

## Annual Review - Academic Year 2022-23

Ladies and Gentlemen, students and guests.

It was wonderful to welcome everyone back to School in September. 2022-23 was the first year free of restrictions since Covid, and it was especially pleasing to welcome parents to events once more. Thank you for your ongoing support of the School. Thank you to our PTG volunteers for their hard work and to our Chair and Vice Chair, Mrs Miller and Mrs Gokul.

We aim 'To unlock the potential of each and every child' and, we were thrilled to receive the news that we have been reaccredited as a NACE Challenge School, confirming our uncompromising ambition to ensure that more able learners achieve their potential, in the context of challenge for all.

Congratulations must go to all pupils on how they approached their learning last year and on their success in their summer assessments.

Well done to Reception, now in Year 1, on completing their first year of School so well and to Year 2, who performed superbly in their end of Key Stage assessments. Year 6 completed SATs assessment papers and results were the most successful since this style of testing was established in 2016. Well done to all our Prep Pupils, who have laid very strong foundations for their future achievement.

We have enjoyed another year of excellent GCSE and A Level results. I am so very proud of all our students on their achievements this year and I send them my heartfelt congratulations. Considering that they have never sat public exams before, and partially studied during the pandemic, they have performed exceptionally well.

At GCSE, students gained more Grade 8s and 9s than last year, despite the harsher marking this summer. Results were the best results from sat examinations since the number grading system was introduced in 2017.

A Level results were excellent, with an improvement in the number of top grades achieved on last year, with almost 1 in 5 students gaining a clean sweep of A\* and A grades.

Particular congratulations go to Louis Ashcroft and Danielle Owusu-Ansah on their outstanding results.

I was delighted that so many students gained entry into their chosen university this summer or higher-level apprenticeships. It was pleasing too that so many had started their journey in our Nursery! - how lovely it has been to see you all grow into wonderful young adults.

Last year the Nursery celebrated its 20th birthday, and we were delighted to officially open our expansion this morning, creating an additional 24 places in our Outstanding Nursery. Thank you to Mrs Auston, Mrs Elding, Mr Dharamraj and the Nursery and Estates team for their work on this project.

It is a unique privilege to be a head teacher of an all through school and to experience the real sense of family that exists when you have children aged 4 to 18, as well as Nursery of course.

Every day in the Prep School is always busy. Last year we enjoyed a wide range of trips, visits and activities.

One of my favourite activities was science day, which included a visit from a variety of exotic animals such as birds of prey, Meerkats and an extremely long python. We also enjoyed the Hobgoblin Theatre Company, who took us on a journey through time, shape and number.

Reception Class enjoyed the Fire, Police and Ambulance Services visiting School, to explain their jobs and how they help us - the children (and teachers) were very excited when we heard the sirens!

Year 2 visited Sandringham House and were delighted to see the enormous resident Koi in the lake. They were also amazed that the trunk of an 800-year-old oak tree was so wide that they could all lean against it at the same time.

Year 3 practised Roman cooking and found out how difficult togas were to put on. They also stayed overnight at Stibbington for their first residential School trip, which included a well-earned hot chocolate and a bedtime story. Year 4, like other year groups, visited Fineshade Wood for their Forest School Day where they hiked through ancient woodland and made shelters and whittling sticks for marshmallows. Some children from Years 4 and 5 also enjoyed the challenges of the Hilltop residential. Year 6 learned to live and sleep in the outdoors on their Bushcraft adventure. They also visited Hunstanton and learnt how the cliffs are made up of different stone, and which ice cream was the best flavour!

In September, we hosted the Society of Heads Singing Day, which was a wonderful opportunity for us to sing songs from *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, with pupils from other Schools. Our Choir sang Christmas songs at the railway station, and this brought a smile to the busy passengers! Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 entertained parents with their performance of '*Baarmy Bethlehem*', which was brilliant; and Years 3 - 6 enjoyed a Christmas singalong with our parents! We all enjoyed dressing up as Santa and taking part in Santa Smile running around the field, round the colourful House Christmas Trees and through 'Candy Cane Lane' before reaching the finish post!

This year we all benefited once again from the Life Bus, which supports our PSHE programme – learning about the human body, how to eat healthily, and how to manage feelings. Our parents also visited to learn more about the topics we cover in School.

For some of us, Dancing is a real passion. We hosted over 300 children from other primary Schools at our spectacular Country Dancing Festival. Earlier in the year, Year 1 celebrated music from 'Around the World' by taking to the stage at the Cresset Theatre -their excitement and infectious smiles wowed the audience and Year 2s did the same when they danced to 'The Best of British' - what an experience! For Years 5 and 6, we showed our love of Drama joining together to perform, 'Robin Hood and the Sherwood Hoodies!'; having lots of fun!

In the Senior School, we started the year by taking part in Enrichment Activities, including raft building, climbing, mountain biking, archery and high ropes, live arena games and bushcraft skills, and of course, a tug-o-war! A great time was had by all!

Geographers completed urban walks and had the most beautiful sunshine in 'Sunny Hunny'. Year 8 visited the Black Country Living Museum, learning about the Industrial Revolution and they were all pleased to see the sunshine again after their time spent in the mine.

2023 brought a new year and a new club to lunchtimes: Gardening Club! Students were busy around the school site, pruning the hydrangeas, clearing the site of the old school garden and preparing the ground for the planting of wildflowers outside the Senior Library.

RS students had the special opportunity to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, whilst GCSE and Sixth Form Historians explored both Castle Rising and Castle Acre in relatively pleasant November weather.

Pupils in Year 6 and above gained an impressive crop of medals in Junior, Intermediate and Olympiad Maths Challenges, which are competitions to develop mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency.

Year 7 thoroughly enjoyed their Book Buzz Breakfast – pupils showed their confidence, love of reading, and love of food! The Carnegie Group once again chose their winning children's novel, agreeing with the national judges for the first time, and others had their own work published. Year 8 students wrote poems based on 'Parents Say...Teachers Say...'. There were lots of mentions of room tidying! Our annual Book Week House Quiz was its usual resounding success and congratulations go to Mandela House on their victory this year.

The School has continued to promote future learning and Years 4, 7, 8 and 9 have devices to use in School and at home. Senior pupils shared their expertise as they taught Year 6 to program using Python, and we again excelled in the BEBRAS national competition and in the Amazon Web Services App Design competition, which saw teams commended for their Game Concept and Design.

Years 10, 11 and 12, visited the Triumph Factory to take part in an in-depth tour of the factory, and a careers session with a graduate designer. As is often the case, praise was given for how mature and attentive all the students were.

This year, the tradition of celebrating European Day of Languages was continued in style, with the entire School joining in activities that included a video conference with our German Partner School in Augsburg.

Our art and design students enjoyed their art clubs; our older students marvelled at the tapestries, portraiture and past fashions at the V&A in London. Their wonderful work was on display for our summer exhibition.

We were delighted to welcome families and pupils to the annual Music Festival Finals. Young Musician of the Year was won by Head Chorister, Megan Wilkinson, whilst the Most Promising Musician of the Year title went to Anjali Khela. The Prep Young Musician of the Year this year was Henry Jiang in Year 5. In other competitions, Rowan Deem was runner up in the Oundle Young Musician of the Year competition.

Chapel Choir journeyed to Norfolk in October. where they sang at Norwich Cathedral and for the Sunday morning Parish Mass at Walsingham Parish Church.

The cast and crew of 'Arthur King' performed superbly, and the show received rave reviews, with many taking to the stage for the first time. It was very funny and showcased an array of wonderful performances. A huge well done to everyone involved.

This year a number of our pupils enjoyed wins or top three placing's in their competition class at Oundle Festival of Music and Drama, and winning an incredible 9 trophies at the Peterborough Drama festival!

Our St John Ambulance Cadet Unit at TPS celebrated its 20th birthday, having grown considerably, with over 50 Cadets attending each week. We awarded over 350 certificates at the Annual Presentation evening, and celebrated a record eight Grand Prior Awards. Special congratulations to Megan Wilkinson who was invited to attend the St John Ambulance Young Achievers Reception at Buckingham Palace as a reward for her efforts and achievements.

Our Bronze and Gold D of E participants did incredibly well on their recent Qualifying Expeditions. Navigation was particularly good, so they all made it back. They enjoyed some lovely weather in the beautiful Peak District and students now continue to work hard towards the other sections of the award.

Either as part of D of E or Sixth Form enrichment, we enjoy the opportunity to support others, by volunteering in our Prep School or for charities. Particular congratulations to Robyn Cummings, who volunteered over 90 hours last year.

For the first time since the pandemic, our skiers ventured abroad and enjoyed a wonderful holiday just before Christmas. With singing and laughter throughout, some went from 'new-born-bambi-on-ice' to expert, within hours!

2022-23 was another impressive year in sport, with pupils of all ages experiencing notable success and it has been pleasing to see the continued growth of boys', girls' and mixed sport, with an average of 28 sports clubs per week, and 258 fixtures during the year! All pupils, no matter what their ability, are active in sport from the Nursery to the Sixth Form. We also saw a welcome return of our sports tours in both Football and Netball.

In Netball, Years 8, 9 (A and B) and 11, won the league and Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 also won the District Tournament. Both U14 and U16 netball teams qualified for the County Finals with our U16 finishing 3rd, our best ever result.

Our cricketers were crowned champions of the Joe Root District League, and were runners-up in the Cricket East Chance to Shine competition, and

In Tennis, both our U12 and U15 squads became District Champions, with our U15s reaching the final of the County Championships. In indoor rowing, we won 9 categories of the Society of Heads national competition.

Particular Congratulations to Sport Scholar Aarav Roy who has continued to be successful in a range of sports and has received the honour of being elected as a Limitless Ambassador. Very well done Aarav - a great all-rounder!

