



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR HEADTEACHER



The end of this term makes it six years for me as Headteacher of The Buckingham School. Through the highs and lows, successes and challenges, I've never felt prouder of the achievements of our students, the hard work of our staff and the support of our parents, Governors and wider community. It is gratifying to see the levels of support in the community are substantially more than six years ago. In the end, the more the community gets behind the School, the more our students will benefit. We are the community's School, and our students represent the future of this town.

I wish the whole community a wonderful Christmas break, and good health and success for 2024.

Best wishes  
Mr Andrew McGinnes

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE**

## STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This term, our "extras" have gained momentum, and have recovered to and surpassed the pre-Covid levels. I don't know of a school where staff work harder for the students. This school offers an incredible range of opportunities to them. At this point, I invite you to revisit the School's Facebook feed since September, look on our website under "Extra-Curricular" or at the PE Department's "Squad in Touch" calendar. I've been looking back over our trips and visits, too.

**A summary of many of the things that have taken place in just fourteen weeks from September to December:**

- Humanutopia (Year 7, so fantastic we've rebooked them for Years 8 and 9) - "making positive changes"
- Positively You (Year 11, inspiration alongside revision)
- White Ribbon Day (ending male violence against women and girls)
- Show Racism The Red Card Day
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Re-start a Heart

**From an academic and Careers point of view, some highlights:**

- Bucks Climate Challenge (our team, "Green Eden", were runners up in the Final)
- Celebration Evening (for the Class of '23, held for the first time since 2019)
- Various Geography fieldwork residential trips
- Year 11 "Support Your Child in their Exams"
- Visits from Aylesbury and Milton Keynes Colleges
- Visit to Silverstone Park
- Maths challenges
- Natural History Museum & Kew Gardens

## Sports staff have been incredibly busy:

- Girls Rugby Club started
- Sports Leaders coaching at Furze Down and Lace Hill schools
- Endless sporting fixtures and Inter-House competition
- Incredible selection of extra-curricular activities

All of this from a team that has been one member of staff short all term.

## Performing Arts:

- Frozen performance and accompanying trip to London, performance at the Buckingham Christmas Lights switch-on
- Urban Strides presentation to Years 7 and 8
- School Talent Show
- Extra-curricular clubs such as Band Club
- Music lessons from visiting teachers

As well as two Frozen rehearsals each week!

## Community and other events:

- Food Drive
- Participation in events such as the Buckingham Christmas Card Competition (we have two winners in Millie and Martha and the most entries, and a visit from the Mayor to thank us)
- Highly successful relaunch of Friends of Buckingham School (FOBS)
- Year 7 Tea Party for their old Year 6 teachers
- Open Evenings for Year 7 and Sixth Form next year



# STAKEHOLDER VOICE

We consult our stakeholders more and more. Your children are regularly asked, in all kinds of ways, about all sorts of things. Naturally, the feedback is acted upon. Since September, we have consulted:

- The whole of Year 7 about “settling in”
- The whole of Year 10 about their GCSE courses
- The whole of Years 8 and 9 about their experiences in School
- Focus groups of 6-12 from every Year Group about how the School’s new Behaviour Policy is working
- More focus groups about experiences of bad language and disrespectful behaviour
- Student Council and the Sixth Form Leadership Team continue to operate and regularly provide the School with feedback on all kinds of issues

We have consulted our staff too, informally, at a number of points in the term. We have also just completed a Wellbeing Survey for staff, which reflected positive trends.

Next, it’s your turn as parents and carers. We run surveys after Parents’ Evenings and these give us useful feedback. However, to dig deeper, we have been working on plans on how to run Parent Consultation Evenings and intend to run our first ones from January to April.

In a typical survey, around 90% of parents will say they would recommend TBS to others. That’s not bad, but that’s not as good as 100%.

# A CALMER, SAFER, MORE PURPOSEFUL SCHOOL

Last year was the toughest that many of us have ever experienced in education. Schools across the country and very much in Aylesbury Vale reported sharp decline in basic standards of behaviour. We were already clear as a school, even before our Ofsted inspection in April 2023, that we would need to update our approaches. We had already begun to invest considerable planning in devising fresh approaches to the day to day management of our wonderful school. This included visiting other schools, extensive research and independent advice from school improvement advisors and colleague headteachers.

I shared with you in September the booklet "Working Together - September 2023", which outlines some of the things that we have introduced this year. It also highlights some of the practices in School and what the School and its families can expect of each other. I've reattached it here, and it is also available on our website, in the "Parents" section. <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/4faa891e37.html>

I don't think I'm exaggerating in saying that the school has been transformed since September. Our students - your children - have responded so well to the new expectations that we have put in place. In September 2023, we embarked on a three-year journey to raise standards in alignment with our seven Virtues. Exemplary student behaviour is a huge part of the journey.

95%-97% of our students respond incredibly positively to simple expectations, with rewards for meeting them and consequences for not. It prepares them for life. A small number of students require extra support and, whilst we are not negotiating on our red lines, we continue to invest considerably in resources and knowledge in supporting them as well as we can.

## We have seen large scale improvements in:

- Climate as a whole - calm, orderly and much more predictable
- This has impacted on attendance which has improved this year
- Student behaviour in class - outstanding at times, a typical standard of good and many fewer issues with poor behaviour disrupting learning
- Student behaviour outside of class - again outstanding at times, typically good and rarely poor or unsafe
- Attitudes to learning and studying - we are starting to see the profit in the quality of students' verbal contributions to lessons and in their written work

## THANK YOU TO FOBS

In September 2022, we relaunched Friends of Buckingham School (FOBS) and this year, a real sense of momentum has built. Please keep eyes peeled for opportunities to support the School fund-raising. The fact is, that the income the School receives for its students barely covers - this year does not cover - the most basic things. Therefore, we rely on fund-raising and sponsorship to allow us the desirables that could really help improve the environment for our students.

We have also been privileged this term to attract direct sponsorship from businesses, and this has helped to support our production of Frozen and our Celebration Evening in particular. Times are challenging - inflation has dropped, but there is still inflation - and the school does not expect, yet is incredibly grateful for, any support in the form of assets, donations or sponsorship.

