

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

16 November 2023



Valete and Welcome

We have recently said goodbye to Bushra Begum, a Learning Support Assistant in our SEND team and Cherise Brown who worked as a part of the Domestic staff in boarding. Most parents will have either seen or spoken to Natalie Greggor who was our Receptionist for six years. She has been a calm, friendly face receiving forgotten items, dealing efficiently with phone enquiries and signing visitors in with a cheery smile. Many thanks to them all and they go with our very best wishes for the future.

We are very pleased to welcome Lizzie Durning and Emma Wheeler who have joined the SEND team as LSAs. We also welcome Jamie Drage who is working with Sport as a coach.

Remembrance

We were so lucky with the weather! I was, alongside a number of colleagues, releasing my inner Michael Fish for a couple of hours. We made the call at 10:00 to go ahead with our outdoor Service of Remembrance - it remained dry throughout with a wonderful rainbow appearing over Main Block as the ceremony closed. I believe it is very important to 'remember', not least in these troubled times as well as acknowledging the past. The band, CCF, choir and School Chaplain played their part superbly, with a special mention to John Schofield (Year 13) for his first class playing of the Last Post and Reveille. It is always so impressive to see 1400 boys participating so well in what is a very traditional service - as I said in my opening address, I do hope that those of 'all faiths and none' found it moving and memorable.

Boarding Inspection

As I write, an inspection of Boarding is taking place. Whilst we are a school 'setting', this is essentially a Health and Social Care inspection. I feel confident that this will be successful and I will share the report when the inspection is complete. Many thanks to the boarding parents who completed the survey.

Next week, we are participating in a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) conducted collaboratively between members of my senior team and a team of reviewers who work at a senior level in a range of schools. Whilst this does not lead to a judgement, there will be a review of classroom and co-curricular practice and participation which I shall share with the school community once complete.

We have adopted this model within the school and Miss Lawson is leading on staff working collaboratively to help each other develop their departments. This has proven to be very beneficial for the teachers to share good practice and celebrate the great work that is going on within the School, as well as highlighting those all important *'even better if's'*

Whilst the Challenge Partners and Departmental QARs (Quality Assurance Review) garner student feedback, they do not collect parent views. However, there will be a Parent Survey on the work of the School coming out in January, which I hope you will look out for and share your thoughts. *'Feedback; the gift that keeps on giving'*.

Sportsman's Dinner

It was super to see so many current and former parents, friends of the school, Old Wycombiensians, sponsors and supporters at the Sportsman's Dinner. We received excellent feedback about the quality of the event, the food and the general atmosphere, compèred by David Flatman who, in turn, introduced Courtney Laws as the guest speaker. As well as being a fantastic evening, the generosity of those attending has ensured that we can have another year of great rugby provision. My thanks to all who attended and, in particular the FRORGS committee, superbly led by Fran Kucera for organising such a splendid event.

Multi-Lingual Success

Congratulations to everyone who entered the Poésieae International Poetry Recitation Competition. Seventeen students went over and above in their language studies last half-term, by choosing to enter an International Poetry Recitation Competition. For this they had to select and practice a poem in a foreign language and then submit a recording of themselves reciting the poem in their best and finest accent. Everyone who entered received a well-earned certificate and recognition points for their efforts and Miss Sheppard was really impressed by everyone's pronunciation and the standard of entries. The top two in each category (year group and language) have gone forward to the global final; the results of which will be announced in December. Special mentions go to Arlow Hughes in Year 7 for entering in Welsh and Ayaan Siyad in Year 11 who submitted entries in three languages (French, Spanish and Italian).

House Competitions

I remember the Rubik's Cube craze in the late 1970s/early 80s but, even with the photocopied instructions that did the rounds on my school's 'black market' I could not complete it for love nor money! How impressed I have, therefore, been to see our students participating so readily in the House Rubik's Cube competition with many completing in just a few seconds - masters of the algorithm and miracles of dexterity. House Drama is next on the agenda - look out for this event as your sons tread the boards.

Parents' Association

Our Parents' Association ran a very successful disco, which has raised their support of one of our current projects. The disco was attended by 300 or so boys and girls (boys from RGS, girls from Beaconsfield High School, Pipers Corner and Wycombe High). I was on duty (discreetly) on the night and, despite that, the youngsters had a great time and conducted themselves superbly amid the sugar rush, loud music and glowing devices that adorned their various limbs. The PA runs a '500 Club' - the more that take part the greater the winnings. Please do take a look at their [flyer](#) and sign up on Parent Pay.

Action Your Potential

Having now worked with almost every year group (Year 10 after Christmas), Action Your Potential are well-established within the school community. Their focus on neuroscience has helped to put wellbeing, as well as study skills, into a context that our students really value. Thank you to the parents who have attended the Academic Evenings and provided feedback. Please contact Miss Lawson (skl@rgshw.com), if you would like further information.

Action Research

We have launched our Action Research Programme where members of staff identify an area to improve methods and approaches, create a plan of action, implement it and then evaluate the results. We are fortunate to have both teaching and non-teaching members of staff as part of this, including two who are also participating in the 'Eton X' Action Research Programme, run by Eton College, later in the year.

Estates Development

The swimming pool is now fully functioning and in use by the community.

Our 'small astro' (as the AWP near the rugby pitches is known) is nearing completion and we are confident that we will be given the go-ahead to install floodlights, following some amendments to the lighting design.

We have also installed solar panels on the Boarding House (Fraser Youens House) roof which will impact our energy costs, alongside the savings already being made by the panels on the Sports Hall Roof.

Phase Two of the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Sixth Form Centre is complete and by the time you read this letter the furniture will have been delivered. It is self-assembly, and there is a lot of it, but I feel certain that Sixth Formers will be working in there before long. I can now start planning an opening ceremony - those who supported the project - watch this space!

Finally

Tonight is our November Showcase, in which we are to receive a musical feast. I will report on that in my next letter.

With best wishes

Philip Wayne