



## From the Headteacher - 12 December 2025

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Dear Parents

### **Ofsted Inspection**

As you will certainly be aware, we were visited by Ofsted Inspectors this week for our first routine inspection since October 2021. This was also our first visit from Ofsted under its new inspection toolkit (framework), which launched earlier this term. In fact, the inspection team on Tuesday (day 1) was made up of seven HMIs (His Majesty's Inspectors), one of whom was a Senior HMI responsible for quality-assuring the inspection process, given the relative infancy of the new toolkit.

I am enormously grateful to pupils, staff, parents and trustees who responded to the various Ofsted surveys, and for all the support and team spirit during the inspection process that so characterises Sir Thomas Rich's. Pupils were fantastic ambassadors for their school throughout the two-day inspection, and my sincere thanks also go to all staff who worked hard to prepare for the visit, and who welcomed Ofsted Inspectors into their classrooms on the many 'learning walks'. It was certainly a robust, thorough, and - at times - forensic inspection process; not only are we one of the very first schools to be inspected in this way, but we have also completed it at the end of a long and very busy Autumn Term.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the provisional grades are currently not public knowledge, but I will write to parents with more details as soon as the final inspection report is published in January. Both the Lead Inspector and the Senior HMI regularly pointed out how much more stringent the new grading criteria are compared with the previous inspection framework; the details of the grades can be found via the link below:

[Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades - GOV.UK](#)

Whilst direct comparisons between the new grades and the old grades are imperfect, both inspectors explained that anything a school receives at the new 'expected standard' was broadly equivalent to 'good or better' on the old framework, with any areas judged at the very challenging grade of 'strong' considered to be excellent or 'outstanding-plus' when compared with the previous system. With this in mind, suffice to say there are many reasons for the School to be very proud of the views of the Ofsted team, and I look forward to sharing the report in its entirety in the New Year.

### **Sunday Times Parent Power Guide**

You may have seen that the annual *Sunday Times Parent Power Guide* was published last week. We are delighted to see that Sir Thomas Rich's School is now ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> nationally among state secondary schools for GCSE and A Level results, which is a rise of 12 places from last year's *Guide*; we are also ranked third in the South West region (a huge area covering Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Dorset and Somerset). These outcomes reflect the outstanding commitment and consistent hard work of all our pupils and staff, and are very well deserved.

### **Curriculum Maps**

Further to a mention in an earlier email this term, I am pleased to announce that our bespoke Curriculum Maps have now been published on each subject's page on the School website: [www.strschool.co.uk/academic/subjects](http://www.strschool.co.uk/academic/subjects).

Aimed at giving parents and pupils an overview of the topics studied in each subject within each Key Stage, the creation of the maps has been a major undertaking over the last few months. To support our pupils in fully understanding their 'learning journey', we hope that Curriculum Maps will help pupils make connections between their learning and have a fuller understanding of the development of skills and core knowledge in each subject as they move through the School. The maps have been developed in close consultation with Heads of Department, and large-format printed versions will be arriving in classrooms early in the New Year.

### **School Council Update**

Once again, our School Council has had a highly productive term, meeting regularly to discuss the issues which matter most to pupils, and to explore practical ways of improving everyday school life. Representatives from each year group have contributed thoughtfully, ensuring that a wide range of voices and perspectives have shaped our discussions.

Throughout the term, the Council gathered suggestions from tutor groups, listened to concerns raised by peers, and debated which ideas would have the greatest positive impact on the school environment. These ideas generated a great deal of discussion, and Council members considered factors such as cost, logistics, and how each option would benefit pupils across the School. To ensure that every student has a say in shaping our next steps, the School Council

has decided to hold a whole-school vote on key priorities. Alongside the vote, the School will also endeavour to address as many of the areas put forward by the Council in the New Year.

My thanks go to all pupils who put themselves forward to support this important way of gathering our pupils' voice.

### Admissions Policy Consultation

As you may be aware, we are making some changes to the Year 7-11 Admissions Policy for 2027-28 entry. As a result, we are required to consult with all stakeholders, including parents. A letter from me and the Chair of Trustees explaining the substantive changes, together with the draft admission policy, can be found on our website at [www.strschool.co.uk/admissions/consultation](http://www.strschool.co.uk/admissions/consultation).

Any queries or feedback should be sent to our Registrar, Mrs Ewart, on [admissions@strs.org.uk](mailto:admissions@strs.org.uk).

### Christmas Dinner

Our caterers, Aspens, provided an excellent Christmas lunch yesterday. So many pupils and staff had pre-booked that we needed to stagger the sittings in the Hall. The atmosphere throughout was fantastic, and it was a pleasure to see our School community enjoying the occasion together. My sincere thanks go to Aspens for preparing hundreds of meals, and to Mrs S Jones (Finance and Operations Manager) for coordinating the dinner.

### House Drama

The eagerly anticipated House Drama competition took place today, and it was wonderful to see so many enthusiastic pupils taking part in the Hall, ably led by the Captains of Northgate, Southgate, Eastgate, Westgate and Newgate Houses. The performances also included cameo appearances from the staff Heads of House: Mr Dempsey for Northgate, Miss Tapscott for Southgate, Mrs Roche for Eastgate, Mr Daniell for Westgate and Mr Williams for Newgate. The final results will be shared next week.

### Nine Elms Road Closure 19 December

If you drive your son or daughter to School, you may have seen a red sign on Nine Elms Road (just around the corner from the School) announcing a one-day road closure for carriageway patching works during the week commencing Monday 15 December. We have queried this with Gloucestershire County Council and have been told that the works are taking place on **Friday 19 December**, which is the first day of our Christmas break (term finishes on Thursday 18 December). We have asked the Council to inform us if any changes are made to this schedule, and have stressed the potential impact any change of date would have on traffic and school buses. We will write to parents if there are any updates next week.


### Key Reminders

- **Carol Service:** Our traditional Carol Service takes place next week on Wednesday 17 December at 6.00pm at Holy Trinity Church in Longlevens. This event does not require a ticket, so please do feel free to join us for what will be a fitting and festive end to the Autumn Term.
- **End of term:** The last day of term is Thursday 18 December; please note, we finish at our usual time of **3.20pm**.
- **Start of term:** Pupils and staff return to school on Tuesday 6 January.

As previously mentioned, it has certainly been a long and extremely busy Autumn Term and pupils and staff deserve to enjoy a well-earned break when it arrives. Heads of Year and Heads of Key Stage will be in touch next week with a pastoral update to close the term.

That just leaves me to say, whether you celebrate Christmas or not, I wish you an enjoyable, peaceful, and relaxing break and thank you, as ever, for your continued support.

Best wishes



Matthew Lynch

HEADTEACHER

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