

Notes from Friends of Ricards (FOR) Meeting 2015

The meeting was attended by Alison Jerrard and Anita Mannan together with parents from most year groups. Apologies were received from Georgie Hopkins.

Mandy Doig (year 7 and 9 parent) led a discussion on **fund-raising** for the school. It was suggested we could ask parents to donate mince pies for the Carol Service rather than use FoR funds to pay for them; Mandy will look into getting sponsorship from local businesses for the annual Quiz Night; and we are still considering the possibility of a Comedy Night. We also have the offer of a fridge freezer which would help with the storage of drinks etc at FoR events – the school is investigating whether a suitable position can be found.

Alison shared with us the **success of RR6** – results have exceeded national levels; students are getting offers from the top Russell Group universities and half a dozen students are applying to Oxbridge this year. Year 11 results took a slight dip from the previous year, not helped by a very poor standard of marking, but Ricards is still near the top of local schools in the league tables.

Next year results will be based on the progress of all students over 8 subjects which is a significant improvement on the current system. Year 10 students will be the first to receive some of their grades as a number rather than a letter. There was some discussion with regard to reassuring students and Anita advised that these changes should be viewed as exciting rather than daunting and unfair. As course work is being phased out there is less chance that some candidates will be helped unfairly at home and this will also give the teachers more time to teach.

Alison advised us that the school is expecting an **Ofsted** visit some time over the next year – probably only a one day inspection as they achieved a 'good' grade last time.

The SEN and Pupil Premium two week **summer school** was highly successful and helped year 6 students with the transition from primary school. There was also a very successful summer trip to **Tanzania** by about 20 of the older students – it took them nearly 2 years to fund-raise for it but they had an amazing time. In 2017 a similar trip to Peru is being organised.

It was impressive to hear that **Alison is now the Co-President of the Association of State Girls' Schools**. She has recently returned from their conference at which there was discussion about the value for teenage girls to feel they can contribute to society, particularly as they worry about major issues such as debt, terrorism and climate change. It is our role to understand the pressures they are under and to help give them the confidence to tackle such issues.

One parent highly praised the **National Citizenship Service (NCS)** scheme which is available to all students aged 15 – 18 and involves 3 weeks of activity and community work, including a residential week, at the very reasonable cost of £35. Pastoral care was excellent, as was the general administration of the scheme, and her daughter benefitted enormously in terms of self-confidence. Alison advised that it can also lead to an internship programme of paid experience and mentoring for some students.

The **school servers** are being up-dated over half term so there will be no telephone/email/internet connections possible with the school over the holiday. Parentmail will also be updated. In addition fingerprints will need to be done again for the whole school as the software is being updated – this will happen in the second week after half term.

Dates for the calendar :

10th November Celebration Awards Evening – Sir Trevor Philips will be the guest speaker

3rd December Carol Service

16th December Dance and PE Showcase

The next FoR meeting will be on Tuesday 1st December at 7pm.

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