



ABINGDON

From the Headmaster: Mr Michael Windsor, BA, MA

20 January 2017

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

It was very good to welcome pupils and staff back to the School after the Christmas break. Although the first day of this week now seems to be known to the media as 'Blue Monday' - supposedly the most depressing day of the year - there is no sign of that at Abingdon as pupils have engaged with their work and Other Half activities with characteristic enthusiasm and good humour.

It was a very positive start to the New Year with some excellent news as we heard that planning permission had been granted for Beech Court. This exciting development, which will be situated next to Greening Court will transform our Sixth Form, Library and Art facilities. It will also enable Music, Drama and other departments to benefit from expanded and improved workspaces. We hope to open these new facilities in the autumn of 2018 and a detailed plan has been put together to ensure minimal disruption for pupils and parents during construction.

University offers have now begun to come through to Upper Sixth students who have applied for an exciting range of courses at a selection of excellent universities. I would like to congratulate the 22 pupils who have received offers from Oxford or Cambridge. This is an impressive number of Oxbridge offers and they come as the result of commitment, enthusiasm and endeavour.

I am pleased to welcome three new teaching colleagues to the School this term. Mr David James joins the Design Technology department, while Ms Kathryn Yarker and Mr John Marjot join Geography.

Students were involved in two trips over the Christmas holiday. The first was a joint Abingdon and St Helen's visit to Strasbourg to practise French, visit the sites and enjoy the festivities. It was a great success from all accounts. The second trip was to Finland's Arctic wilderness and the photographs taken show what an incredible landscape this is. The boys and staff found the scenery breath-taking and have returned with much appreciation and respect for this beautiful environment.

Abingdon students continue to take part and flourish in a wide variety of activities. I would like to congratulate Jamie Farrow who, amid fierce competition, has won a place as a tenor in the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. We have also seen success for James Hogge who finished second in the National Cipher Challenge,

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run by the University of Southampton Mathematics Department. James has also been extremely helpful in assisting with the School's Code-breaking Club.

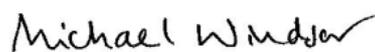
The CCF is through to the national stage of the Air Squadron Trophy competition after a very impressive day at RAF Cosford. The cadets finished first overall after some tremendous individual and team efforts. Congratulations also go to fifth year, Sam Christie, who has been selected to play for the Oxfordshire County Tennis Team at the U18 County Cup in Norwich at the end of February.

Football and hockey are well underway with both sports enjoying the facilities at Tilsley Park. Footballers benefited from the new 4G pitch for pre-season training and the 1. XI's hard work paid off with an excellent win at the Rugby School pre-season tournament where they emerged unbeaten. In their first fixture of the term against St John's, Leatherhead there were some spirited matches including a hard-fought victory for the 1. XI. The Hockey Club enjoyed an excellent first fixture against St Edward's, winning nine out of ten matches including convincing victories for the 1st and 2nd XIs. Best of luck for what will be a tough fixture against Eton this weekend. The Cross-Country team travelled to a snow covered Sevenoaks to compete in the Knole run, the most competitive race in the school calendar. With a young team it was always going to be a baptism of fire but the boys ran valiantly coming a respectable 15th out of 41 teams competing.

The Abingdon Science Partnership is continuing to do fascinating work not only in furthering interest in science outside the curriculum at School but also in the wider community. My thanks to all the Science Ambassadors who are excellent advocates not only for science but also for Abingdon School. In particular I would like to thank Carl Olavesen who is running an after school club at St Edmund's Primary School. The Club is very popular with children at the School and the Science Co-ordinator there has passed on her appreciation for all that Carl is doing.

This is a short but very busy term and I wish all the pupils the very best for the weeks ahead. I will also look forward to catching up with parents at the many events that will take place between now and Easter.

Yours sincerely



Michael Windsor