

**Inspiring excellence  
Fulfilling potential**

## **Hinchingsbrooke School**

### **Letter from the Principal October 2012**

Dear Parents

It seems incredible that half term is almost upon us, and what a half term it has been!

I have met so many people and learned so many things about Hinchingsbrooke, that, not only do I already feel at home, but I also find myself with renewed vigour in coming to work in the mornings. This is quite a remarkable school and a wonderful community.

We have set up two very important review processes this term: one to review the curriculum and one to review the organisation and management structures.

The first of these is being led by Lee Walker (Vice Principal) and is actively being progressed by over 40 staff from across the school as well as a number of students. This is a root and branch look at subjects and courses, lesson length and everything that goes to make up the students' learning experiences. We will communicate the outcomes as soon as they are known and we are currently looking to implement any changes from September 2013.

The second is being led by me and is looking at leadership and management structures within the school as well as the academic and pastoral organisation. Again the outcomes will be implemented from September 2013.

The term began with a long hard look at last summer's results. Although there was some individual successes it is fair to say that the results overall were very disappointing and well below expectations. A lot of soul searching and analysis has been done in order to understand exactly what went wrong. Like many other schools we are querying both English and Maths grade boundaries, as this is not the only disparity between what was expected and what was achieved. A very robust action plan is in place for the current Year 11 to ensure that they have the very best chance of success in only a few months' time and Year 11 parents will be receiving a letter with the details from Vice Principal Lee Walker. Some structural changes have been implemented immediately which will ensure Heads of Department have direct SLT support focused on the teaching and learning. Regular meetings to monitor progress and identify potential underachievement are taking place and there is to be a personalised mentoring programme for those students who are most in danger of not achieving their target grades. I know as parents you will do your best to support and monitor your children's work. Please ask to see their planners, use them as an opportunity to discuss their school work with them and please sign them. If you are at all concerned, please contact the form tutor in the first instance.

Senior staff have agreed the priorities for this year are:

1. To put in place a series of actions to ensure the school achieves its threshold targets at KS4 in 2013 - namely 73% 5A\*-C (including English & Maths).
2. To eradicate any teaching which is less than 'good' and to ensure that teaching is 'outstanding' overall by 2014.

3. To develop a curriculum that is rich, broad, relevant and engaging and which provides clear opportunities for students to fulfil their potential and progress to the next stage of their education.
4. To improve the consistency of behaviour management across the school and thus ensure an exceptionally positive climate for learning throughout the curriculum.
5. To develop the quality and consistency of leadership and management at all levels.
6. To develop provision for ICT and educational technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

We are developing a new and exciting opportunity to work with a community in Sierra Leone. This promises to provide some wonderful opportunities to develop an international link with a two-way flavour. As the programme develops, do look out for the details. I am aware that there are many in the community who have enjoyed a similar relationship with Malawi over the years through the charity MEL. This has not only provided many wonderful experiences for our students, but has also benefitted the Malawi community enormously. I would like to thank MEL for all the work they have done and no doubt will continue to do. For those wishing to continue this work I am sure MEL will continue to go from strength to strength. However, for Hinchingsbrooke School, we are now looking to our new international venture and I am sure that future generations of staff and students will gain similar experiences and develop similar passions for this work.

At the beginning of October Hinchingsbrooke House played host to a number of prestigious schools for the CamStar conference. This brings together schools who are involved in research with Cambridge University focused on developing pedagogical practice. A fine setting, in which to hear about some fascinating work and to share expertise.

Our Open evening for parents of Year 6 students saw the PAC packed to the gunnels and the excitement and interest in the school was heart-warming. Staff tell me there were more parents and students than ever. The departmental displays gave a good impression of the work we do at Hinchingsbrooke and parents and students were able to follow up with a visit the following day to see us in action. The Sixth Form guides were exemplary and rightly received many compliments as outstanding ambassadors for the school.

The school played host to the Booker prize winning author Hilary Mantel earlier in the term. Having read 'Wolf Hall' myself this last Summer, I was delighted to meet her and will look forward to reading the sequel perhaps over Christmas. Hilary was impressed and delighted to be given a tour of the House courtesy of Tom Wheeley our resident expert in all matters House related. We are of course trying to get her to feature a chapter or two of the yet to be written third book in the trilogy at the House!

Last Friday we played host to two Olympians as part of our 'Keep the Flame Burning' Olympian celebration day. Hannah McLeod, Team GB Bronze medallist and Paul Hall Olympic Gymnastics coach were able to witness and to contribute to a splendid day which provided opportunities for

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everyone from our A level Elite performance groups to a large number of Primary children ably supported by our Sports leaders. Hannah and Paul addressed around 500 students - an assembly, a Gifted & Talented session, an A level workshop and common core lessons - it was lovely to see them both sharing their experiences and success with Hinchingsbrooke. Our new mission: **Inspiring excellence, Fulfilling potential** provided an apt theme around which the HBK media team posed their interview questions. We also featured on Radio Cambridgeshire just before 9.00 a.m.

Other guests this half term have included our M.P Jonathan Djanogly and Nigel Hugill the Founder and Executive Chairman of Urban and Civic. Nigel has just become Chairman of the Board of the RSC and is also chairman of the Urban think tank 'Centre for Cities', Council member of the London School of Economics, Chairman of the committee for redevelopment of Tate Britain, Audit Chairman of British Waterways and a member of the Independent Transport Commission.

With a musical evening still to look forward to as I write, I am sure I have only given a small selection of everything that has happened during the seven weeks of this half term in this vibrant and exciting learning community of Hinchingsbrooke.

Finally, I would alert parents to the changes made to the training days as advertised through our website. Monday 7 January 2013 will now be a normal school day, whereas Monday 15 April 2013 will be a training day and one additional day for training will be taken on Monday 8 July 2013.

May I once again thank you for your warm welcome and wish you all a very pleasant half term break.

Kind regards



**Andrew Goulding**  
Principal