

Writing this in blistering heat as the schools prepare for the final few days of this academic year, I'd like to record my thanks to all school staff for their hard work and dedication as schools work, together with families, to rebuild after the effects of the pandemic. As a governor and Trustee, I know how much care and effort has gone in to planning to deliver the best care and support for rebuilding self esteem and confidence in our children and young people, enabling them to catch up where they have missed out during lockdowns, whilst caring for their mental health. I wish you all a restful and happy summer break!

August is also a waiting time for those young people who have taken public examinations. Regardless of their results, I know they will all have done their best and hopefully they can enjoy a few weeks of freedom from study before embarking on whatever their next stage of life will be. You are all in my prayers.

A few people from our village and church community were with us for the Bernardi Strings Concert in Findon Church on 10th July. Those who weren't missed a wonderful experience! After refreshments including a glass of Nyetimber at Findon Place, we were treated to three very different pieces by the six talented string players in the ensemble, including viola, cello and double bass, as well as Andrew's trademark Stradivarius. The programme started with Tchaikovsky's 'Souvenir de Florence', after which the ensemble were joined by three young violinists from the String Academy to perform 'Eli Eli Fantasy', a piece specially written for the String Academy by Malcolm Singer. This was a lively and captivating new piece, and it was a joy to see the enthusiasm and skill of the young players showcased. Sadly, Covid had affected the number of youngsters able to join us but the confidence shown by these young people demonstrates the value for the Academy set up by Andrew to encourage children as young as 8 in furthering their musical talent. The final piece was Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, 'The Pastoral' and it was a joy to hear the contrasts in the music of an entire symphony performed by just six players, in a setting prepared by Beethoven himself! The storm sequence was particularly powerful. The programme for the evening had these words: 'With nature surrounding Findon and musicians beautifully depicted in the William Morris ceramics beside the church Altar, the setting is perfect for this evening's performance.' It was such a treat to enjoy music of this standard in our own Parish Church.

Wishing those who will be travelling this summer a safe journey and wishing you all a happy and fulfilling summer.

Helena