one of the top six Drama Performers at this week's Cheltenham Performing Arts Festival. Archie has delivered outstanding performances throughout the event, achieving 1st place in his Shakespeare performance, 1st place in his Solo Acting performance and 3rd place in his 'Scene to Song' performance. These achievements are a testament to Archie's talent and hard work. On behalf of the entire School community, we wish him the very best of luck in his final performance this evening. Having had the pleasure of watching his final rehearsal yesterday, he is certainly deserving of his success.

Finally, a reminder that we finish for the half-term holiday on Friday 23 May at 3.20pm. Miss Tapscott (Deputy Headteacher) will be in touch with parents next week with a further pastoral update, leaving me to wish the school community a safe and enjoyable half-term break.

Best wishes



Matthew Lynch

HEADTEACHER

SIR THOMAS RICH'S

Oakleaze Gloucester GL2 0LF

01452 338400

info@strs.org.uk

www.strschool.co.uk

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