



# ED HESTER'S PRINCETHORPE JOURNEY 2009 to 2022

“We are delighted to welcome Ed to the Foundation. We were determined to find a new head who would develop and uphold the distinctive ethos of the school, and we have found that and much more in Ed.”

Mary O’Farrell,  
former Chair of Trustees

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

Ed Hester took over the Headship of Princethorpe College, the senior school of the Warwickshire Independent Schools Foundation as it was then known, in September 2009.

He was the College’s second lay Headmaster and joined from Rugby School, where he had been Assistant Head. On appointment he also became Senior Head of the Foundation, which included Crackley Hall School and Little Crackers Nursery in Kenilworth.

Ed already had a close connection with the College as his children, James and Lizzie were both pupils and his wife, Tracey, taught History at the College. Ed often recounts how they came home from school and urged him to apply for the post when the announcement was made about John Shinkwin moving on to become General Secretary of the Catholic Independent Schools’ Conference.

In the appointment announcement, the then Chair of Trustees, the late Mary O’Farrell, commented, “We are delighted to welcome Ed to the Foundation. We were determined to find a new head who would develop and uphold the distinctive ethos of the school, and we have found that and much more in Ed. He comes with a wealth of experience of education in the maintained and private sectors, and as a committed Catholic, wholly embraces the Foundation’s ethos.”

Ed commented, “Princethorpe has made great strides in recent years in terms of academic success, extra-curricular achievement, improvements in facilities and growth in pupil numbers. This success needs to be maintained and built upon and it will be my job to drive standards and achievements still higher.”

Ed started as Headmaster on the same day as Katherine, his youngest daughter, joined Year 7.



# EMBRACING THE MSC LEGACY

**As part of Ed's introduction to the College he was naturally keen to understand and appreciate the legacy of the Catholic Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the congregation who founded the College in 1966.**

Early in his role he spent valuable time in Ireland with the MSCs and fully embraced and adopted the MSC Founder Jules Chevalier's *Spirit of Family* mission statement. These words have become intrinsically linked to the College and lived out in its religious life and ethos over the period of Ed's headship.

*"Ours is a spirit of family and a spirit of brotherhood formed by kindness and understanding by compromise and mutual forgiveness by gentleness, humility and simplicity by hospitality and a sense of humour."*

*True community does not come about all at once. It needs to be built up each day into a community of faith, respect and love, by the constant effort of each member.*

*At the same time It needs to be built up as a human community knit together by compassionate relationships where each member brings their own talent and knows they are recognised, accepted, heard, encouraged and challenged.*

This long, close association with the MSCs continues to be celebrated and lives on in the College to this day, with Feast Day in December and the ongoing presence of Fr Alan Whelan MSC in our Chaplaincy, Fr Teddy O'Brien MSC, our parish priest, and regular dialogue with Fr Carl Tranter and the MSCs in Dublin.

The MSCs' ethos also underpins our two simple College rules: be kind and do your best and features in our new Pupil - School Charter.



**Missionaries  
of the  
Sacred Heart**  
MSC MISSIONS

# 2010





Over Ed's time in office he has driven many significant milestones and developments at the College and indeed the wider Foundation.

The School has grown from 762 pupils and five form entry in 2009, to six or seven form entry and around 930 pupils today, its optimum size. The Foundation has grown and developed too, changing its name to The Princethorpe Foundation in 2010, with many subsequent developments.

Thanks to Ed and the team he has built around him, Princethorpe College has grown in credibility and stature over the last thirteen years, it is now a 'first choice' school for many families. The Foundation now numbers some 1,400 pupils aged 2 to 18 years and streamlined key core functions from Bursary and Recruitment to Marketing, Development, Estates and Grounds underpin the organisation.

## MERGER WITH ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL

Within a few months of Ed's appointment, negotiations commenced with the trustees of Abbotsford School, a small independent school in Kenilworth, and the decision was taken to merge with Crackley Hall School in 2010.

Peter Rush, former trustee of Abbotsford recalls numerous clandestine meetings before the merger was officially announced. Seven staff and forty-five pupils transferred over to Crackley Hall. Ed was also closely involved in the appointment of Rob Duigan as Headmaster in 2011 to lead Crackley Hall. The Abbotsford site was subsequently sold for housing development and helped fund major campus developments at Crackley Hall, including the new *Abbotsford* teaching wing and *The Gables*.



