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Dear Parents / Carers

As we come to the end of another school year, I offer some reflections of what has been a significant year for our school. We began the school year in September 2011, with our students newly attired in blazers, buoyed by some encouraging public examination results in the summer and with the full support and backing of our Local Authority to develop our Business Case for a capital Investment in Learning in our school. By the end of the calendar year, we were delighted to be able to report that significant progress was visible in the school. Our students were telling us that our new school uniform had smartened up not just student appearances but also their attitudes to learning, the support of the Council ~ and Councillor Stanton in particular ~ had led to the commitment of a £6.0million capital investment in learning in our school, and our new tracking and monitoring processes were giving us cause for optimism about our public examination results this summer.

In May we received the expected visit from Ofsted and, whilst the team of Inspectors commented favourably on many of the initiatives underway to raise achievement, our progress over time ~ and in particular our end of year examination data ~ since our last inspection was not yet strong or sustained enough to enable us to meet the more stringent criteria to be identified as a 'good' school. We believe that the results this summer will significantly strengthen our position and enable us ~ next time around ~ to show the sustained level of improvement required to be at least a 'good' school.

I hope that all families have followed the successes of our students and our activities through the 'rolling news' stories and pictures on the school website. Just in the last few weeks of this term we have won the Wokingham Spelling Bee competition in French (beating the specialist Language Colleges); we have seen students on residential activities in venues as diverse as the New Forest and Spain; we have held two Graduation Ceremonies for Year 7 and Celebration and Achievement Assemblies for other years; interviewed and shown around our new Year 7 students; held an outstanding Sports Day on possibly the only dry day this week! and shown, through the active engagement of our Sixth Form Leaders, that the House system and the student leadership of it are going to be real strengths in the year ahead. Finally, our developing partnership with Oracle Corporation has seen our students' Art work on

display in their European Headquarters and resulted in a celebration evening for the students and their families attended by senior colleagues from the company as well as our Chair of Governors.

The energy and commitment shown by both students and the staff, right up to the end of the school year, are testament to the vitality and strength of our school. I am enormously proud of all those who work at our school and our improvement journey can only accelerate on the basis of the hard work put in by everyone.

At the end of the year, we have to say farewell to a number of colleagues who are leaving us, but I am also pleased to say that our recruitment strategy has been highly successful and we are fully staffed with specialist teachers in all areas for September. I will write to you at the start of the new term with the names of our new colleagues and details of changes to posts of responsibility within school, but this letter gives me an opportunity to say a formal thank you to all those who have served in the school and are leaving this summer.

This term sees the retirement of two of our School Governors: Mrs Dillamore and Mrs Squires. I would like to thank both of them for their commitment, hard work and loyalty to our school over the time of their periods of office. Mrs Squires has fulfilled the key roles of both Vice-Chair and Chair of Governors and, on a personal level, I would like to thank her on behalf of the whole school community for her leadership of the Governing Body, her advice and her wise counsel.

From the Associate (non teaching) staff, we say farewell to nine colleagues. Miss Fowler and Mr Doyle initially joined us as volunteers, but were soon taken into the Learning Support Team. They, together with Miss Hillier, Mrs Clift, Mrs Daniels, Mrs Everett Brown and Mrs Szczerba, are all moving on to new opportunities ~ ranging from teacher training to higher education and employment. Mrs Perry and Mrs Shafiq are leaving us on maternity leave. We wish them all well for the future.

From the teaching staff, we say farewell to ten colleagues. Mr Hooper has been providing teaching cover in the Modern Languages Department and we thank him for his hard work in this role. He will be teaching in Newbury next year. Miss O'Neill in English and Mrs McBirnie in Technology have completed their first year of teaching with us and our now moving on to new opportunities abroad ~ Miss O'Neill in Ireland and Mrs McBirnie in Tasmania, Australia. Mr Quartey first came to us as a supply teacher in Business Studies but this year has been teaching his specialist subject of Religious Studies. He has secured a new teaching contract in Buckinghamshire. We thank them for their hard work on behalf of our students. In Science, Mr Young left us at half term of the summer term and Mrs Nockles is leaving us at the end of the summer term. They have both shown real commitment to our school and to our students and have always been prepared 'to go the extra mile' for our students. We wish them all the best for the future. Mrs Seabrook Moore has gained a new post working, more closely with the Sixth Form at Ranelagh School in September. Mrs Seabrook Moore has had a significant positive impact in MFL during her three years of leading the Department. Under her leadership the school has gained the prestigious International School Award; we have a new partnership established with a French school and our Language Leaders are highly regarded in the community for the work they do in local Primary Schools. Miss Dutton joined us

in 2009 as the Director of Development in Years 8 and 9, but her talent and ability quickly brought her promotion to Assistant Headship. Miss Dutton is highly regarded by all who work with her ~ colleagues, parents, Primary School colleagues and most importantly our students. She has brought an energy and real focus to our work on teaching and learning and she leaves an important legacy to help us on our own improvement journey. Miss Dutton is moving to Garth Hill Academy where she will further develop her leadership skills as a member of their senior team and, I am sure, progress to the highest levels of our profession.

My final thanks are to two colleagues who are, quite simply, unique in their commitment to The Bulmershe School. Mr Bilton has worked at our school for 34 years. Our school has been his only school in his professional life as a teacher ~ an achievement which is unusual in this time of change. He will be best remembered for his many years of service and dedication as a well respected and valued teacher of Science and Subject Leader of Biology. Mr Bilton's commitment to teaching and to developing the talent of young scientists has been significant over the years and he will be missed by many families including those whom he has taught across the generations. Mr Bilton is also an historical author of note and his knowledge of the battlefields of northern France and the trench warfare of WW1 always provided fascinating insights into another world for our young students. We would all like to thank him for his work at our school and to wish him all the best for the future.

Mr Tyler retires at the end of this term after 38 years' service to our school. Like Mr Bilton he too has served in one school ~ although he did have one year on secondment to Australia ~ and I know of no other colleagues who have shown such dedication to one school. Mr Tyler has fulfilled a wide range of roles in our school on both the pastoral and the academic sides of the school. He will be best remembered as a highly successful and very well respected Subject Leader of Physical Education. Mr Tyler was instrumental in our school becoming a specialist school for sport and he too has had a significant and positive impact on the lives of many local families. When Mr Tyler spoke at our farewell staff event at the end of term, he spoke eloquently about teaching and reminded all of us that teaching is about engaging young people in activities that are 'fun' and that is how we can enable them to learn best. Teaching was a vocation for Mr Tyler and one that he fulfilled with distinction at our school. On behalf of our community I would like to thank him for all his work with our young people over all of those 38 years.

Finally, I would like to thank all our parents for your support of our school and our young people over this year. 2012 – 2013 will bring its own challenges and opportunities but we are well placed to move forward to an exciting and successful future. The Autumn term for students begins on Tuesday 04 September 2012 and the arrangements for the first day are posted on the school website.

With all best wishes for a very pleasant summer holiday



Peter Lewis  
Headteacher.