

September 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

And so, we're underway. I hope you have all had wonderful summers, whatever the weather brought for you... I also hope you enjoyed The Beckwith, whether you'd been training regularly over the summer, or simply managed to locate your trainers on the morning. It was a joy to see so many of you there, even if some of us melted... Your first quiz question of the year though (which I was posed on the morning), was why don't the flakes in the Mr Whippy ice creams melt... Answers on a postcard...

So much has been taking place at LWC over these eight weeks, with Speech Day and the Centenary Festival now a distant, but happy memory.

Our school has been a cultural smorgasbord of diversity and nationalities on summer camps here, including our first ever hosting of a Buddhist meditation retreat ([Vision, Mission, and Values - Pundarika](#)) - 200 individuals who relished the space, the calmness, the beauty and the silence of the grounds. We also welcomed [Tsoknyi Rinpoche - Pundarika](#), famous and revered in the Buddhist world, as he led the meditation teachings. So much of the time was based around silence and stillness – in fact, those attending undertook most of their activities that way. Which got me thinking.

For those of you who read my Blog last year, I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was before dawn, and an uncomfortable night in an uncomfortable tent on an uncomfortable slope in coastal Dorset had woken me early. Slipping on a jumper and chilly shoes, I tentatively made my way around guy ropes through a gap in the hedge, past a small copse of pine trees and out onto the coastal path which fell away down the grassy hill. The rooks had stirred from the uppermost branches before resettling themselves in the dusky gloom. As I came over the crest, the broad expanse of the Atlantic Ocean greeted me, gently at first, but as I reached the rocky platform eighty feet above the shingle shoreline, the chill wind grabbed at my sleeve with its breath that felt cold, but not quite sharp enough to regret bringing another layer.

I nestled into a small, sheltered scallop of a landslip and with arms tightly folded, saw dawn flowing over the rippling waves towards Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove: it was exquisite. The first few boats laboriously chugged their way to the fishing grounds in front of me, gannets and gulls sought a meal from the shoreline and in the distance, the twinkling lights of a faded

coastal town flickered away. As the wind stiffened from the west and the longer I sat, the more I noticed the little things: the rhythm of the shingle cusps on the shoreline, the way in which light shifted and rippled across the wave crests and the inexorable drift of small branch towards deeper water.

It was, quite simply, a period of sheer stillness I had not experienced before. It was uplifting and reflective in equal measure: it was life affirming. Those two hours that I sat in an ever-warming wind ignited and flamed the desire to seek out genuine stillness at every opportunity and to see the world at its pace and not our own. This is hidden from so many of us who don't take the time to step off the path of predictability and rightly so, for such rewards should be for those who take the time to separate themselves from the status quo.

Breathing more slowly and deeply, and thinking more clearly, I made my way back to the campsite, past the now noisy copse, through the blackberry-laden hedge and towards my tent: still the only person to be experiencing the day.

As I slid off my dewy shoes and lit the gas stove on this Duke of Edinburgh expedition as a 16-year-old, I resolved to have the courage to change not one, but all three of my A-level choices away from the classical world and into the scientific one. That decision, all those years ago, set a pathway in motion that has led me to where I am today.

A step off the path creates the smallest of ripples which flow out in every direction. It is simply a matter of which crest you choose to ride. By joining LWC, your children are now on that journey too. Thank you for being a part of it.

And so, LWC mark 2 begins.

We are so excited to welcome you all back to LWC as we begin the 2nd century of our existence as a school that sets out its stall not only to nurture, enhance and transform the lives of those who spend time here, but also empower them to transform the lives of others. Strategy 2030 (we will share this strategic masterplan with you during the year) will play a crucial role in this; a strategy we are now forging onwards with at some pace. Like a West End show, the set has been readied over the break, and the new stage is ready... well, almost... with close to £2.5m spent on the College during this summer period as projects come to fruition. Fortunately we have no RAAC concrete on site.

- **Zanetas, the new Sixth Form Centre and coffee shop looks incredible**, taking one of the oldest buildings in the school (actually, it was the first teaching space all those years ago) and transforming it into a contemporary academic venue for those final two years.



With the largest Sixth Form in our history, we are taking over another part of the building to enhance the space still further. As parents and guardians, you will be welcome to use the space on Saturday mornings before matches – more to follow on that.