**KEY**  
MILESTONES

2010

## HMC MEMBERSHIP

In 2012 Ed was elected to membership of the prestigious Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC).

HMC has about 250 members, which are generally considered to be the top independent schools in the country.

At the time Ed commented, "This achievement recognises Princethorpe's exceptionally high standards of teaching and learning, our superb staff and broad extra-curricular programme. We are up there with the very best schools in the country".

This milestone was celebrated by the Old Princethorpians at London's East India Club, when the Princethorpe crest joined the ranks of other top schools adorning the club's walls.



**"This achievement recognises Princethorpe's exceptionally high standards of teaching and learning, our superb staff and broad extra-curricular programme. We are up there with the very best schools in the country"**

Ed Hester



Leading  
dependent  
Schools



2012

## A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Ed's drive and vision for the future has impacted greatly on the College over the last thirteen years.

In 2012 he unveiled an ambitious ten-year capital expenditure building programme to equip the school with thirteen further classrooms, two IT suites, a state-of-the-art Technology Centre, additional sports pitches, a new theatre and more science laboratories. That plan has come to fruition over the last ten years, with the opening of *The Limes*, the refurbishment of the Quad, Clarkson Theatre and the Roundhouse and now the new £8 million, 10-laboratory Science Centre under construction and due to open its doors in September 2023.





Princethorpe  
College

## New Science Centre Opening 2023



£8 million project

1,800 sq metres

10 Laboratories

4 Biology Labs

3 Chemistry Labs

3 Physics Labs

2 staff bases

2 preparation  
areas

1 break out and  
study area

## MERGER WITH CRESCENT SCHOOL

In 2016, further merger negotiations took place with Headmaster, Huw Marshall and the trustees of Crescent School in Bilton, Rugby.

The Crescent, a small independent prep school, had been a longstanding feeder school to Princethorpe and joining forces seemed a natural progression with mutual benefits. Huw retired a year after the merger and Joe Thackway took over as Headmaster in September 2017. The school has significantly built pupil numbers and undergone numerous improvements since the merger, including major refurbishment and the opening of the new Horton Centre



## OFFICIALLY A GOOD SCHOOL

The College was pleased to receive its very first Good Schools Guide review in 2021.

The guide, which selects schools to be included on merit alone, is famous for its unbiased and candid reviews of state and private schools and is trusted by families worldwide. Princethorpe is now one of just 1,300 schools currently reviewed by the guide, out of over 30,000+ schools in the UK.

An editor from the guide visited the College in May, interviewed Ed, toured the campus, observed lessons and spoke with pupils and parents.

The guide concluded:

*"We have the impression that Princethorpe College just gets on with things, modestly feeling no need to blow its own trumpet. But during the long term tenure of this head it has gained in confidence, reputation and status and parents have sat up and taken notice. They know that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to educating their children and have found the school that agrees with them; a good outcome for all."*



2016

2021

THE  
GOOD  
SCHOOLS  
GUIDE



# ACADEMIC, PASTORAL AND CO-CURRICULAR SUCCESS

Ed has also been the key driver behind further improvement to the academic standards and achievements at the College.

He has placed a strong focus on teaching and learning, the recruitment of excellent staff, investment in IT and systems to monitor progress and performance. As a result, public examination results have gone from strength-to-strength over the years and combined with an outstanding Careers offering the school has a great track record of getting students into their first choice university including Oxbridge and more recently onto competitive degree apprenticeship programmes. These achievements are celebrated at the annual Prize Giving Ceremony.

Improvements have not been focused solely on the academic side of school life. The College is renowned for its outstanding pastoral care including vertical tutoring which was successfully introduced in 2015.

A rich co-curricular programme is at the heart of Princethorpe life with a host of co-curricular clubs and activities on offer, including DofE and trips both at home and abroad. Ed also introduced the biennial Careers Fair which has featured impressive keynote speakers such as Sainsbury's CEO, Justin King and Jaguar Land Rover's CEO, Phil Popham and harnessed the power of the OP and parent network.



