



18 July 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

As another academic year draws to a close, as well as reflecting on key events and successes from across the year, I wanted to note a particularly special milestone for our school. Ninety years ago, on 09 July 1935, the very first intake of foundlings walked from Berkhamsted Station to their new school on Chesham Road. Though nearly a century has passed, I'm confident that the familiar outline of these magnificent, historic buildings would still be instantly recognisable to the former foundling students.

However, I'm sure that they would also appreciate some of the changes we have made to help make school life more comfortable and effective for students a quarter of the way through the 21st century. Behind that traditional facade, lies the ongoing improvement and expansion of great facilities.

One significant development for this year is our newly completed, extended Music Block. This fantastic new facility moves both Drama and Music into their own dedicated spaces, further supporting the arts and allowing our students to continue to flourish in these creative subject areas. It will also mean that students working in the languages block will be able to carry out speaking and listening tasks without having to compete against a backdrop of Yellow Submarine coming from Mr Hutchinson's room.

Anyone attending any of our school concerts will be aware of just how brilliant our young musicians are. The summer concert was a stunning display of instrumental and vocal prowess - and it needed to be as our students were competing against Glastonbury for attention on the same weekend. Thanks as ever to our fantastic music department who coordinated the performances on one of the warmest evenings of the year. Congratulations to everyone involved in delivering a fantastic evening of performances.

Strong performances were also centre stage where our young actors treated us to a brilliant KS3 drama production of 'The Mystery of Mr Ruggles'. Alongside music and drama, our PE department has seen notable sporting achievements this term, not least of all our U16 Girls Football Team and U15 Girls Cricket Teams becoming County Champions.

And of course, we've had an array of engaging trips and visits, from Year 9 students going to Paris, to Year 10 students learning about physics and climate change at Oxford University - and not forgetting the record number of students successfully completing their Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and our Learning Ambassadors' regular visits to primary schools and Ashlyns Care Home. My thanks, as ever, to all staff involved in making sure this experiential side of school life remains strong and vibrant.

I am sure that all these opportunities are part of what makes Ashlyns so attractive to prospective students and parents. We continue to be heavily oversubscribed and the second half of our summer term has seen a range of Year 7 transition events for our new students. Whilst for us, this is part of our annual cycle, we never forget that for our new students this is their first time and making it special and supportive is central to our plans. I'd like to thank our buddies for their fantastic work in making our new students feel so welcome.

Of course, as ever, the summer term means 'exam season' for our Year 11 and Year 13 students. Revision, boosters and additional support have all been delivered to make sure our students were 'match fit' for these important milestones. My thanks go to each and every member of staff who have supported them on their journey towards academic success, including giving up weekends and holidays to ensure our students felt as confident as they could going into the exams. We look forward to celebrating their achievements on A level and GCSE results days in August.

Our end-of-year Reward Assemblies have been a wonderful opportunity to recognise the success of our younger students. Over the past two weeks, we have proudly presented over 300 awards, acknowledging accomplishments in academic subjects, as well as Character and Head of Year awards. Congratulations to all who received recognition this year.

Our volunteer network of Governors continues to provide invaluable support to the school, and I would like to welcome the appointment of Miss Holmes as our new staff governor. The Ashlyns School Association (ASA) has also had a very busy term, including a hugely popular comedy night.

As always, we also say goodbye to valued members of staff who are moving on to new adventures. We wish all the best to our teaching staff: Miss Abela, Mrs Dight, Miss Crozier, Mr Harland, Mr Hart, Mrs Heath, Dr Lavery, Mr McDonald and Mr Roberts (Science). We also extend our best wishes to our departing support staff: Mrs Demosthenous, Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Khalil (the young one!).

Continuing with the theme of goodbyes, we recently celebrated our Year 11 prom and Year 13 parents' reception where we bid a fond farewell to another cohort of our fantastic students. As they embark on their next adventures, I am reminded of the short poem, 'Come to the Edge', which encapsulates the spirit of independence and courage we help to foster in our students thanks to the amazing support they receive from their parents and Ashlyns staff.

Come to the edge  
We might fall  
Come to the edge  
It's too high  
COME TO THE EDGE  
And they came  
And he pushed  
And they flew

Finally, please make a note of the dates for our return in September: Tuesday 02 September for Years 7 and 12; Wednesday 03 September for all students.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful summer break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shapland', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**James Shapland**  
**Headteacher**