



# Batley Grammar School

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**Mrs Brigid Tullie**

**Head**

10 September 2010

Dear Parents

As we start the new school year you may wonder, as I did, what happened to the sunny summer holidays that we were expecting! Despite the weather I do hope that you and your families had a restful and enjoyable summer break.

## **New pupils**

A warm welcome is extended to all our pupils but in particular to our new pupils in school this term.

In Priestley House our Nursery class is, once again, full. We have two new year 7 forms in the Senior School, and in the Sixth Form we again welcome new students. I have been particularly pleased to witness first hand many of our new pupils settling well into the Batley Grammar School community and, as is the case in a small school like ours, quickly getting to know not only the rest of their peer group but also many of the older pupils, who are looking after them.

During the last few months I have welcomed many visitors to the school, including prospective parents and their children. Their praise for the pupils and the school generally was a pleasure to hear and it serves to remind us, lest we take it for granted, just how special Batley Grammar School is. We do tend too often to keep this fact to ourselves and, as I have frequently mentioned, all of us associated with Batley Grammar School: pupils, parents, governors and staff alike are ambassadors for our school.

## **Mrs Jane Gummer**

Many of you who knew Mrs Jane Gummer, our Chair of Governors, will be very sad to have heard of her untimely and sudden death a fortnight ago.

Jane Gummer was an amazing lady who had a natural ability to relate to everyone with whom she came into contact and a warmth which was very much appreciated by all.

As Chair of Governors she worked tirelessly for the benefit of all those involved with the school and she never missed an event, be it a nursery nativity, a senior school concert or a more formal meeting. She thoroughly enjoyed watching the pupils in action and was one of Batley Grammar School's greatest ambassadors. She had been a Governor here at Batley Grammar School since 2001. She was the first female Chair of Governors in the 400 year history of the school and, as Chair, led the Governing Body at a very important time in the school's history, during which our proposal has been submitted to become a 'Free School'. It is such a shame that she will not be with us to see the fruition of such labours in this significant project which she helped champion. She was hugely supportive of the staff and pupils and all they achieved; her death is such a sad loss for everyone at the school and she will be greatly missed by us all.

A private family cremation will be held this week followed by a service of thanksgiving on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. This will take place at St. Johns Church, Cleckheaton at 3.00 pm and anyone who would like to attend is invited.

Yesterday morning in senior school assembly we remembered not only Jane but also one of our cleaners, Fran Medlock, who also died during the summer holidays following illness.

### **Free School Progress**

You will not be surprised to learn that interest in the school has significantly escalated since we announced our proposals to become a Free School.

As I mentioned in my end of year mailing, we submitted all the necessary documentation, towards the end of last term, for an application for Free School status. Of course this is a particularly complex proposal, more so than most, because transferring a school from the private sector to the state sector is by its nature multifaceted. Ours began as an Academy proposal and then had to be rewritten as a Free School's proposal. This is now with the DFE and the Secretary of State. Not surprisingly, discussions and work are still ongoing; we have had a number of meetings and communication throughout the summer period and it is very important for us that we achieve the right outcome. Our proposal contains different models which all need to be assessed. When we have a clear outcome of course I shall announce it.

I was alerted by the DFE and the New Schools Network that the first proposals ready to progress to the next stage would start doing so shortly. Subsequent proposals will be moved to the next stage as and when they have been worked through, with the Department, and the Secretary of State gives his approval.

We know we have a strong bid and we are currently working towards Free School status. Our preferred date would be for September 2011, however until the process has been completed and the funding agreement signed by the Secretary of State, we cannot yet confirm the actual date of transfer which does seem to be the most frequently asked question by those wishing to come here!

In the meantime, because initially we would be running our admissions procedures alongside the Local Authority's, we are looking to obtain a realistic idea of those families interested in applying to Batley Grammar School once it is a Free School, and therefore require the necessary information to be sent to them.

To register an interest in receiving information about Batley Grammar School as a prospective Free School, parents may either visit our website and complete the Free School Information Form or request a paper copy from the School Office (01924 474980). I am enclosing a copy with this letter for you to pass onto someone you know who may be interested, or indeed for you to complete yourself.

### **Exam results 2010**

We were very pleased with the A level and GCSE examination results in 2010. I congratulate all our pupils and staff on their excellent results, which reflect a lot of hard work during the previous school year.

At A level the Year 13 students once again achieved outstanding A level and AS results with students passing 96% of all subjects taken. Just over 50% of these entries were the top grades of A\*, A or B and 74% were grade C or above.

At GCSE the pass rate was 99.5% of all subjects, with 91% being 5 A\*-C passes including English and Maths (as compared with the national average of 69.1%). 72% of the GCSE results were the top A\* to B grades with almost a third of all grades being A or A\*.

Of course we are always of the opinion that raw results only ever tell part of the story and the 'value added' data we have received in school indicates just how well the pupils do in relation to their potential and expected achievements.

### **World's Biggest Coffee Morning**

In both Priestley House and Senior School we are holding a Macmillan coffee morning at morning break on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September, where pupils will have the opportunity to buy cakes, buns and biscuits. If you would like to support us in raising funds, donations of buns, cakes and biscuits would be extremely welcome and may be brought into the Senior School General Office from the morning of Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> onwards.

Your support is greatly appreciated and the funds raised will help to make a big difference to the lives of those affected by cancer.

## **Year 7**

It is both an exciting and possibly daunting time for the new Year 7 pupils as they move from primary to secondary education. Many things are different such as the numbers of different teachers and moving between classrooms at the end of lessons. To help the pupils settle in quickly and to become accustomed to senior school, we have adopted a more formal whole school approach to provide them with a common, school wide framework to work within. This will enable them to know exactly what is expected of them.

Each term we intend to concentrate on a different theme / study skill. In the first term it is organisation and the presentation of work; the second term is responding to feedback; the third term is learning how to revise effectively.

The themes of organisation and presentation of work can be summed up as follows:

- Always arrive to lessons on time
- Always line up quietly outside the classroom
- Always stand quietly at the start and end of lessons
- Always have appropriate equipment for each lesson
- All work should be dated
- All work should be titled (underlined)
- All work should be presented legibly and neatly
- All work should be handed in on time

At the start of this first term each Year 7 pupil has been given a small laminated card outlining the whole school requirements for this term's theme. This will fit neatly into each pupil's pencil case or planner. In addition, pupils will also find that each classroom will have posters on display indicating these requirements.

We are also running a poster competition for Year 7 pupils in which they will be they are asked to design posters on this particular theme.

Form Tutors, as your first point of contact, will be supporting the Year 7 pupils and monitoring their success with this initiative. Initial feedback will be give to Year 7 Parents at the Welcome Evening on the 19th of October at 7 pm in the Old Library.

## **Senior School Homework**

Homework has long since been a thorny issue, with pupils thinking they have far too much while others might disagree. To help gain a complete as picture possible, Year 8 – 11 pupils will be recording the amount of homework set and the amount of time spent on it. If you have any concerns about homework, please feel free to contact your son or daughter's Form Tutor in the first instance.

## **School Uniform**

Senior school uniform requirements are clearly laid out on pages 4-6 of the School Planner. I would like to thank parents for observing our requests at the end of last term. Pupils looked very smart and were dressed appropriately for the start of the new school year. However, I would like to draw your attention to the guidelines about jewellery and make-up, particularly the need for earrings to be small and plain if they are allowed to be worn. In addition hair adornments should be functional, and in darker colours, rather than decorative; we will insist on the latter being removed.

## **Parents' Association and Friends of Priestley House**

The Parents' Association and Friends of Priestley House work hard on our behalf to organise a variety of fundraising and social events for both parents and pupils. They make generous donations to fund special projects in both areas of the school and your support for these two groups would be greatly appreciated.

I would therefore like to draw your attention to the date of the Parents' Association AGM and meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 7 pm. Some of our committee last year were parents of pupils who have now left and we do need some more parents to volunteer to assist. You will already have been sent a separate letter giving details of the Parents' Association AGM and the need for more volunteers.

The Parents' Association run a 100 club and have a few numbers left to sell. If you would like to purchase one of these, (at £15.00 for the year), then please complete the reply slip with this letter. They have organised a Christmas Ball for the 11<sup>th</sup> December and information flyers are enclosed with this mailing.

### **School Calendar, Parents' Evenings and Senior School Reporting Schedule**

This year, in an attempt to be more eco friendly and administratively efficient we are producing the calendar electronically in a format that allows us to make additions and alterations when necessary without having to print further paper copies to send out. You will find details of all of these on our website: [www.batleygrammar.co.uk](http://www.batleygrammar.co.uk)

### **Open Day 2010**

You will notice from the calendar that Open Day is on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October from 10 am to 12 noon.

We hope to be able to extend the range of displays and activities for prospective parents and their children but that does mean that we rely upon our current pupils to be in school, that morning, helping in departments, taking part in activities and volunteering as guides and generally being effective ambassadors for the school.

Enclosed with this mailing you will find a separate letter about Open Day together with a reply slip to indicate availability. Please note that the school will close on the Friday afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> October so that staff may prepare the school for Open Day.

### **Bag2School Collection**

Once again we shall be having a Bag2School collection, the bags will arrive in school on the 11<sup>th</sup> October when we shall despatch them together with information relating to the collection date on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

### **And finally....**

We are eagerly awaiting our School Magazine from the printers and when it arrives in school it will be sent home with the pupils. You will find it full of news items and reports on the many activities, events and achievements from last year. I have previously commented about how busy we are throughout each academic year, and how we manage to carry out so many activities both in and out of the classroom. This forthcoming year looks to be no exception! I have both praise and admiration for our tremendous team of staff who work so hard with your sons and daughters to provide them with the many opportunities on offer to complement their academic studies.

Our focus for this term is one of 'starting as we mean to go on', particularly with our high expectations in relation to behaviour, discipline, planning, organisation, uniform, respecting all members of our community and making a strong contribution to the school's continued success.

It was a real pleasure to welcome the pupils back into school at the beginning of term, and I trust that with our guidance and your support they will give of their best and make the most of this year at Batley Grammar School and Priestley House

Yours sincerely



B P Tullie (Mrs)  
Head

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