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

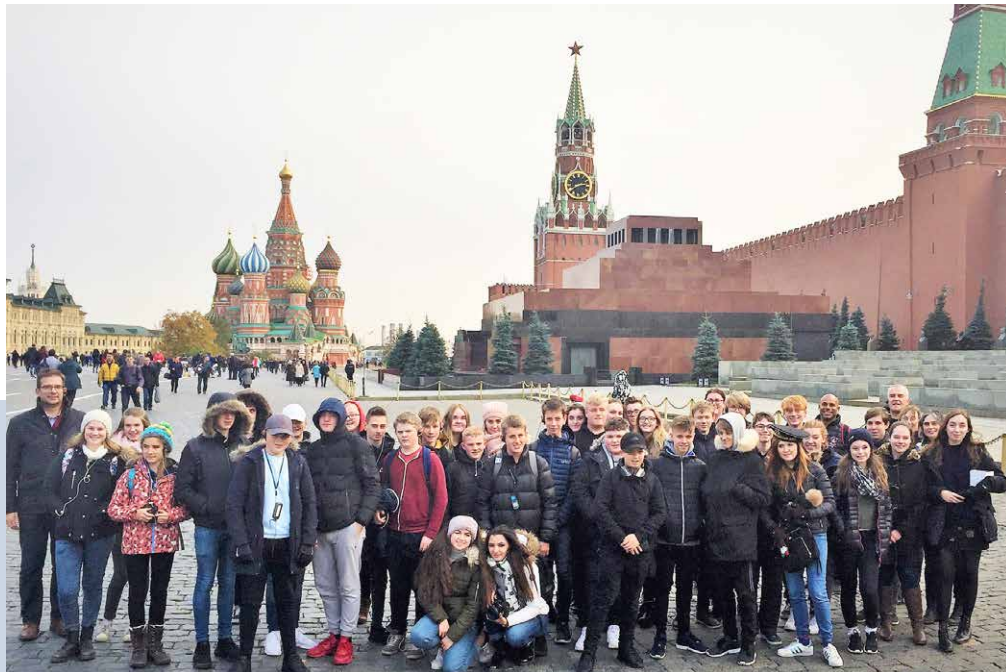
2022 A-level, BTEC and  
Extended Project Qualification  
summary results:

- 127 candidates
- 45% A\* & A
- 95% grade C or better

## SCHOOL LIFE

### Ed has always played a central role in day-to-day school life.

For many years he taught Mathematics to A-level, he and his trombone have been regular members of the Orchestra and Jazz Band, performing at many different events and occasions and he has participated in memorable school trips to New York, Washington and Russia, plus an OP and Development trip to Hong Kong. He has attended Year 11 Proms and Upper Sixth Leavers Balls at some of the finest locations in Warwickshire. A keen sportsman and Oxford Blue for cricket, he plays for the Princethorpe Piranhas staff team and is a regularly seen supporting the College teams on the touch line during Saturday fixtures.

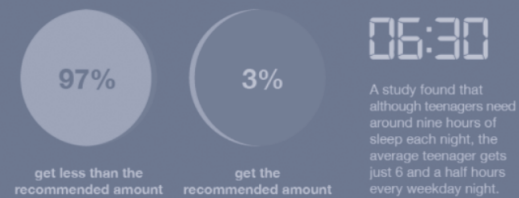


A proud member of Fisher House, he has entered wholeheartedly into House events (particularly those that involve singing), who can forget 'Another Brick in the Wall'? He has taken part in his fair share of charity events including the gruelling 24/7 Mary's Meal's walk. He has even welly wanged, abseiled down the Tower and appeared on TV's You've Been Framed riding an exploding Space Hopper!!

His Headmaster's quizzes and assemblies are legendary, as is his obsession with the importance of sleep, digital wellbeing, marginal gains and his love of Winston Churchill.



► 97% OF TEENAGERS DO NOT GET ENOUGH SLEEP



# GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

A key member of the OPs Committee and regular presence at OP events, Ed was instrumental in the plans to celebrate and mark the College's 50th anniversary in style.

A programme of Golden Jubilee celebrations spanning the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years saw the whole College extended community participate in a plethora of events from a splendid House of Commons dinner, to *Princefest* (a festival akin to Glastonbury only bigger (and wetter)), a charity Cycling Pilgrimage between Issoudun and Montargis in France, in homage to the MSCs and the Benedictines who built the original Priory, and as a finale a wonderful Golden Jubilee Ball.