- **Hendersons, the totally transformed Junior hub**, is ready too. A place to relax for those pupils in year 7 and 8. It means that the current Junior Hub has become **more classroom space** – this time for Politics – one of many new Sixth Form subjects that the pupils are loving), as well as office space.
- Several of the **boarding houses have also been upgraded** (especially Sutton and Park) to meet the demand for spaces at LWC and we sincerely hope the pupils enjoy these new areas. We run a continually rolling our investment programme into the houses.
- And what of the **Bramley netball and tennis centre?** Next to Sutton Hall at the top of the campus. Well, it **looks awesome**. New surfaces, new fencing, new viewing areas and lighting means it can be used all year round. Great news for our netballers especially. And ready within 2 weeks.
- The **roofs of the Swimming Pool and Sports Hall have been covered in solar panels** as we move onwards in our drive to be one of, if not, the greenest and most sustainable and environmentally-friendly schools in the UK. The farm is already incredibly well managed from an environmental point of view.
- And, as part of our work with the firm, Geeks (www.geeks.ltd.uk), the digitalisation of LWC has begun, in which we aspire to be sector-leading in the UK. We have also seen Vectare take charge of our digitised bus service.

To lead this internally, we welcome Richard Smeeton, our new IT Transformation Consultant, and Chris Andrews, Director of Digitisation and IT Services.

New staff welcome

And within the myriad of these inspirational new spaces, we welcome a group of superb new staff whom I hope you will enjoy getting to know.

With over 260 teaching and business staff at LWC, there will always be movement within the school as individuals move on to promotions or other opportunities, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce our new teaching staff to LWC [here](#). They espouse the values that we stand for and proved themselves at interview with their passion for teaching and learning and the LWC way of life.

ISI Inspection coming to LWC this year – thank you for your help

There is a new framework in September for independent schools across the UK and LWC is likely to be in this first wave of inspections as our last one was in March 2020 (and there is a 3 year rhythm). In this new scheme, **feedback from parents and pupils will play a crucial role within it** – thank you in advance for your contributions as and when they come, as an excellent inspection will benefit us all on so many levels, notably with the headwinds in the sector presently.

We are particularly pleased with the progress on our PSHEE which a recent visiting inspector described as ground-breaking for the sector, the focus on Pupil Voice shining through, and our Parental Engagement Programme, not to mention the continued success in breadth and depth of sport, dance, and performing arts as we close in on reaching 50:50 boys and girls.

Exam results:

After reading the news this summer, you could be forgiven for thinking that no child was going to achieve any decent grades whatsoever, but both the Upper Sixth and Fifth Form were a credit to themselves and their teachers. They deserved every success. For our Upper Sixth, this was their first set of major public exams.

At A Level, 33% of all grades were A*-A, some 8% higher than the comparable 2019 grades as were A*-B grades and 75% of our Upper Sixth achieved their first choice University place (the majority still take this route, though degree apprenticeships and other avenues are growing in number). A few notable results included;

- A* A* A* Nick Watt
- A* A* A James Jones, Joe Gregory, Oliver Parker, Felix Auld, Megan Sawers
- A* A A Max Johnston, Harriet Gibson, Isobel Rafferty, Ella Winn, Sadie Kitto
- A A A Max Lowes, Sophie Goodwin

And at GCSE, results were very good too, with 14% of all grades being 9s, nearly 50% 9-7 (That's A*-A in old money) and nearly 90% 9-5.

In this cohort, notable results included;

- **10 grade 9s (a perfect score!):** Freya Green
- **9 Grade 9s:** Grace Batley
- **8 grade 9s:** Emilia Richards
- **7 grade 9s:** Will Powell, Jonathan Smith
- **6 grade 9s:** Isobel Roberts, Dylan Beckett

And our BTEC results go from strength to strength too with 7/10 grades being at Distinction level (that's an A grade equivalent and judged at the same level by Universities as A Levels.)

And finally...

I wish you all a wonderful year and look forward to meeting you in the weeks and months ahead. To our new parents especially - you are most welcome – thank you for being part of our story, a story we cannot wait to write with you.

At the start of term assembly, I spoke about the Japanese word, *Kintsugi*. The Art of finding perfection in imperfection. In a complex world, this is not a bad place to start...

Take care and look forward to seeing you all soon.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

Adam Williams
Headmaster