

The newsletter of the Partnership between Gateshead Council and Hookergate and Ryton Schools

Issue 6: February 2011

Dear Parent,

The Headteachers and Governors want everyone in the expanded area to see the school as truly theirs and this means they are looking closely at the school's image and identity as well as working on detailed plans for expanding the facilities. Introducing changes like this are difficult but many students and parents have told us they want to be part of ONE school so the changes you read about here are a key way of achieving this.



New name for Ryton Comprehensive School

Students, parents and others have been consulted about changing the school name. They told us that the "Comprehensive" ideal of an education for all was important. Many questioned the need for any change – Governors hope the aim of creating one school, outlined above, is something everyone can support. "Thorp" or a variation of it emerged as the most popular suggestion. Governors were then struck by the ideals held by the man behind the name – and for that reason they are proud to announce that from 1st September 2011 the school will become Charles Thorp Comprehensive School.

Charles Thorp came to Ryton aged 12 when his father Robert became Rector of the ancient parish of Ryton which ran from the River Tyne to the River Derwent and the Gateshead/Northumberland boundary - covering almost exactly the new catchment area.

He established free education in the parish, later founding Thorp School in Ryton village named after his father. He

became the founder of Durham University (which along with London, was the first to be established in England since the Reformation).

As a Fellow of the Royal Society he worked to bring accessible music and singing to church services. He founded the first penny savings bank in England and was an active campaigner for the abolition of slavery which took several decades to become a practical reality after initial laws were passed banning it.

Charles Thorp made a significant contribution to society and in particular our community. Charles Thorp Comprehensive School recognises the mining history of the area the inclusion of both the Derwent and Tyne valleys and references the ancient parish which covered the school's new catchment area, running south from the bank of the Tyne to Chopwell and Rowlands Gill and from Wylam to Blaydon.

New uniform for Charles Thorp Comprehensive School

A new uniform is being developed as part of the new school identity. A range of options will be prepared so students can have a big say in deciding on their future look.

We currently have students from both Ryton and Hookergate schools designing a new logo for Charles Thorp Comprehensive School. We will be shortlisting a selection and will be asking students and parents of both schools to vote for their preferred design.

Ryton site development

National investment in school buildings is on hold for now. In the meantime, Gateshead Council and the two existing schools are determined that proper facilities will be ready over the next two years, no matter what the national picture may be.

More students mean more space is needed of course. The Hookergate site will remain open as part of Charles Thorp Comprehensive for Years 8, 9 and 11 until September 2012. Building plans have been drawn up to improve the Ryton site's security and circulation, provide improved dining facilities by September 2011 and to create new classroom spaces where necessary for students as they join the site

Continued overleaf

over the next two years. Early sketches and plans of the development of the Ryton site are available to all parents via the Council's website

www.gateshead.gov.uk/bestforthewest.

Draft proposals were on show at the school for the recent Year 9 pupils options evening and they will be on display again at the Year 11 options evening on 3rd March 2011. In addition to this we held a drop in session on Tuesday 15th February 2011. Local residents, parents of pupils at Hookergate and Ryton Infants Juniors and other interested stakeholders were able to have a look at the draft proposals and let us know what they thought.

We anticipate being able to make a Planning Application for the works that are required on site to ensure that proper facilities will be in place to accommodate all those attending the enlarged school from September 2011 onwards.

Programme of joint activities

In addition to the work of the Joint Governors Group, a considerable amount of work is being carried out by both schools to integrate the students and the wider community. Detailed below is a list of activities that have taken place to date and there are also photographs available on the Council website

www.gateshead.gov.uk/bestforthewest:-

- Students from the two schools are already learning together. There have been several joint events for Year 9 students covering Science, Citizenship and option choices. This Year Group will join together on the Ryton site in September to start their GCSE and BTEC courses.
- The options evening for Year 9 held at Ryton was a huge success. Hookergate parents of Year 9 children also had the opportunity to tour the site and facilities with Ryton sixth formers.
- As well as Hookergate students attending the Ryton site, tutor groups from Ryton have also visited Hookergate to experience what a different school feels like.
- There is an open invitation for Hookergate parents to attend the Friends of Ryton Comprehensive School (FoRCS) meetings. For more details please see their website at www.rytoncs.co.uk and click on 'Community'.

School admissions

Parents who have chosen Hookergate School as their first choice have now been contacted to discuss a change of preference to Ryton School.

All parents can seek advice and guidance about the application process from school admission staff in **School Organisation on 0191 433 2756/2109** or from the **School Choice Adviser Mrs Sandra Arkless on 0191 433 2446**.

You can also contact **Ryton Comprehensive School on 0191 413 2113** to arrange a visit or get a school prospectus at www.rytoncs.co.uk

What happens next?

- Complete the formal processes to legally change name to Charles Thorp Comprehensive School.
- Seek preferences for a new school logo.
- On 1st March, all parents will receive their offer of a school place. They will have until 15th March to formally accept the place offered.
- Finalise new routes and timetables for transport to and from Hookergate catchment area to Charles Thorp Comprehensive School.
- Planning applications will be made for the works required at Ryton for September 2011 and for September 2012.
- Following the success of the Year 9 transition evening, there will be a similar event held on 11 May 2011 for the transition of Year 9s into Year 10.
- The Ryton Summer Festival will take place on Saturday 2nd July at Ryton Comprehensive School. If you are interested in helping with the organisation of this year's event please email: inform@rytonsf.co.uk

Stay informed

You have told us you want to be kept informed. These newsletters will go out to every pupil in Hookergate and Ryton schools and also every pupil in the primary schools linked to both Ryton and Hookergate.

- Read this newsletter
- pass it to others
- check out the Council's website for latest news
- let us know what you think
- any questions?

Contact: Sandra Punton on 0191 433 3384
www.gateshead.gov.uk/bestforthewest