Celebrating 50 years in 2016-2017



**SATURDAY 3 & SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**50th JUBILEE PRINCEFEST**

**SATURDAY - 12.00 NOON TO 11.00PM**

<b>FUNFAIR RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS</b>	<b>MUSIC</b> FROM ROCK TO POP AND BIG BAND TO SOUL
<b>OPS vs COLLEGE SPORTS</b>	<b>TOURS OF SCHOOL</b> FAMILY CAMPING
<b>BAR * FOOD STALLS</b>	<b>FIREWORKS</b>
<b>SHOPPING VILLAGE</b>	<b>FINALE</b>

**SUNDAY - 11.00AM TO 4.00PM**

<b>CELEBRATORY MASS</b>	<b>REUNIONS</b>
<b>BAR * BRUNCH</b>	<b>* TOURS OF SCHOOL *</b>

**TICKET INFORMATION COMING SOON! INCLUDING EARLY BIRD OFFERS**  
visit [www.princethorpe.co.uk](http://www.princethorpe.co.uk)

The Princethorpe Foundation, Charities Registered in England & Wales and Charities by Companies Number 457776. Registered Charity Number 1081724. Registered Office: Princethorpe College, Princethorpe, Nuffield OX12 9PL. Celebrating 50 years in 2016-2017



# 2016



Golden Jubilee  
**CYCLING PILGRIMAGE**  
ISSOUDUN TO MONTARGIS  
30 MAY ~ 3 JUNE 2017

2017

The Golden Jubilee  
**Ball**  
SATURDAY  
1 JULY 2017

# WEATHERING THE COVID STORM

No-one can deny the difficulty of the challenges faced during the Coronavirus pandemic and the impact of the enforced closure of schools on education and our young people.

Friday 19 March 2020 was indeed a very dark day for Ed as he told students that they would not be taking their GCSEs and A-levels and learning would be moving online. Ed's steadfast leadership and clear decision making, steered the Foundation through this uncertain time, the smooth move to home learning, furloughing of staff, focus on careful financial management and husbandry of resources and a professional approach to teacher assessed grades, kept the organisation afloat and our pupils on track.

Life went virtual off and on for many months from lessons and parents' evening, to Open Events, Entrance Exams, OP gatherings, the Careers Fair and even the most surreal of Prize Givings with distanced awarding of prizes and communal singing of the College hymn, *Here I am Lord*.

On the return to school, thanks to extremely careful planning Covid measures were swiftly implemented and testing regimes introduced, before measures were relaxed and thankfully eventually lifted.



# ISI INSPECTIONS

**There have been three Independent Schools Inspectorate Inspections since Ed has been in office, all of which have been extremely positive.**

On their most recent visit in April 2022, Princethorpe received the highest possible ratings across all criteria.

The ISI Inspectors noted feedback from parents that, 'commented positively on the strength of the children's learning and how this reflected the commitment of the teaching and the direction provided by the school's leaders and trustees'.

Ed commented, "We are delighted with the report, it is a ringing endorsement for everything we do here at Princethorpe and reflects a huge team effort."

He continued, "Pupil achievement and personal development are the two key benchmarks for any successful school and being graded as excellent in both of these broad areas, demonstrates the incredible talent, dedication and professionalism of our staff, the outstanding attitude and approach of our pupils and the support of our parents."



**Pupils benefit significantly from an atmosphere in school which is positive and one where learning and trying one's best are celebrated.**

**ISI Inspection 2022**

**ISI Inspection 2022  
Excellent in every area!**

## A NEW ERA

**In February 2022 the search for Ed's successor as Headmaster of Princethorpe began after a review of the overall management and leadership of the Foundation by the governing body.**

The decision to separate Ed's two roles of Princethorpe Headmaster and Senior Foundation Head meant that Ed would be able to step away from the day-to-day running of the senior school and be able to dedicate more time to the strategic direction and development of the Foundation as a whole.

In April the trustees of the Princethorpe Foundation were delighted to announce that a successor had been found and Grove du Toit would be the new Headmaster of Princethorpe College with effect from January 2023.

Grove went through a rigorous month-long selection process to secure the post against a strong field of candidates. He is currently Deputy Warden (Senior Deputy Head) at Forest School, a co-educational independent day school for children aged 4 to 18, located on the edge of Epping Forest, a position he has held for five years.



As Foundation Principal from January 2023 Ed will work in partnership with the Board of Trustees, Eddie Tolcher, Grove du Toit, Rob Duigan, Joe Thackway, and the Senior Management Teams and staff across all the Foundation schools to develop an ambitious vision and strategy for the next exciting stage in the Foundation's evolution.

