



## **Annual Parish Meeting 2022**

### **Introduction**

We are very proud of what the College has achieved throughout the pandemic and grateful to our pupils, parents and local community for their support and understanding. At times, it has been very challenging to keep the College fully open and to deliver our normal curriculum. However, our staff have worked extremely hard and, through their resilience, professionalism and determination, rallied together to ensure pupils' experience has been positive, affirming and successful.

The year started with the terribly sad death of one of our pupils, which had a significant impact on his peers. This, combined with anxiety linked to Covid-19 and the well-documented national increase in general concerns regarding young people's mental health, have seen us double our efforts in providing excellent pastoral support whilst achieving academic success.

As part of the recovery curriculum, the DfE has funded tutoring for small group and individuals. We have targeted pupils in English and Maths most in need. Pupils take part in a fifteen-week programme. We have deliberately steered away from the narrative of 'lost learning', 'catch-up' and 'falling behind' as they are unhelpful terms that have not supported pupils' resilience or optimism. The DfE has given all schools 'Catch-Up' funding which we have used to increase counselling hours, tutoring, improve technological support and buy other resources to support pupils' progress.

Our overall approach is captured in our new CARE values, launched at the beginning of the year: Community, Ambition, Respect and Endeavour. We want our young people to take part, aim high, be kind and work hard in order to achieve their goals and to develop into fully-rounded, good citizens who contribute positively on a local, national or international stage. We try to live by these values every day, building on the legacy of Henry Morris, to ensure that our College supports all individuals to be the best they can be. Our new website, launched in January with better functionality and a more modern design, gives a clear sense of who we are and what we want for our pupils.



West Road Concert



Junior Choir at West Road



## **Covid-19**

From September to March, we had 692 confirmed positive pupil cases. The true number of infections was probably considerably more and understandably this led to significant disruption. Almost all pupils have returned to school but individual cases of long-Covid and school anxiety have resulted in further pressure on attendance. Staff absence was particularly high in the spring term with up to fifteen staff members off work on a daily basis. Due to demand, it was not always possible to find external supply cover, which meant staff had to cover for colleagues, adding workload. Autumn lockdowns, setting up test centres, bi-weekly asymptomatic testing, additional cleaning and various other measures certainly kept us busy throughout the pandemic, as did responding to changing guidance.

In this latest 'living with Covid' phase, we continue with promoting hand hygiene, maintaining ventilation and being cautious about indoor large-scale events but full College life has resumed. Some events, such as parents' evenings, have remained on-line as these have proved popular and convenient. Our extensive extra-curricular programme has now fully resumed, the exam series will proceed as normal and our Y10s will take part in work experience later in the year.



Performance of Remote



Remote Performance at the Garage

## **Personal Development**

In January, we introduced our new CARE Pledges for Years 7 and 8 whilst also encouraging older years to take part. The Bronze, Silver and Gold Pledges encourage pupils to participate in a range of activities and opportunities that we feel will help develop their character and values. These include reading, attending clubs, volunteering, helping peers, showing leadership, supporting events and active involvement in sports, arts, music, drama and cultural programmes. The purpose is to recognise and celebrate the huge number of pupils already engaged and to encourage more pupils to 'take part' and 'aim high'.

We have introduced additional leadership opportunities for KS3 pupils this year. Our Year 8 Housemates support pupils with transition to school, including helping out at the Y6 Summer School. Our Y9 House Ambassadors play an important role in representing the College and Arts Ambassadors have improved the school environment and promote cultural events. We will be introducing Peer Support and Anti-Bullying roles this term, which should complement the work already being done by our vibrant Pride and BAME clubs. Duke of Edinburgh has never been more popular, our Y9 Sports Leaders continue to develop their talents and our Senate (Y11 Leaders) have

made an excellent contribution throughout the year. Maud Blair, a local author, visited the College to share her personal story of segregation in Zimbabwe as part of our 'broadening the narrative' agenda. Our staff continue to explore the inclusiveness, relevance and ambition of our curriculum.

Understandably there have been fewer events this year but those that we have been able to offer have been very successful. The autumn term ended with a wonderful carol service at Great St Mary's. We had to limit numbers in the church but we were able to live stream the event, which was very well received. Our Year 11 musicians performed some stunning pieces at the Stapleford Granary last term and the highlight of our musical calendar, our West Road Concert, saw more than 160 pupils playing to a delighted audience in March. Recently, our drama pupils performed a new play, 'Remote', which impressed professional directors and parents alike. We have run trips to Hastings, Walsingham and Norwich this year and more than 100 Year 9 pupils will be heading to Scotland for a week of activity in June.

The Principal attended the SYG's 20th Anniversary Dinner at Ely Cathedral at which many past pupils celebrated alongside the Bishop and members of the Sawston community. SYD took to the stage again after a two-year hiatus with their upbeat production of 'Oklahoma'. All in all, it has been lovely to see young people enjoying themselves and having an outlet for their passions, something they have undoubtedly missed over the last two years.



Oklahoma



Carol Service, Great St Marys

## **Premises**

This summer we had expected the DfE Schools Rebuilding Programme to start on site. However, due to a new project team being appointed in the autumn term, there has been a delay with work not planned now until autumn 2023. The new team is progressing plans well and the final option will be selected in the summer. Extensive works are proposed, which is likely to take two years to complete. It is exciting to think that the end result will be a fully refurbished site or even new energy-efficient buildings able to accommodate the 1200 projected school population.

## **Sports Centre**

The Sports Centre, earmarked for refurbishment, continues to be very popular even after a challenging two years. Membership levels and the programme of activity have nearly returned to our pre-pandemic position. It is now rebranded Anglian Leisure Sawston, one of a family of Sports Centres within the Anglian Learning Trust. The investment planned should transform the changing facilities and give the local community a Sports Centre they can be proud of and enjoy.



## **Adult Learning**

We remain committed to Adult Learning and have seen our number of learners gradually return since opening up after the pandemic. Sue King, our long-serving manager, retired in April but we have appointed a new manager to deliver the programme which continues to cater for a wide range of interests.



Shortlisted Art Bytes Exhibition Entry



Screen Print Project

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Overall, the College is in a strong position with a bright future ahead. We have healthy finances, the DfE investment will reinvigorate the site, the pupil population continues to grow, academic results remain high and opportunities for young people abound. The greatest current challenge is recruitment and retention but we hope the reputation of the College and the attraction of working with our pupils will keep bringing fresh talent and committed staff to join the team.

Jonathan Russell  
Principal