

ERMYSTED'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

September 2005

Dear Parents

The staggered start to the term, with Years 7, 12 and 13 starting on Tuesday; the remainder on Wednesday heralded the end of the summer holidays. As usual, they appeared to pass far too quickly - at least for some of us!

Staff update

We welcome a number of new colleagues to the staff this term – the majority resulting from retirements over the last academic year, but a few due to our continuing four-form entry and workforce remodelling:-

Mr Graham Hamilton – Deputy Head, English	from Salt Grammar School, Shipley
Mrs Wendy Hilton – Chemistry	from Skipton Girls' High School
Mr Will Suter – Physics	from Harrogate Grammar School
Mr Roger Humphreys – Modern Languages	from Leeds Grammar School
Mrs Tracy Finney – Art and Design	from Fearn Community Sports College, Bacup.
Mr Stephen King – Information Technology	from Skipton Girls' High School
Dr Christine Merrall – Biology (part-time)	Mrs Jane Lister – Mathematics (part-time)
Mrs Lynn Whittaker – Examinations Officer	Mrs Helen Horrix – Cover Teacher
Mr Chris Meehan - offering assistance during Games periods	

Examination results

Advanced Level: 73.7% of papers were graded A or B (comparison 2004: 75.5%, 2003:78.9%), 100% pass rate (ie grades A->E) - the first time that this has been achieved. Including General Studies all students achieved at least 3 passes. One student (Robert McLean) achieved grade A in 6 subjects and twelve achieved grade A passes in all their five subjects. Jack Eyre was in the top ten candidates who achieved the highest overall marks in Further Mathematics (Edexcel) and two students scored one of the top five marks in their papers (with AQA):- Jim Whittock in Art and Design (out of 4815 candidates) and David Horton in General Studies (out of 26646 candidates). Regrettably there were some disappointing, but not totally unexpected performances at the lower end of the spectrum. In terms of university entrance, the vast majority of applicants had their offer of a place confirmed though this year a few pupils experienced difficulty as a result of their grades; most, but not all, are now sorted. All fourteen pupils offered places at Oxford/Cambridge achieved their required grades.

AS: 63.3% grades A or B (comparison 2004: 64.4%, 2003: 68.3%). Thirteen pupils gained grade A in each of their subjects. Many pupils are in a strong position to move forward to A2 though too many will rely on AS resits next January to improve their prospects for Summer 2006.

GCSE: 57.4% grades A* or A (comparison 2004: 55.9%, 2003:54.0%), Congratulations not only to the vast majority of pupils on their deserved success but also to the Maths Department for a 100% pass rate (ie grades A*->C) for the fourth consecutive year and to the Technology Department (64 out of 88 grades A*/A). Gianluca Consoli and Mark Clements each achieved 10A* grades and James Humphries, Joe Mitchell and James Kelly each achieved 9A* and 1A grades. Three pupils scored one of the top five marks in their papers:- Thomas Pascoe in French (out of 138508 candidates), Mark Clements and Conor Cahill in English Literature (out of 47222 candidates) (all papers were with AQA). 67 out of 90 pupils achieved 10 passes (grades A* -> C). Though not a surprise, two failed to achieve the national benchmark of 5A* -> C grades.

National curriculum tests for Year 9 took place in early May with the results for Mathematics and Science being received in School at the end of the last academic year. Due to the debacle of last year, the arrival of English results was deliberately delayed, arriving in school at the end of August. Parents of last year's Year 9 pupils should receive formal notification of their son's results in the tests together with teacher assessments in the coming weeks. These tests are seen as indicators providing evidence that pupils are progressing satisfactorily through their middle school years. A summary of results is as follows:-

KEY STAGE 3

Subject / Level	Absent	4	5	6	7	8
English	2	1	7	42	37	X
Mathematics	1	-	-	9	33	46
Science	3	-	7	28	51	X

An explanation as to what the levels mean:-

Levels 5-6 are the levels expected of 14 year olds

pupils who achieve Level 7 are exceeding what is expected of 14 year olds

pupils who achieve level 8 (only available in Mathematics) at the end of KS3 are working considerably in advance of what is expected of 14 year olds.

Other news, information, requests.....

