



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

FOUNDED IN 1480
BY WILLIAM OF WAYNFLETE

From the Chair of Governors, Bob Price

24 March 2026

Dear Parents,

As you know, it is rare for the Chair of Governors to write to you personally, and when he does, it is for a matter of importance. I am doing so today to let you know that after eleven highly successful and transformational years, and having established a remarkable reputation across the sector, Helen Pike has decided to step down as Master of MCS at the end of the 2026/27 school year. Helen is an outstanding leader, and will leave with our sincere gratitude and warm thanks for her exceptional headship.

Helen was, of course, the first female Master at MCS. Her arrival heralded a number of developments which have ensured the school remains in excellent operational and financial health, and at the forefront of educational practice. Most recently, she has guided the Board of Governors to one of the most significant decisions in the school's history, to become fully co-educational from 2027 - setting MCS on a positive course for its next half millennium.

Deeply committed to the belief that excellence is strengthened by diversity, Helen has been a driving force behind the growth of the school's bursary programme, and around one in ten Senior School pupils now receives financial assistance with fees. Along with the staff, governors and our many dedicated benefactors, she has helped to establish a strong culture of philanthropy at MCS of which the recent highly successful Giving Day is but one example. With these foundations now well embedded, the school will continue to develop its ambitious bursary goals over the years ahead, and the new Master will inherit excellent relationships with our many supporters in all parts of the world.

During Helen's time as Master, MCS pupils have secured consistently outstanding academic results which have allowed them to move on to leading universities and into rewarding career pathways. Helen led the school through the disruptive challenges of Covid with confidence and compassion. Under her tenure, MCS has been recognised as a Top 20 Independent School and South East School of the Year by the Sunday Times and won the award for Independent School of the Year for Social Mobility. With these and many other achievements, we are in a good position to take forward our growing network of international partnerships, which will deliver an important new income stream to support the school's longer term strategic goals.

Helen will not be handing over the reins until August next year, which will allow a substantial and smooth period of transition before she moves on to pursue the next stage in a stellar career.

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She plans to apply her experience, talents and knowledge in ways that build on her thirty years as an educationalist and a leading light in the independent school world, taking a broader role in helping our sector to thrive and to be a force for social good. There will be many opportunities over the coming year to celebrate Helen's achievements, and to thank her fully for all she has done for MCS.

The process of recruiting a new Master is already under way, and is being led by a panel of governors that includes two experienced former Heads and three other long serving governors. We are being supported by a leading recruitment firm, Odgers, which has worked for many years with a wide range of leading independent schools on similar senior appointments. I will of course keep you in touch with progress and hope to be in a position to provide an update by the end of the academic year.

In concluding this letter, I would like to thank Helen again for her outstanding leadership, wisdom and expertise throughout her time as Master. She will leave the school in excellent shape for her successor. I would also like to thank all our staff, pupils, parents, OWs and Friends for their continued support and commitment to making MCS the remarkable school and community it is.

With warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Price', with a short horizontal line underneath.

Bob Price
Chair, Board of Governors