

Friday 8th September 2023



Dear Parent/Carer

### **Parental Update 124**

Happy New (academic) Year! I trust you have enjoyed a restful summer holiday, even if the summer weather only really seems to have started in the last few days.

Welcome to the first *Update* of the new school year – and a particular welcome to parents of students in Years 7 and 12 who are receiving this newsletter for the first time. I'm delighted to be able to let you know that both 'new' year-groups have settled well into life at St Margaret's this week!

The *Parental Update* goes to press every other fortnight during the school year, and aims to keep you in touch with the major news from our school. It's circulated to all parents electronically, so if you plan to change your e-mail address, **please let us know** so that we can make sure we keep in touch.

### **Congratulations...!!**

Over the summer we received two sets of external exam results: 'A'-levels/BTECs for Year 13 students on 17th August, and GCSE/BTECs for Year 11 students on 24th August.

So many of our students achieve strong grades in external exams that I can honestly say that those two days in August are amongst my favourites in the whole school year! This year 62% of 'A'-level grades awarded were C or higher, and our Year 13 BTEC grades were similarly impressive; most subjects achieved a 100% pass rate. Very many of our students got the grades they needed to progress to higher education, or an apprenticeship, of their choice. At GCSE, initial indications are that our boys made quantifiably more progress than boys with similar prior attainment in other schools around the country, which is obviously fantastic news.

Many, many congratulations to every student who achieved so highly – and a huge *THANK YOU* too to their teachers, parents and carers, without whom such magnificent results would simply not have been possible.

### **New Vision Statement, and new school values**

Over the course of the last academic year, we've spent time with representative students, staff, Governors and parents looking at our School Vision Statement and Values – you may recall we consulted with you about an early draft version in the Spring Term.

At their last meeting last year, the Governors approved our new statement, which you can see at the top of the next page; our new school values are in **red**. We have been – and will continue to – explore what each phrase means during our Collective Worship with students over the next few weeks, and I'll include some thoughts in the next *Update* too.

But in the meantime, thank you if you or your son have been involved in any way with the process!

*“All things are possible for one who believes.”*

Mark 9:23

We are an inclusive, ambitious,  
transformational learning community.

*Through our faith and work,  
and by living out the values of  
compassion, resilience and respect,  
our whole community will flourish  
and become more fully the people  
God  
calls us to be.*

#### New Colleagues

I'm delighted to be able to welcome a number of new teaching colleagues to the St Margaret's team.

- Having previously completed a placement here as part of her teacher training, **Miss Atherton** has joined our Religious Studies Department as a full-time RS teacher. She made a great impression when she was here with us previously and we're delighted to welcome her back!
- **Mr L Martin** is joining our Maths Department, again as a full-time teacher. We're delighted to have been able to attract a well-qualified mathematician to join our ranks – welcome to the team, Mr Martin! (Mr S Martin continues to teach in our Science Department).
- **Mrs Parry** has joined us as an Assistant Principal, and our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo). Given the importance we attach to SEND here, she is an Assistant Principal, and a full member of our Senior Leadership Team. We're delighted she has joined us!
- **Miss Tutt** is also joining our senior leadership team as an Assistant Principal, and will be overseeing our work ensuring the highest standards of Teaching and Learning. She's previously served a school in London in a similar capacity, so brings plenty of experience to the post.

We have a number of new support staff colleagues, mainly Learning Support Assistants, joining us this term too; I'll introduce them to you in our next *Parental Update*.

#### Other staffing changes

As mentioned in *Parental Update* 123, there have been some changes to the Senior Leadership Team this term too. The full team now comprises:

- Mr Brierley           Principal
- Mr Slater            Vice-Principal, overseeing the curriculum
- Mr Gibbons         Acting Assistant Principal, leading our pastoral care
- Mrs Parry            Assistant Principal, and SENDCo (see above)
- Dr Silverstone      Assistant Principal and Acting Director of Sixth Form
- Miss Tutt            Assistant Principal overseeing teaching and learning
- Mrs Bell             Acting Associate Senior Leader, overseeing our literacy work
- Mrs Harding         Acting Associate Senior Leader, overseeing our Christian ethos
- Mr D'Arcy            Director of Finance and Administration (seconded part-time to All Saints)

As far as our Heads of Year are concerned, Mr Harrison is now Head of Year 7, and Mr Jones is Acting Head of Year 11. The other Heads of Year have 'moved up' with their year-groups.

### Welcome from Matt and Becky

We continue to benefit from the support and commitment of two part-time chaplains, Matt and Becky, funded by the Church of England. They've produced a short video to introduce themselves, which will be uploaded to our website shortly: we'll send the link round early next week!

### Prayer

One of our parents very kindly, and faithfully, organises a Parents' Prayer Group that meets virtually at 2pm every Monday afternoon. I know she'd warmly welcome new members! The group meets on Zoom; the meeting code is 704 496 1444 and the password is pray. Alternatively, you can use [this link](#).

### BITUP

We're always looking to improve what we do as a school, and I'm delighted we've been chosen to participate in a research programme called BITUP (which will help us do just that). In order to take part, we need to share some data with a third party – which you do not have to consent to, if you do not wish to do so. Details about the project, what data will be collected, and how it will be used, are included in the attached letter ("*Parental Update 124a*"). Please take the time to read it, and 'opt out' of the project if you wish to do so.

### Year 7 parents: a date for your diaries

Our Year 7 Welcome Eucharist – always a special event in our school year – will take place this year at **6pm** on **Wednesday 4th October** in St Anne's Church (just next door to school). All Year 7 students and their parents and carers will be warmly welcomed to the service. Please save the date!

### Out of school...

We're proud of the fact that so many of our students are great ambassadors for our school as they travel to and from St Margaret's.

- Some students choose to travel to school by bike, which is a great way of travelling and keeping fit: as you may know, I am a keen cyclist myself! But I would strongly encourage all

student cyclists to **wear a helmet** when they cycle – a few years ago, wearing a helmet probably saved my life. And I would also remind students that out of respect to others, **bikes should be pushed, not ridden, on pavements**.

- Students should also travel straight home at the end of the day. Occasionally we receive complaints from our neighbours (or, more recently, a local sports club), which is not what we want to hear – so please encourage your son or daughter not to loiter in the locality once they have finished at St Margaret's.

I'd be most grateful if you could reinforce these messages at home.

Finally...

After such a damp August it seems ironic that we've had such gorgeous sunshine this week! I trust you will be able to enjoy the weather this weekend, and I'll be in touch again in a fortnight's time: the next *Parental Update* will be circulated on Friday 22nd September.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Brierley', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Stephen Brierley  
Principal.