



TOOT HILL

BINGHAM • NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

From the Head Teacher

CONTACT

Dear Parents and Carers

A new academic year dawns and this one will feel newer than most! With a new working week in place allied to tiered classes in Years 7 and 8, pupils and staff will be working hard to adjust to this new regime.

As parents and carers are aware, these changes are a strategic part of our 'New Directions' agenda to raise standards at Toot Hill School. The key focus over the medium term will be to raise academic achievement – our goal at GCSE is to achieve 80% of students achieving 5+ grade A*-C and 70% achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Mathematics. We genuinely believe that we can secure this achievement. Our curriculum reorganisation will provide more opportunities for pupils to do well in the 'core' subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. Pupils will also be given a more flexible range of options at GCSE. Our teaching and support staff will continue to spare no effort in the care and support we provide for our students.

The only barriers that we can identify to the attainment of our declared goals related to attitudes to learning. Poor attitudes to learning manifest themselves in a number of different ways, such as:

- Poor personal organisation – lack of books and equipment; homework not attended to;
 - Reluctance to fully engage in set tasks, resulting in poor quality work;
- Failure to consistently meet basic school expectations related to dress code, courtesy and consideration to others, punctuality to lessons and regular attendance at school;

It is the responsibility of each student to co-operate with the school in order to achieve their full potential. Parents and carers play a critical role in this process. A key strand of our 'New Directions' agenda is to increase the frequency of communication with our parents and carers, face to face and via our Termly Reports. This initiative was positively received last year and we aim to further improve our effectiveness in this area by changing the way Parents' Evenings operate so as to improve the quality of the interactions.

I have always stated that any school will be ultimately judged by the quality of its examination outputs, especially at GCSE. Once again, Toot Hill has maintained its high standards at Key Stage 3 and 4. Our Year 11 pupils achieved 71% 5+ GCSE's at Grade A*-C with 56% of entrants achieving 5+ GCSEs at Grade A*-C including Math's & English. Seven drama students achieved results level with the top 5 marks in the country. At A Level we were pleased to record a 98% pass rate, with 72.3% of pupils achieving Grades A-C in their examinations. Our Key Stage 3 students excelled themselves with 100% attendance throughout the examination period and were rewarded with strong results: 88% achieving Level 5+ at Math's (with 47% at Level 7+); 87% achieving Level 5+ at Science, and 90% achieving Level 5+ at English - our first subject achieving 90% at Key Stage 3. We are grateful to the teachers for their hard work, and proud of our students for their excellent attainment.

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A key strand of our curriculum work this year will be related to Literacy – probably the most critical skill that determines examination success. It was quite alarming to note, when I interviewed Year 9, 10 and 11 students last academic year, how many students did little or no private reading of any kind. Consequently Mrs R Terry (MFL and former Assistant Headteacher) has been working with departments on a strategy to raise literacy standards. This strategy will be integrated into all departments' schemes of work at Key Stage 3 and will focus on key basics:

- Writing (including spelling)
- Reading
- Speaking & Listening.

Every subject will assess these areas as appropriate for each student and it is our intention that we will produce a single literacy level for each student at the end of the academic year. In the meantime please encourage your child to carry on reading and/or listen to audio books. Fiction or non-fiction, books, quality magazines and newspapers are of equal value. The critical learning advantage from reading and the resulting enhanced level of literacy is that it provides students with a confidence and maturity in their communication skills, which is critical in the global world economy.

I look forward to seeing all of our parents and carers on the 20th September for our Pupil Review Day. On this day, Mr Whiteley (Senior Deputy Headteacher) and Mr Taylor (Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare) will be providing information on Learning Progression and Pastoral Care and I very much hope that all parents and carers will attend his presentation.

I would like to thank all of our students, staff and parents/carers for their support during our Circus Activities Week, and to extend my thanks to all those involved in the Year 10 Enterprise Week of preparation for university and the world of work. Both events were an amazing success. The external providers taking part were very impressed with our students, who demonstrated their excellent talents and abilities and whose behaviour was so good at the Summer Circus Festival.

Equally, hearty congratulations go to Mrs A Price and the Community Arts team for a highly successful Summer School programme, which was fully booked and enjoyed by all.

Finally, I wish everyone a successful 2007/8 academic year.

Yours sincerely

John Tomasevic

Mr. Andy Mackay

We were all shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Mr Andy Mackay at the end of the summer term. Mr Mackay started teaching at Toot Hill in 1972 and during the 29 years that he gave to the school he was Head of Geography and Head of Humanities.

