



From the Headmaster: Mr Michael Windsor, BA, MA

16 December 2016

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

I have very much enjoyed attending many events and meeting pupils and parents this term. I am grateful to everyone who has made me feel so welcome and I am excited about the future for this great school.

A significant task this autumn has been the appointment of a new Head for Abingdon Prep and I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Governors announced on Monday that Craig Williams has accepted this position from September 2017. Craig comes to Abingdon from the Senior Deputy Headship at Thorngrove School. Craig has a Geography degree from Oxford and is an accomplished sportsman. He represented the University at 2nd XI level at both cricket and football, and he continues to enjoy playing cricket. Other interests include golf, historical novels and Manchester United. We will look forward to welcoming Craig and his family to the Abingdon community.

Over the course of the year, I will be working with the Senior Leadership Team to produce a development plan that will outline the strategic direction of both Abingdon School and Abingdon Prep School. I am keen to hear parents' views and so have engaged RSAcademics to produce a parental questionnaire that will come out next term. I hope parents will be willing to share their views via the questionnaire or directly to me if they would prefer.

The range and diversity of activities over the last few weeks at Abingdon has been exceptional. Students have taken part in a Particle Physics Masterclass at the Rutherford Appleton Lab, workshops from world-renowned musicians bass-baritone, Richard Burkhard and violinist Levon Chilingirian, a chess simultaneous display with Grandmaster Peter Wells plus a wide range of sporting activities including a British Regional Canoe Polo Competition. The opportunities available are outstanding, as is the boys' enthusiasm to embrace them. My thanks to all staff who go to great lengths to make this possible.

Our senior mathematicians came a very impressive sixth out of all worldwide postal entries in the Princeton University Maths Competition. In a second global challenge - Computational Thinking with 40 countries taking part - first year, Philip Grotjahn scored the highest mark in the School and gained a distinction. Congratulations are also due to first year, Oliver Glover, who has again won a place in the National Children's Orchestra. Oliver is an exceptional oboist for his age, playing Principal Oboe in the School's first orchestra.

Following the Model United Nations practice day with St Helen's, 18 boys went on to pick up a host of awards at the conference including Hayden Ramm who was awarded the accolade of Outstanding Delegate. Lower School boys have also been in lively debate with

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: +44 (0)1235 521563

Fax: +44 (0)1235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

their counterparts from St Helen's who joined them for a 'curry and dinner debate' (a pastime well worth practising!).

I will watch with interest the progress of two sixth form teams who have entered the BlottMatthews Airport to Airport, A2A, challenge to solve the aviation problems in the south of England. The competition winners will be announced in March and it should be a fascinating project to be involved with.

I thoroughly enjoyed the productions of *Treasure Island* from the Lower School and the Third Year's *And Then There Weren't Any Left*. The engaging performance from the younger boys was enhanced by an imaginative set and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. OA Ed Rowett's spoof murder mystery was demanding for the talented third year cast who successfully pulled it off. I look forward to the senior students from Abingdon and St Helen's in action next term. There is much to enjoy from our close link with St Helen's. Drama and Music in particular benefit enormously from this excellent partnership and this year's Joint Choral Society was a fine example of the synergy between the two schools.

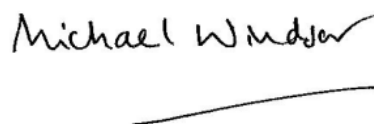
Last weekend saw the end of the rugby season and final matches for the boys in the Upper Sixth. My thanks for their determination and hard work representing the School and I hope they enjoy the game for many years to come. I cannot help but mention the 1st XV win over Radley – always a pleasure - and the excellent end of season results against Marlborough and RGS Guildford.

In other sport, the U15 squad swam brilliantly at the ESSA national relay finals improving enormously on their qualifying position in both relays. Very well done. Cross-country Club has also seen a good start to the season with the seniors and inters coming third at Harrow. Lower School fencers enjoyed their school tournament with Jacob Drew picking up the trophy.

Boarders have been embracing Christmas, decorating trees and turning their hand to making cards and gingerbread houses for the local community, many of whom joined us for our annual Christmas Tea Party. Sixty residents were entertained by school bands and choirs and everyone entered into the festive spirit. Carol services have been in abundance this week and term will come to a fitting end at St Helen's Church with the whole school gathering together.

I wish everyone in the Abingdon community a peaceful and happy Christmas and all the very best for 2017.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Windsor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Michael Windsor