Pupil numbers - With the continuing four-form entry, we have a record number of students on role at the start of this term – 671 in total. Twelve pupils from local schools joined the Sixth Form whilst eleven from last year's Year 11 have departed, the majority to other educational establishments. In addition to those joining the Sixth Form we welcomed our new intake into Year 7 where 106 of the 112 places were taken up. In addition, four boys joined Year 8 at the beginning of this term. We wish them all every success in their time at Ermysted's.

Bid for funding for Excepted Buildings – Notification was received on 22 August from the DfES that funding (£1.7 million) has been granted for a new canteen. At the same time, approval was given to proceed to tender. Our target is to have the building available and ready for use in September 2006, if not before.

Gargrave Road - We believed that plans were agreed during the last school year for additional safety features on Gargrave Road: ie paved area inside the wall, with spaces in the wall (thus enabling pupils to wait inside the school premises) and safety barriers to be erected on Gargrave Road. At the close of the school year, we were informed that a local councillor had objected to the plans. Whilst this has been sorted by the Highways Department et al, it meant that work would start later than had been expected rather than the changes be in place for the start of term. As it was, work commenced on Friday 2 September! It is hoped that this project will be completed by half-term.

Car Parking – With an increasing number of staff, parking on-site has become more difficult. In terms of Health and Safety issues, parents are requested *not* to come on to the school site either to drop or collect children. A car park (access via Coach Street) is very near to school. Parents are encouraged to make use of this facility.

School rules:- Last term, a working party spent some considerable time updating our behaviour management policy. The general feeling was that whilst there were school rules in place, the school community would benefit from having them clarified. All parents should have received a copy of these and it would be appreciated if they encouraged their son(s) to adhere to the revised dress code – school blazer, school tie, black shoes, black socks, V-neck grey (not rounded) sweaters etc. Trainers must not be worn with uniform. It would also prove helpful if articles of everyday clothing, sports kit, calculators..... displayed their owner's name wherever possible. Stockists of school uniform are 'Little's Minimarket' (Sackville Street, Skipton) and also 'Top Marks' who have recently opened a shop next to Sam Houston's on Gargrave Road. Please note that earrings, studs etc. are not part of school uniform, even if covered by tape.

Unfortunately schools are not immune from theft and Ermysted's, from time to time, falls prey to the opportunist thief. During PE and Games, a facility is available to deposit valuables and pupils are encouraged to make use of it. However, pupils should not bring considerable sums of cash or other articles of value to School; on the rare occasions this is necessary, they should be left with the Form Tutor for collection at the end of the School Day. Mobile phones are not encouraged and music devices are not to be used in School from 8.40am to 3.45pm (I suggest there is little point in bringing them to School). No weapons/illegal substances may be brought into School.

Text books:- At the end of each academic year a significant number of text books are not returned. Replacing them is expensive both in terms of time and money. I would be grateful if there are any text books at home, they could be returned to school as soon as possible.

Open Evening - Our annual Open Evening for prospective pupils and their parents is scheduled for Tuesday 20 September starting at 5.30pm. Attention is drawn to a communication that all parents should have received (delivered by boy post) relating to arrangements for this day. School is finishing at afternoon break at 2.15pm with pupils assisting with preparations for later in the day. For those parents with more than a passing interest, the closing date for applications for Year 7 entry in 2006 is Tuesday 27 September.

Request for help:- Partly due to workforce remodelling and a lack of space at Skipton Girls' High School, selection testing for out-area applicants will take place at the Rendezvous Hotel (formerly the Hanover). The LEA is seeking invigilators for this venue and also for in-catchment schools. Training will be given. Anybody interested should contact Mrs Linda Blenkhorn (Craven Education Office, Water Street, Skipton 01756 792427).

School Office – Considerable time is spent by the ladies in the School Office in passing messages from parents to pupils. The Office staff would greatly appreciate that such requests are only made for urgent messages.

Update of information - There were occasions last year when contact was needed to be made with a pupil's parents / emergency contact, only for it to be found that the telephone numbers, particularly mobile phone numbers on file were out of date. Please ensure the Office is aware of any changes in this respect.

Punctuality - The majority of boys arrive punctually for School, however last year there was a small minority (notably Sixth Formers) who arrived late. I would ask for Parents' co-operation in ensuring that their sons leave for School in time to arrive for registration at 8.45pm. It is appreciated that there are occasions where lateness cannot be avoided – e.g. School Bus late – this is the school's problem not the pupils.

Absence - Following an absence from school, a note is required to confirm the absence and the reason for it. This practice is required for all boys, including those in the Sixth Form. Of concern is the practice of removing boys from School near the beginning or end of terms in order to make an early start to the holiday. A similar problem occurs when pupils return late from holidays. Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to note that where a pupil is absent from School without the school's permission but with the parents' blessing such an absence is unauthorised, albeit parentally condoned.

Coursework - Coursework is a major component of a large number of many GCSE, AS or A-Level syllabuses and as a consequence it can have a major bearing on the final grades achieved by candidates. Coursework should provide marks that are relatively easy to achieve compared to the pressures that come with examinations. However each year, a number of pupils underachieve at both GCSE and A-Level because they are not prepared to put in the effort required or simply because they are not able to manage their time properly when it comes to coursework. In an attempt to assist pupils (in Years 10 and 11) with the latter and to give parents an awareness of the requirements and timings of GCSE coursework, a list of deadlines will be sent to parents in the near future (also posted on the school website [www.ermysteds.n-yorks.sch.uk]).

School Fund - Parents should have received a plea for a parental contribution of £15 to the School Fund. As the School has charitable status, the Inland Revenue will allow it to reclaim tax paid by the contributor. In effect an annual contribution of £15 is worth £19.23 to the School for a basic rate taxpayer. All that is required is to sign a form indicating your willingness to donate by means of Gift Aid. Parents who have previously signed a Gift Aid form and a standing order or direct debit require no further action. Additional forms are available from the School Office.

Parents' Association - During last year the Parents' Association made numerous purchases to supplement the boys' education. Details of their meetings are circulated by boy post (look for the bright yellow paper). The next meeting (AGM) is on Thursday 27 September 2005, in the Technology Block at 7.30pm – why not come along? If there are any questions before then, the Chairman, Mrs Woodhead will be happy to answer them (contact via School Office).

Term / Holiday dates for the academic year 2005-2006

Autumn Term 2005		Tuesday 6 / Wednesday 7 September – Friday 16 December
Autumn Term 2005	(Half Term holiday)	Monday 24 October – Friday 28 October
Spring Term 2006		Wednesday 4 January – Friday 7 April
Spring Term 2006	(Half Term holiday)	Monday 20 February – Friday 24 February
Summer Term 2006		Tuesday 25 April – Friday 21 July
May Day Bank Holiday		Monday 1 May
Summer Term 2006	(Half Term holiday)	Monday 29 May - Friday 2 June

Future events during this term

Other dates this term, which are worthy of note are:-

- November 3 { events – Parents' Evening – Y7 (an opportunity to meet your sons' Form Teacher).
- November 3 { combined – Parents' Association Cheese and Wine Evening (for Y7 parents)
- September 20 – School Open day for prospective pupils and their parents
- September 28 – Parents' Association – AGM 7.30pm Library – all parents welcome
- October 12 – 22 – Y10 German Exchange visit to Simbach
- October 10 – Parents' Evening – Year 13
- October 12 – School Cross Country
- November 16 – Parents' Evening – Year 11
- November 28 – Parents' Evening – Year 12
- November 28 – Inter-House Drama Competition
- December 5 – Parents' Association – Wassail Evening
- December 10 (Saturday morning) – Founders' Day – **attendance compulsory**

Provisional dates - Parents' Evenings:- Year 8 – Wednesday 8 February Year 10 – Tuesday 14 February
Year 9 – Wednesday 8 March Year 7 – Thursday March 23

Do you shop on-line ?

www.ermysteds.n-yorks.sch.uk/directory

Shopping online can now raise money for school funds. We have a new directory of shops on the school website (address given above) – these include music, sport, travel and fashion. Each link works as expected and normal prices / special offers will be charged but school will receive a small percentage simply because you are linking to the shop site via our school site. Examples: buy a CD from Play.com, school could receive 50p; if you buy a new outfit from Debenhams, school might receive £5 - all at no cost to you. Many big names are listed (Tesco, Littlewoods, Debenhams, Boots, Amazon, WH Smiths, Argos, Curry's, Carphone Warehouse, Expedia, CS WOW, HMV, Kitbag,.....and the number will grow. Whenever you want to buy online DO NOT GO directly to the shop site – ALWAYS GO to the school site and click on the link – it costs you nothing and will boost school funds.

Yours sincerely