



## The 121<sup>st</sup> Annual OV Reunion Dinner – Saturday 14 September 2024

### Acting Head, Dr Alison Oliver's speech.

Good evening. I am honoured to be attending this OV Annual Dinner.

I would like to take the opportunity to first thank our Alumni and Business Development team. Thank you for all you do to enable us to maintain such strong relationships with our OVs and ensure that they are able to maintain their own links.

At the heart of our School is the unique spirit and vitality of our pupils. Their energy and enthusiasm create a vibrant community. We are proud to be a school that celebrates individuality and cultivates an environment where confidence can grow, and pupils reach their full potential. And, we embrace the wider King's community made up of centuries of Old Vigornians whose achievements and experiences give context, meaning and value to our own.

I congratulate our now departed U6 from last year on a strong set of A level examination results. Over 90% of the cohort attained grades A\* to C, with particularly strong performance in Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Physics. In addition, almost all students secured their firm or insurance university places. This year group was one whose Middle Years were significantly affected by the Covid pandemic, this underscoring how significant their outcomes were. Indeed, there were standout feats and individual successes.

And I congratulate also our new L6 for their GCSE results. In what was our largest cohort for more than 10 years, 96% of pupils attained grades 9-4, this being A\*-C equivalent in "old money". And behind the statistics, there are tales of great determination and solid hard work. They begin their A level studies, along with those joining us, with an excellent basis for the next two years.

While we continue to strive for and celebrate academic excellence, this is paired with encouraging and supporting superior sportspeople, which has been recognised by the Good Schools Guide that placed King's as one of the top eight schools in the UK for rowing, and School Sport magazine ranking King's in the top 1% of sporting schools in the country.

This September sees the opening of our refurbished pool, which some OVs may remember from its first years of use as an open-air facility, along with the launch of our new Swimming Academy. In encouraging you to reminisce here, it is a timely opportunity for me to acknowledge that this year, 2024, marks the fortieth anniversary of the establishment and opening of Kittermaster House and Oswald House.

With service, determination and enquiry as key tenets of an education here at King's, our Combined Cadet Force takes an important role in school life. Our RAF Section excelled at the National Air Squadron Trophy Competition, coming first in General Service Knowledge and Second in Drill and Turnout in the regional round and thus securing a place at the National Final. Our Student Councils in all three schools also take this baton of service, last year creating an upstander community and new Foundation School Rules.

Model United Nations continues to enjoy high levels of involvement and success. In Young Enterprise, our L6 company *La Vie Naturelle* took part in the local area Showcase of Company of the Year Award and won the Sales and Marketing Award. Our *F1 In Schools* team secured a place



in the F1 in Schools National Final following a win in the 'Central Regional Final Professional Class Award' at Aston University.

With outstanding drama and musical productions, dance showcases and formal, informal and chamber music concerts, Open Mic Nights and more, our pupils have been able to develop confidence and skill alike in Drama and Dance and Music. Across the year, pupils enjoy tremendous success in Associated Board, London College of Music and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art exams.

Over the summer period, all three school sites have been busy with varying updates and developments. At King's Hawford, there has been significant renovation work carried out on the pavilion. King's St Alban's has seen new LED lights in all rooms. At the Senior School, works have included the second and final stage of the development of the Sixth Form Centre.

I would like to touch here upon VAT on independent school fees. The School's prudent financial management informed the governors' strategic decision to not increase the amount parents pay in January from the fees already set for the academic year 2024-25. Within this, the governors have committed to not increasing fees beyond 10% for the following year, this being, though, contingent on inflation. We know this is an important and decisive point in the independent sector and the local market and, the school's position on VAT, gives us the chance to maximise opportunities for pupil recruitment and retention.

These updates are but a snapshot of the life of our three schools. Their identities have been shaped by the role each of you as OVs has had, both when as pupils and because of your ongoing and intrinsic link with them. Thank you for your ongoing involvement with and commitment to King's.

Furthermore, we look forward to seeing you again soon at many OV and School events across the coming academic year - keep an eye on your Vigornian Hub for all events including the dates of our annual matches against RGS in all the major sports. We are hoping to retain the title in rugby and football that we won last year and take the cups in hockey and netball!

And, as a final note, please do take flowers with you when you leave – but please do leave the vases behind!

**-End-**