



# Plymouth High School for Girls

*"For life, not school, we learn"*

24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Students and Parents/Carers,

I do hope that you are well and looking forward to the half term break.

It's been a busy time in school with Year 11 and 13 coming towards the end of their school based GCSE and A Level assessments, the last of which will be completed by Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May. Both year groups have taken a mature and praiseworthy approach to all that has been asked of them. On behalf of the school, I should like to thank and congratulate year 11 and 13 and also thank their families for doing their bit to help our young people achieve the best possible outcomes.

Assessments across the school have continued despite the disruption we have faced. Year 12 received their end of year grades last week and many have already started forming study and preparation plans to ensure that Year 13 is a successful one.

Years 7, 8 and 9 are taking their end of year assessments at the moment and they have worked hard with their teachers to plan carefully for each one. Lessons learnt in Key Stage 3 about how best to revise and prepare for assessments pays dividends for GCSE and A level assessments. A big well done to years 7, 8 and 9.

Year 10 have their mid-course end of year examinations in June and I know that many have already started thinking about what they will do to be ready for these assessments.

It would not have been possible to keep our focus on progression and learning without the unfailing support of our parents, thank you for all that you do in the background to make sure that your children are ready to learn and do their best to succeed.

I wanted to update you on the appointments we have made recently. The vacancies arose as a result of two things. Firstly, the changes we have made to our curriculum for 2021/22 to broaden its appeal, improve the subject balance and add courses to our post 16 offer, and secondly, as we will be saying goodbye to two long standing colleagues who have chosen to retire. Mr Osborne and Mrs Eales-White are both retiring at the end of this academic year.

Mr Osborne has been an integral part of Plymouth High since joining the school in 2001 and has taught and tutored students across all year groups in his time. He also ran Folk band, much to the delight of the club members and the audiences at school events. Mrs Eales-White joined Plymouth High in 2005 as Head of History and concludes her tenure with us as Head of Sixth Form. She is also our resident 'Plymouth High through the years' expert and I know we'll be calling on her knowledge and enthusiasm for the school's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024.

In September, we will be welcoming the following teachers. Miss Wright as a History and English teacher. Miss Wright is currently on her training placement with us and has demonstrated the kind of dedication to student learning and welfare that will see her fit in so well. Miss Cook is an experienced Physics teacher who impressed us hugely during the recruitment process, she is very much looking forward to starting with us. Mrs Readey is an experienced English teacher who is also a Plymouth High Old Girl. Her enthusiasm for Plymouth High and what we stand for shone out from the moment I first spoke with her when she called to speak to me about the post. Mrs Pickles joins us as Head of PE whilst Ms Luscombe is away on Maternity leave. Mrs Pickles is an experienced PE teacher and comes highly recommended. We wish Ms Luscombe well and look forward to meeting the new arrival in due course. Mr Jenkins joins us as Head of Sixth Form. Mr Jenkins is a very well qualified teacher and school leader and impressed the panel with his motivation, his understanding of current and future issues and also of what we are trying to achieve for all students who attend our school. I am confident that you will all be delighted with the colleagues that will be starting with us in September and I know they will help us go from strength to strength.

Since we have joined Thinking Schools Academy Trust, things have moved on rapidly. There has been a very extensive investment in our IT provision including hardware, software and staffing. Although staff are using the new system and finding their way through, they will need some opportunity for training in the finer points of MS Teams and MS One Drive so that they can best support their classes. I plan to arrange an afternoon of training for all staff before the summer break which will mean an early finish on one day for students. It would not have been appropriate to have scheduled the training whilst staff and students were so focused on the school based GCSE and A level assessments which is why I have waited until after half term for the training. We will write again with more details.

Following some very careful financial planning and support from the Trust, we will also be enjoying some much needed interior refurbishment over the coming months. Half term will see the start of the work, with more to come over the summer holidays and again in 2022. We will be investing in new, high quality blue flooring throughout many parts of the school and redecorating with the traditional Plymouth High colours of blue and white. We are also investing in low carbon LED lighting and on improvements to our site gate on Alton Road to improve safety for students during the school day. The Main Hall is also scheduled for an upgrade along with 5 classrooms as we start to work systematically through the school. There are also other, less exciting, but still very important works planned around health and safety for all that use our site, including upgrades to the various alarm, electrical and heating systems that we have in school. Although students won't necessarily be aware

of these particular improvements, they can be sure that their school is being improved in all areas. We will do our best to create a real wow factor for our young people for September. Our plan is that over time, the whole school will be brought up to a consistent, high quality standard with the Plymouth High colour scheme throughout the whole school. Our site team have been an integral part of the process to get the improvements scheduled and Mr Berry, our new Facilities Manager, has been instrumental in making it all happen.

Sports Day is now set to run and is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> July. It is so exciting to once again be planning a whole school event and I know our students will have a wonderful day. Our new year 7 are looking forward to starting with us in September with families getting their first Plymouth High live welcome on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May via MS Teams.

The practice 11+ day is on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June and I thank those parents who have already contacted Mrs Rogers [k.rogers1@tsatrust.org.uk](mailto:k.rogers1@tsatrust.org.uk) to offer their help. If you can help and would like to take part, please contact Mrs Rogers.

I wish you all a very happy and restful half term break and I will be in touch again after the holiday.

Best wishes,



**Simon Underdown.**  
**Headteacher.**

