



□ Update from Gavin Sterry, Headteacher

I am writing this newsletter at the end of the first full week with all students in school — and what a fabulous start to the term it has been! I always look forward to a new school year, but this year is extra special for me. Not only is it the beginning of my first full year as headteacher of Ridgeway High School, it is also (we all hope) the return to something close to school as 'normal'.

It feels great to embark on a brand new school year after all the disruption of the last 18 months or so caused by the Covid pandemic. The students themselves have been telling me how happy they are to be back as well. They can once again enjoy and make full use of our wonderful workspaces and specialist facilities in subjects like technology, dance and drama.

The pictures here are of some of our new students. [You can find more pictures on our website](#). Year 7s have made a fantastic start. It was a joy to see them arriving last Thursday for their first day, full of optimism, ready for their new adventure and bursting with pride in their smart new uniforms. We were able to use the staggered start to the term to have an induction day especially for them. They had the school virtually to themselves for the whole day, so it was a perfect opportunity for them to explore and become familiar with their new surroundings.

This year we welcome more than 180 students in year 7, our largest-ever year group. The fact that we are now heavily oversubscribed is a sign of the confidence that the local community has in us and is due in no small part to the hard work of students, staff, governors and parents over the last few years. One of the things that has most impressed me in my short time here is that sense of Ridgeway as a family, with everyone looking out for each other. I look forward to welcoming our new parents into the Ridgeway family.

The Covid pandemic is, unfortunately, far from over. All students have now had two opportunities for testing in school. Many thanks to Miss Carey, Ms Stewart, Mrs Lord-Owens and Ms Parker who helped with the testing. The focus shifts to regular testing at home — ideally twice a week. We will provide test kits. We continue to follow national and local guidance regarding Covid and I am glad to say that the

number of positive cases is low at the moment.

The start of term has also seen testing of another kind. We have been asking students to do tests in a number of subjects. This isn't an ideal way to start the learning year, but it is essential so that we can identify the gaps in students' knowledge which will inevitably be there because of the amount of lost learning time since March 2020. We need to know where the gaps are so that we can put in place targeted catch-up. Our first intervention groups are already up and running.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, please get in touch with the relevant head of bubble. Working closely with families is one of the things that makes Ridgeway such a wonderful school. We also offer outstanding wellbeing support, and I am delighted that we now have Lucy Gibbons working with us as part of the Social Workers in Schools scheme.

You will notice that our mini-calendar isn't in its usual place at the foot of the page. That is because, with rates of Covid infection currently climbing both nationally and locally, we are unable at the moment to say for certain what format some of our planned events for parents and families will take — in other words whether they will be 'real world' or 'virtual'. As soon as I know more, I will of course let you know. For the time being [we have set up a Virtual Open Evening page on our website](#), and we will be adding more content to it in the coming days and weeks.

I am delighted that we are again able to run trips and visits. Our year 11 geographers will be heading to Betws-y-Coed in North Wales next week to do fieldwork. Learning outside the classroom is so important for young people, not just to support and supplement their textbook-based learning but also for their wider cultural and spiritual development.

Another upcoming event — of possible interest to parents and carers — is an informal 'meet and greet' with the Wirral SEND team. It will be a chance to ask questions and share ideas. The event is taking place at Leasowe Primary School next Wednesday (15 September) and starts at 6pm. [Click this link for further details](#).

