



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

From the Headmaster: T R Hands BA AKC DPhil FKC

2 May 2023

Dear Parents

I am happy to be able to report on the excellent week which the new Headmaster, Ms Elizabeth Stone, spent at the school just before the start of term. We all enjoyed this visit. Elizabeth already knows the school well and loves it greatly. She values its tone and its traditions and is well placed to understand these in the light of best international practice. She looks forward to meeting all parents early in Short Half, and I look forward to completing a handover process now emphatically underway. All who have met Elizabeth now readily understand for themselves the satisfaction of the Governing Body at securing so auspicious an appointment.

In the last week of term, eight inspectors from the Independent Schools Inspectorate saw all – or part of – more than one hundred lessons, and scrutinised our policies, premises and plans. They have produced two reports. The first looks at the technicalities and legalities of compliance. Schools either pass (described as good) or fail: no other qualitative descriptors may be used. The Educational Quality report employs a range of descriptors (excellent, good, sound, or unsatisfactory): we are all delighted to see the school achieve excellent in both the categories assessed. The [full report](#) accompanies.

There is less positive news regarding buildings. Sports Centre construction has been affected by Covid, disruption of personnel and supply chains, inclement weather, and the discovery of asbestos as well as a Saxon street. Although the project will not be finished this term, we remain optimistic that it will be completed by the end of the year, and await with enthusiasm its transformative effect.

The Sterling Prize winning architects, Stanton Williams, have produced exciting plans, visible [here](#), for our two new boarding houses. Planning permission is being delayed by new national legislation over “nutrient neutrality” (see [here](#)). We are working through the guidance with the planning authority; and, as it would need only one setback to frustrate the timetable, Ms Stone and I have recommended to the Governing Body that the opening is postponed until September 2025. We will of course continue to admit boys and girls at 16+ as day pupils.

These disappointments notwithstanding, the school is in good heart. Achievements at the end of last term – especially academic achievements – were remarkable. The Inspection Report makes excellent and highly encouraging reading. Yesterday we enjoyed a first whole school Coronation Lunch and later in the day a remarkable Coronation Concert, open to every wind and brass player in the school.

I wish all pupils and parents a most enjoyable term and look forward to as large a parental attendance as possible at Wykeham Day on 17 June.

Yours sincerely

Dr T R Hands