Well done to the large number of boys and girls who compete at District, County, Regional or National level, play for prestigious clubs, or as part of academy or club schemes. Several have gained elite individual or team honours in several sports, including netball, football, cricket, rugby, tennis, fencing, trampolining and martial arts.

Our sports days were a testament to teamwork and House spirit. The pupils' enthusiasm and determination were evident as they worked together, supporting and encouraging one another. The days were filled with friendly and healthy competition and, most importantly, fun.

As always, House Battle of the Bands was very exciting, with lots of audience participation and cheering. Huge congratulations to all who took part, and a special well done to Spencer House, who stole the show.

This year we saw healthy competition between the houses in many competitions and Congratulations to **Mandela**, for winning the House Events Trophy and to **Spencer** House who triumphed in winning the House Point Shield. Well done to you all on earning an amazing **33,644** House Points, which is incredible.

Throughout the year we marked specific events as part of our PSHE and pastoral focus. In November we raised awareness of bullying, with children and staff taking part in odd Socks Day, highlighting that we are all unique. In February, we focussed on our emotional wellbeing as part of Children's Mental Health Day - children participated in a range of Mindful Meditations on the theme of 'Connections of Kindness'. We were entertained by some creative videos to celebrate Fairtrade fortnight, by Year 10, working on a project within the Careers section of our PSHE curriculum.

As a Woodard school, we welcome those of all faiths and none, to be part of our diverse community. We celebrated the festival of Pentecost with a whole school service, led by pupils and staff, reading in over 20 languages, to launch our Celebrating Diversity Week.

Throughout the week, students visited important places of cultural or religious significance, including a mosque, the Holocaust Memorial Museum and a Hindu Temple. We also enjoyed diverse culinary experiences and my thanks go to our wonderful catering team for preparing some delicious meals from around the world.

Inclusivity and diversity are important values at School and in October, students led an excellent Equality, Diversity and Inclusion assembly to mark Black History month. In the Summer term, students led an innovative, informative and thought-provoking assembly celebrating Pride month, focusing on the meaning of the Pride flag, including a play written by Deputy Head of School, Harriet Miller. Senior students collaborated to create an art installation by combining over 400 colourful butterflies. Throughout the year we have been working towards the Rainbow Flag Award, demonstrating our understanding and acceptance of different identities. We were delighted to commission the painting of a diversity mural by street artist, Nathan Murdoch, led and designed by

students, and supported by the Westwoodians' Association and Centre 33, as part of the redevelopment of the 'quad'.

In November, we held an act of Remembrance in School, with Staff and pupils gathering at the flagpole. Father Toby led proceedings with readings and prayers led by students and staff. We were joined by Mr Dharamraj, Mr Lang and Mr Green, who all served their Country. In January we commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day with a moving assembly led by Mrs Buxcey and her Lower Sixth Philosophy group, with Music Scholar, Megan Wilkinson, playing at the conclusion of this moving reflection. And in May we celebrated a whole-school Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, led by Bishop Robert – he spoke about being made of the right materials to live the Christian life, using chocolate teaspoons melting in hot liquid as a visual aid.

Whilst there has been much to celebrate, we were, of course, saddened by the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and took time to reflect on her life of service.

In the Summer, we celebrated the crowning of King Charles III with a Coronation lunch, street party style, culminating with the planting of a beautiful magnolia tree to mark the occasion of the Coronation.

With the cost-of-living crisis impacting those less fortunate than most, it was fitting therefore that we voted to support The Peterborough Soup Kitchen as our main School charity last year. We worked hard throughout the year to raise money for this and other causes. We also continue to think of those affected by the conflict in Ukraine and again donated supplies to the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

We organised a range of fundraising activities, from House Bake sales to Christmas trees, and you raised two and a half thousand pounds on Appeals Day, which was amazing.

In total, we were able to raise **eight and a half thousand pounds** last year – on behalf of the various charities and we would like to thank everyone for your generosity.

We are delighted that One of the Soup Kitchen's trustee's, Fiona Winchester, is able to join us today and I would now like to ask her to come forward to receive a cheque for £7,237.20 towards their ongoing work.

Thank you to all the students who have helped deliver the Annual Review this year.

We welcomed a number of new staff last year and said farewell to others, who either retired or moved on to new challenges, and we send them our best wishes.

We were so sad to learn of Mrs Cohen's passing and we said a sad farewell, at a very moving and lovely service at Marholm Church, led by Father Toby.

So finally, I wish to sincerely thank all the staff who work throughout the School and Nursery. They continue to go above and beyond to support you in your learning, working hard behind the scenes to provide you with a first-rate experience.

Thank you to all parents, grandparents, relatives and carers for their continued support over the last year.

Finally, I wish to congratulate you all on your many achievements over the last year and wish you a restful half term holiday.

Well done to you all!



Mr A D Meadows, BSc Hons, NPQH

13<sup>th</sup> October 2023