



July 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

This will be my last newsletter as Principal of Ripley. I would first and foremost like to thank you all for the support you have given me and for the trust you have placed in me over the past 11 years. It has been my privilege to be part of the journey of this wonderful school and to do what I could to build on the work of my predecessors and of Julia and Thomas Ripley. Even in the short period of 11 years we have seen many significant changes in education and I am grateful that we have, with God's help, and with support from so many people, been able to weather them all.

I am delighted to be able to announce that I will be handing over the baton to Mr Martin Wood, who will take up the post of Principal of Ripley on 1 September. Martin came to Ripley in 2007 as Assistant Principal, having been Head of Sixth Form at Ormskirk School. Originally a teacher of Economics and Business Studies, Martin has held a number of posts at Ripley and is currently Senior Vice-Principal. He has already made a very significant contribution to the success of this school and will, I have no doubt, steer it successfully through the next stage of its journey. Outside work, Martin and his family are very involved in his local Anglican church and he is an avid rugby league fan, though he has no plans (as yet!) to move PE at Ripley away from rugby union! All of us here at Ripley are delighted by Martin's appointment and wish him every success and fulfilment as he takes up his new role.

Staffing

As is always the case at this time of year we say goodbye to a number of staff:

Sam Cheesman, our Chaplain was ordained on 1 July and is moving to be a Curate in Thornton Cleveleys. Miss Watson (Science), leaves to take up a promoted post in Manchester, Mrs Matthews (Science) and Miss Hunt (English) are leaving to take up posts nearer home, Mrs Curran (PE), Mr Jarman (Maths) and Mrs Hall (reprographics) are retiring, Mr Unsworth (Science), Mrs Cressey (DT) and Mrs Jones (Maths) are leaving at the end of temporary contracts, Miss Bateman is taking up a post at her local church and Mrs Wood (Textiles) and Mrs Winstanley (Dance) are leaving having seen through the last years of Textiles and Dance. Our four Ripley scholars: Ben Drury, Callum Baxter, Joe Osborne and Katy Knipe, are now moving on to university. We are grateful to all these staff for the contribution they have made to Ripley.

In September we will be welcoming 4 new teaching staff:

Mr English	Science
Miss Montgomery	Science
Miss Turley	Maths
Miss Newsham	KS3 Manager, English

Additionally, Revd Adrian Wolton will be joining us as our Chaplain and Adam Robinson, India Harding, Anna Watson and Victoria Knipe will be joining us as Ripley Scholars.

Inspection

On 27/28 June we had our five yearly SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. The inspector was in school for 2 days and spoke to pupils, parents, governors, members of the wider community and a range of staff in school. He was also able to attend part of our Alpha away day at St Tees. Our full report is on the website; these are the summative judgements:



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The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A distinctively Christian vision and set of values are deeply embedded in the life of the school and have a profound impact on the lives, wellbeing and flourishing of learners and adults.
- The school's leaders are deeply committed to the school as a church school. They articulate, from personal conviction and with confidence, a compelling Christian vision.
- Collective worship has a central place in the life of the school. It is of high quality and has a very significant impact on the lives and aspirations of the whole community.
- A very strong RE department is highly effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

We are all delighted with this outcome which reflects many years of hard work and improvement. Thank you so much to all of you who pray for us and our work regularly, we are deeply appreciative.

Examinations

The examination season is, thankfully, at an end. Linear exams and new specifications meant even more papers for candidates and students have had a very demanding few weeks. The examinations do appear to have gone smoothly and there have been no major issues. Outcomes will be very interesting with more linear exams at A levels and a mixture of grades and numbers at GCSE. I attach a very useful briefing sent to us which covers some of the frequent questions asked about the new grading systems.

Extra-Curricular activities

As I say at every Open Evening, these are what we all remember long after subject lessons have receded into the depths of memory! This is the busiest time of the year for expeditions out of school with many new opportunities and experiences for our young people. Trips out include the Australia Exchange, the Music Trip to Luxembourg and Germany, two trips to Normandy, various subject fieldtrips, a Battlefields Trip, a trip to the Globe Theatre and numerous D of E expeditions including a trip to the palace to meet the Duke of Edinburgh at his very last award ceremony. We are particularly indebted to Mr Walton, our Educational Visits' Co-ordinator for his meticulous work in compiling all the documentation needed for such trips out of school.

We have had a great deal to celebrate in school in recent weeks; we have enjoyed the junior school production of "Into the Woods", showcasing much new talent, our Strawberry Supper and, indeed, the birth of our first baby alpaca, Isabel! We look forward to the Tri-Star and the Archbishop of York Young Leaders' Award ceremonies, to our Founders' Day service with the Bishop of Burnley and to our Sports Presentation evening. We were sad to say goodbye this month to Bishop Geoff, our Bishop of Lancaster. He has been a great friend to the school over the last few years and we will miss his visits to Ripley.

Buildings

Work on our buildings never stops! Our tower was damaged during Storm Desmond and is to be repaired this summer. The repair will take until October and during that time there will be extensive scaffolding around the entrance to the main building. We will also be continuing to upgrade security around the building with additional fencing.



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Sport

Swimming: Well done to all the Ripley swimmers at the Inter Schools' Gala; brilliant team performances across all year groups. Winners: Year 7 Boys, Year 7 Girls, Year 8 Boys, Year 10 Boys Runners Up: Year 8 Girls, Year 9 Boys, Year 9 Girls, Year 10 Girls

Athletics: Lancashire Schools' Athletics Championships Medallists: Gold (Ed Jeans, Erin Moffatt, Hannah Bales); Silver (Daniel Palin, Jack Tipler, Oliver Patterson); Bronze (Tineka Jennings, Sam Mercer, Ethan Temple-Betts, Reuben Hutchinson).

North West Regional B Athletics finals: Junior (Yr7/8) Boys - 3rd, Girls - 5th; Intermediate (Yr9/10) Boys - 4th Girls - 5th

End of Term Services

We finish our term on Friday 21 July and as always, pupils will be attending services across the city: Year 7 and 8 will be at The Priory; pupils should meet outside the Priory at 8.50am. Year 9 will be at St Tees; pupils should come to school as normal. They will walk to church with tutors. Year 10 will be at St Paul's Scotforth; pupils should come to school as normal. They will walk to church with tutors. Year 12 will remain in school for a service in the chapel.

Buses will arrive at 12.25pm. The following buses will be available: 935, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 567, 581 and 478. Pupils travelling south should go up to the A6 main road to catch a bus and those going north should go to the bus station.

The new term begins on Friday 1 September for Year 7 and Monday 4 September for other year groups. To help parents and pupils prepare for the new term, attached to this newsletter are the Mobile Devices Policy, the Uniform Policy and our equipment list. Please do take the time to read these.

So, one chapter of my life draws to a close. In September I will be moving on to become CEO of The Bay Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust set up by Ripley with the aim of growing a family of church and community schools within the geographical area of Morecambe Bay. I will be accountable to the Board of Directors for the performance of all schools in the Trust and will be working two days a week from the Lodge just inside the main gate. So, I am not leaving Ripley entirely and will enjoy keeping in touch from more of a distance. I will certainly continue to pray for this great school and all who are part of it as Mr Wood shapes the next chapter of its story. I hope very much that Ripley will continue to be a beacon of excellence in our local community and that the Kingdom of God will always be visible in this place.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Nicholls".

Principal