Mr Mackay will be remembered by staff and students alike for his hard work, genuine nature and warm heart. He will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with his family – wife Joan, and daughters Heather and Laura, both of whom were students at Toot Hill.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE YOUTH GAMES GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

The following pupils won the gold medal for Rushcliffe:- Maddy Sharpe, Annie Godley, Katie Waddingham, Safia Zerdazi, Georgie Wood, Harrison Packard, Frank Garnet-Welsh, Jake Smith, Jake Gollings, Johnny Chandrakumar, Tom Peters.

Well done to you all.



Exam Success 2007

We have been very pleased with the results achieved by our students at all levels in 2007. At Key Stage 3, pupils achieved at high levels in all core subjects. A summary is shown below:

Subject	% gaining level 5+	% gaining level 6+
English	90	51
Mathematics	88	74
Science	87	56

Parents/carers will shortly be receiving their child's test results and Teacher Assessments for all subjects at the end of KS3.

At Key Stage 4, 71.1% of students achieved 5 or more *A-C grades what mirrors the best results ever achieved in 2006. 97.9% achieved 5 or more *A-G grades (including English and Maths) and 100% of students gained at least on GCSE grade.

College students maintained the very high success rate with a 97.9% pass rate. Of these 46.5% were graded A-B and an impressive three quarters of students gained A-C grades. The majority of students leaving the College were able to secure their first choice of Higher Education Course.

Rob Whiteley
Senior Deputy Head Teacher

ATTENDANCE & FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Every school's pupil/student attendance figures are now carefully monitored by the Local Authority and DfES. All schools are required by law to demonstrate that every effort is made to ensure pupils attend lessons. This year we are moving to an electronic registration system. This change enables us to take registers in every lesson as well as at normal registration periods in the morning and afternoon. Once this data has been analysed we can instantly see any instances of unauthorised absence and quickly contact parents and carers.

If a student is LATE to any lesson resulting from their own actions, this will also be recorded by the class teacher. The amount of time by which they are late will also be noted, and once they have accumulated 60 minutes of missed lessons they will stop in school after the end of the school day to recover this lost learning time. Their key message is: it is better to be prompt to lessons rather than late.

A critical concern, both for us as a school and nationally, is the number of sessions lost due to family holidays taken during term-time. We appreciate the reasons why many families wish to do this but it does place a burden on the school. Lessons need to be caught up – often involving the teacher in extra work – and, of course, each child has the statutory right to 190 days' of school education in the year.

As I indicated in the September 2006 edition of 'Contact', from 1st September 2007 I will not authorize family holidays booked for term-time unless exceptional circumstances prevail and I have been formally advised of these in a written request for authorisation. This is in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1st September 2006. Section 7, **Leave of Absence**, Section 3: states:

3) A pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where:

- a) **An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and**
- b) **The headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application**

We very much hope that all parents and carers will understand the educational reasons for this stance.

Absence through illness, dental or doctor appointments, etc will of course be treated as in previous years and according to statutory requirements.

September Dates

w/b Tuesday	4th September	Yr 7 Midyis Tests Yr 10 Yellis Tests Yr 12 +13 Alis tests
Wednesday	5 th September	Literacy Assembly Y9
Thursday	6 th September	Literacy Assembly Y8
Friday	7 th September	Literacy Assembly Y7
Wednesday/Thursday	12 th / 13 th September	Year 6 Open Evenings
Tuesday	18 th September	Individual School Photograph, Period 1, Years 7 and 10
Thursday	20 th September	Student Review Day
w/b Monday	24 th September	German Exchange
Friday	28 th September	Macmillan Coffee Morning

School Term Dates – Autumn Term

Following the DCSF allocation of one extra non-teaching day for staff training, the school will use its statutory allocation of non-teaching days on the following dates: Monday 17th December to Friday 21st December inclusive. The Autumn Term is therefore scheduled to end on Friday 14th December, which will be the last day of term, giving pupils a three-week rest over the Christmas season.

The school term dates, which are set by the Local Authority, are therefore as follows:

Autumn Term 2007:

Tuesday 4 September – Friday 14 December inclusive.

Half-term:

Monday 22nd October – Friday 26th October inclusive.

Spring Term 2008:

Monday 7 January – Friday 14 March inclusive.

Half-term:

Monday 11th February – Friday 15th February inclusive.

Summer Term 2008:

Monday 31st March – Monday 21st July inclusive.

Half-term:

Monday 26th May – Friday 30th May inclusive.

NEW CLUB AT TOOT HILL **TOOT HILL ROWING CLUB**

All pupils welcome! Every Monday
3.30pm – 4.30pm. We will have 10
rowers next year so come along and
have a go.

