



ABINGDON

From the Head: Miss O.F.S. Lusk, B.Mus

26 September 2014

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

Term has got off to a flying start with everyone settling in well. Starting a new school is a big step for everybody, boys and parents but particularly so for our boarders for whom this could be their first time living away from home. Our induction days, before term starts, help with getting to know the routines and making new friends. All of this can seem a bit daunting, especially if you have come from overseas. Since the beginning of term the boarders have been kept busy with trips to Longridge Activity Centre, the cinema and a visit from St Swithun's School.

All the new boys are excited but also apprehensive by this new start and we think we have a good programme, honed over many years, to help them settle as quickly as possible. Our new first years seem to be growing accustomed to Abingdon life and they are appearing a little more confident about the campus. I do enjoy seeing them, usually dressed in blazers bought with room to grow; their tremendous enthusiasm is a good reminder of all that is on offer here. They have each been given a second year mentor to help them settle in and who better to show them the ropes. The third years, too, each have a sixth form mentor from their house. If you do have any concerns at all about your son then please get in touch with his tutor.

We have welcomed a number of staff to the School since the beginning of term. Mr Andrew J Hall is a Composition Teacher; Miss Wenyan Guo joins us as a Chinese Language Assistant; Mrs Janet Dunbar is our School Receptionist; Ms Sian Cave is a Management Accountant; and Mrs Caroline Burgoyne, Mrs Angelina Beech and Miss Rebecca Axtell have all joined our Housekeeping department. We wish these new colleagues a happy and fulfilling time at the School.

My congratulations to Mr and Mrs Matthew Fisher on the birth of a daughter earlier this week.

I have presented several colleagues with long service awards this week. Both Mrs Sandra Hendy and Mrs Denise Thornfield have worked in our housekeeping department for 20 and 25 years respectively. Also receiving acknowledgement is Mr Andy Bush who has taught trumpet here for 20 years. My congratulations to them all on this remarkable achievement.

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My congratulations also go to our catering manager Peter Hadfield, who, earlier this summer, won the Sodexo “Star Business Manager of the Year” for the Independent Education division.

We welcomed two inspiring speakers to the school last week. The Lower School had their introduction to our “Be the best you can be” programme with Paralympian Talan Skeels-Piggins and the Geography Society enjoyed James Fry’s talk on “Commodities and how they rule our lives”.

Last weekend was the School’s activities priority weekend which saw boys taking part in DofE canoeing and walking, the CCF had a Field Weekend at Longmoor, the Art Department held a Big Sculpt workshop for GCSE pupils and the First Year took part in a team building day. There was much rugby to see with the 1st XV taking on an OA team of recent leavers and a Prep Schools’ Rugby tournament plus badminton and cross country. The Cross Country Club ran very well at the Longworth 10km with Nat Jones finishing first and Alex Miell-Ingram third. Many congratulations also to Michael Fabes who finished fourth in the World Aquathon Championships in Canada. Michael was the first British team finisher.

The Drama Department began this year’s *New Views* playwriting workshops and senior drama got underway with a training workshop at St Helen’s. This is also an exciting time for the AFU with their annual screening of films taking place tomorrow. It promises to be a very enjoyable evening with 11 new short films including the AFU’s first music video. Parents are very welcome and tickets are available via the website.

Other events coming up include two concerts; on Thursday 9 October at 7.30pm the renowned Waterloo Band of The Rifles, the largest infantry regiment in the British Army, joins our Symphonic Wind band and St Helen’s Concert band for what promises to be a tremendous evening in the Amey Theatre. On Thursday 16 October the trumpeter, Crispian Steele-Perkins, will entertain with a selection of music from Handel to Miller. Again, tickets are available from the website.

Rugby has begun in earnest with all year groups out in force. The 1st XV beat local rivals St Edward’s but narrowly lost to Berkhamsted. The U16s are impressive with the A to D teams all unbeaten to date.

As I write, I am limbering up for the biennial sponsored walk. It looks like a beautiful day for it. The whole school, boys and staff, will be out in force - quite a sight!

I hope the term is going well for you all.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk