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Shrewsbury School

Shrewsbury School
The Schools
Shrewsbury
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Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you refreshed and rested after the summer holidays! There is always a great sense of excitement, anticipation and expectation as the school returns from far flung corners of the globe to the security of our familiar routines. It has been excellent to catch up with those who have been on school expeditions to Sulawesi in Indonesia, and Malawi, together with those who have survived a fortnight in Abersoch.

This year, at my first Headmaster's Assembly, I was delighted to be able to speak of 'historic' times.

Emma Darwin Hall has opened, on time and to budget, with a full contingent of Lower Sixth new girls, together with a stalwart team of Upper Sixth Form émigrés from Mary Sidney Hall to provide some leadership based on experience. Mrs Kait Weston, the new Housemistress, has been very pleased with the start, which has been achieved through meticulous planning over eighteen months. We now eagerly await the celebrations associated with the formal opening by Ruth Padel, poet, author and great-great Granddaughter of Emma and Charles Darwin, on Saturday 17th September.

In turbulent economic times, it is confidence boosting at all levels to know that the school roll is the largest in Shrewsbury's history, with the biggest single increase in numbers our researchers can identify – the only possible exception being during the Second World War, when Cheltenham College was billeted with Shrewsbury!

I am most grateful to all those for whom 'holiday' is the most intense period of the year, as the relative quiet on the school site is seized as an opportunity for refurbishment. Key projects this summer have been:

- Refurbishment of studies and bedsits in School House
- Re-alignment of pedestrian flows in Kingsland Hall, together with the appointment of a new catering company
- For those of you who may wish to make an appointment with me, the Headmaster's offices have been brought up to date and are now much more in keeping with our levels of ambition for Shrewsbury as a school. Phase two – the refurbishment of the offices of the Second Master and the Director of Studies, will take place over the half-term break.

Many staff have also been involved with the analysis of examination performance. Whilst A levels were very much in line with predictions and the improvement over recent years, at GCSE our headline figures were nothing short of outstanding, representing a record-breaking performance at many levels. With a talented cohort of 75 new pupils joining this year group in the Lower Sixth, optimism is extremely high.

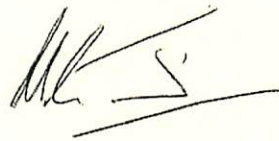
Despite the obvious attractions of doing so, we are sticking to our principles by not entering our results into the League Tables because we feel that to focus purely on academic statistics deflects from our vision of providing the best possible holistic education.

At the start of term, members of the Common Room experienced a thought-provoking and stimulating lecture on how to motivate teenagers, delivered by Ian Gilbert of Independent Thinking Ltd. We were challenged to encourage thinking 'outside the box' and to lead pupils to break out of their 'comfort zones' by taking up new opportunities. To anyone who claims "I can't do it" – "Not yet" should be the reply!

Last year in one of my newsletters I mentioned that, such is our rich diet of success, hardly a week goes by without having a triumph to report. It looks as though this will continue to be the case. Five days into term the 1st XI cricketers were confirmed as the Independent Schools 2011 Champions, after beating Wellington College and the Portsmouth Grammar School in the postponed finals at Arundel, in Sussex. Our team would be the first school in history to win the competition twice in a year if they can defend their title next summer.

Once again, we look forward to the privilege of nurturing your energetic offspring through the fresh opportunities, challenges and achievements of this new academic year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. S.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.