



Dear Parent/Carer

New Year 7 Parents' Newsletter - June 2015

With SATS out of the way and leavers' events imminent, this is an exciting time for Year 6 children. I hope that they are looking forward to moving to secondary school in September as much as we are looking forward to welcoming them. Mr Roberts is in the process of visiting everyone in their schools ahead of the transition day when the children visit Wood Green. As a reminder, this is on Monday 6th July and begins at 8.30am.

As Headteacher of Wood Green, I would like to say how delighted I am that you are joining the Wood Green community at a very exciting time. I will be able to tell you more about this at the Transition Evening for new Year 7 parents and carers on Thursday 9th July at 7pm, but I thought that an early newsletter would give you and your child a flavour of what has been happening at Wood Green recently.

Student Success

There has been plenty to celebrate in recent weeks, covering so many areas. Year 7 students have achieved great success:

- the girls' team won the district athletics championship
- several students won bronze and silver in the UK Maths Challenge
- the choir has performed in the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford and in France on our Junior Choir tour
- the students experienced our Cornbury residential, learning bushcraft skills and sleeping in tepees in the beautiful woodlands and were praised by the leaders for their excellent behaviour and positive attitude
- a group completed a Latin taster course and will start learning for an early GCSE next year
- year 7s contributed to the school council team winning the WODC 'Have Your Say' citizenship competition

This is just a taster and perhaps an early homework for your child could be to look at our website and begin to plan what clubs and activities he or she might like to join!

Recent press article

I would like to reassure those who read the recent article in the Witney Gazette about Wood Green School and academies. I feel, and many parents and students have expressed the same view, that the piece gives a very unfair impression of our school.

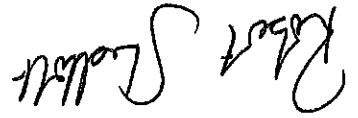
Whilst the school was placed in Special Measures in October 2013, as I explained at the Open Evening last September, the pace of improvement has been impressive and we hope that Ofsted will arrive soon to acknowledge this. Last year our students achieved the best GCSE results in the history of the school, considerably above national averages. This year they look set to achieve even higher. The tiny taster of achievements and opportunities outside exam headlines listed above show that we are a successful school.

I would also like to reassure you that the description of the school's buildings are also misleading. Whilst there are some areas of the school that need Local Authority investment, many blocks have recently had new windows and roofs recently and there are areas of the site, such as our gardens, restaurant and astroturf, that are admired by other schools. Governors will continue to plan further updating of facilities and buildings.

The article was attempting to highlight an important national issue: the Government is encouraging schools to become academies, but cuts to funding for buildings make it very difficult for good educational organisations to support schools in making this move. My own view about academies, as I have said previously, is that becoming an academy in itself does not lead to improvement. We made the decision to pursue becoming an academy because we found a strong partner, Challenge Partners, who shared our values and who recognised the potential at school and the importance of our role in the community. Also, the Challenge Partners network includes many of the top schools nationally, with whom we regularly share ideas. I am delighted that we have joined the Challenge Partner network of schools, which will continue to benefit the education of all our students. However, Challenge Partners made a decision that this was not the right time to take on the financial management of a school. As always, our focus is on the best ways to ensure progress and improvement. If the Governors and I consider at a point in the future that becoming an academy is in the best interest of the school, we will proceed by consulting with the whole school community.

My greatest concern was that the inaccurate claims in the article risk demoralising our wonderful students and families, including yourselves. I have been heartened by the incredibly supportive responses from all members of the school community, including letters from students which were far better written than the original front page! As one comment said, "Wood Green School holds a proud place in the Whitney community and the staff and students deserve praise for the progress that they have made." I look forward to meeting you in July and am happy to explain more about these issues and our plans for future development. I can reassure you that you have chosen a school where there are high expectations, many opportunities and an exciting future.

Yours sincerely



Mr R W Shadboit
Headteacher