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Dear Old Sulians,

As we come to the end of another academic year it is worth reflecting on achievements and also considering those areas which have not been as successful in order that we can learn from them and move forward.

The academic life of the school has been enriched by the introduction of Drama into the Lower School curriculum, a move which has been met with enthusiasm by the boys. The support of Skill Force, an organisation which helps some of our older boys to attain a range of practical qualifications, as well as taking them on camps and other outdoor activities, has been exceptional. The achievements of these boys have been excellent and we very much hope to see their efforts fully rewarded when the GCSE results are published in August. Mathematics have recently achieved notable success, seeing a large number of boys in Year 7 and 8 achieve Gold, Silver, Bronze or certificates in the UK Mathematics Challenge. The individual achievements have been superb; one boy being invited to a residential 'masterclass' on the basis of his score. We await the SATs scores for Year 9, GCSE for Year 11 and AS/A2 results for the Sixth Form with interest. The Sixth Form will be "sending forth" six of our students to take up Oxbridge places, nearly one hundred others taking up places at universities across the country.

Sporting achievements have, of course, been significant again. Four of our Rugby XV's reached the finals of the Somerset Cup, one reaching the semi final stage. Victories by two of our teams in these finals ensured that a previous record was equalled. Our Under 12 football team achieved County success, winning convincingly in their final at Bath City's ground in April. The support for the footballs teams at each age group has been significant and it is very pleasing to see that so many have had a chance to represent their school during the year. The cricket teams have had the opportunity to play a significant number of matches during the course of the season, recording some impressive victories, although in others perhaps losing out when victory seemed likely! The matches have all been played in excellent spirit, however, and this is the key theme of the games between Beechen Cliff and all of our opponents. Hockey has developed further strength over the year, significant numbers involved in the 'School of Excellence' – a link between the school, university and Bath Buchaneers. Mr Markall's tennis teams are beginning to develop effectively; victories against traditionally strong teams such as Bristol Grammar, demonstrating the progress being made – in part due to the new tennis courts at the school. Shooting, judo, rowing, badminton, basketball and archery have all been enjoyed at a competitive level within the school this year, ensuring that a further 'raft' of sports are able to be developed in the years ahead.

Outward bound activities continue to be a dominant element of school life; The Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition to the Massif Central being a huge success, as was the Ten Tors Challenge, in which the school had two teams entered. Tir-y-Cwm visits continue to inspire the younger boys; all of the Year 7 boys undertaking the group development activities which bring so much opportunity for the boys to work and learn together. Further visits to Llain for the pursuit of Technology activities have given further opportunities for personal development, as has the recently revived Centurion Challenge – brought back at the behest of Pat Colbourne, following his challenge to the pupils at the Presentation Evening last November. It is this area of school life which so many of the pupils remember for years after the end of their school days and we can only hope that we will always have such an inspired and skilled set of staff to undertake such challenges.

Curriculum development activities have also been characteristics of the year. The English Department have encouraged boys to participate in the 'poetry slam' competition, competing against other local schools at the



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Guildhall. Again, we had teams at the Model United Nations at Kingswood, scoring commendations from each of the judges. At Sixth Form level we have seen strong links developed with the Royal High School, much of which revolve around the creation of strong enrichment and extra-curricular activities – ranging from equestrian and archery to still life production and theatre studies. Technology have been working on further projects related to the creation of racing cars, small aircraft and robotics. The aim is to develop interests in all areas of technology – hopefully leading to a longer term interest in engineering and associated careers.

Ofsted described many aspects of Beechen Cliff School as “outstanding” following their visit. Pupil conduct, the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities were all considered to be of the highest quality. We know, however, what really matters and it is important that Beechen Cliff continues to stay true to its aspirations. In this, we hope that the school has lived up to expectations and will continue to offer the boys of Bath an education which gives genuine ‘life enhancing opportunities’ – in the school and beyond.

Andrew Davies
Headmaster