Comments, Liz Griffin, Chair of Trustees, "The Foundation has evolved significantly over the last ten years. As a result of mergers and the popularity of our schools, we have grown from 800 pupils to over 1,400 today and we have over 250 members of staff, what's more our schools are operating in a complex and ever-changing political, legal and economic climate. We are ambitious for the Foundation and the creation of this new dedicated role will ensure that we continue to develop and flourish."

She continues, "Ed, with his proven leadership and strategic skills, is uniquely placed to fulfil this role. He has done an outstanding job as Headmaster of Princethorpe College, and I am delighted he is taking on the new role. Of course, Ed will continue to have a very keen interest in life at Princethorpe and be on hand to ensure a smooth transition and successful handover to Grove, who will be supported by Princethorpe's excellent Senior Leadership Team."



2022



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Liz Griffin, Chair of Trustees



2023  
ONWARDS

## MESSAGES FROM THE PRINCETHORPE COMMUNITY

*"Many times during Covid I thought I'd much rather have Ed in charge of the country than the actual Prime Minister of the time! A genuine leader who has the knack of finding the right questions to ask and inspiring people to find the answers."*

Alan Compton, Director of Digital Strategy

*"A delight to work alongside. Always fun, forward thinking and in good spirit."*

Mary Wheildon, VSOP

*"We're so lucky to have such an inspirational and motivational head for our children. A superb role model that embodies everything the school stands for. Our children are so happy at Princethorpe."*

Tracy Benbow, Parent and PTA Member

*"His leadership and kindness embodying 'The Spirit of Family.'"*

Mary Benham, Chaplaincy Co-ordinator

*"It's been a joy to see Ed's energy and application, in harness with the staff as a whole, do so much good for so many students over so many years."*

Bernard Thorogood, Former Trustee

*"Stepped in to help the Maths department in staffing crises on many occasions, despite his own workload. The only thing he wouldn't do was teach statistics, although he did once do an emergency lesson on the normal approximation to the binomial distribution."*

Sharon McBride, Head of Maths

*"We have so much for which to thank Ed. He has been a wonderful head and has given unstintingly in his service to the College."*

Rachel Taylor, Longstanding teacher

*His enduring care for the quality and quantity of sleep that the student body were receiving!*

Pratheesh Prabakaran, Head of School

*"Early in Ed's tenure when we started the process of potentially merging Abbotsford and Crackley. Mary, Ed and myself met in various random discreet locations to discuss options and to see how it could work. I could imagine that it was very similar to the cold war era of spies meeting in Berlin, dark alley ways, obscure hotels, etc."*

Peter Rush, former Trustee of Abbotsford and Princethorpe

*"Ed's thoughtfulness is uppermost in everything he does, both for the pupils and staff. His warmth shines through in every interaction and it is clear he's respected by all, even if the pupils don't always get his jokes - through no fault of his!"*

Lorna Prestage, SEND Co-ordinator

*"Since our kids joined Princethorpe, Mr Hester has always been supportive and present in all activities. Your sense of humour brings great balance to the respect your role naturally inspires and makes everyone feel at ease."*

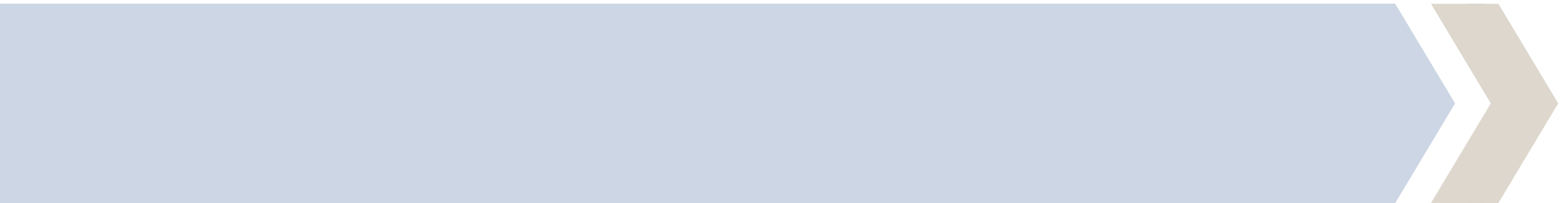
Paula Hernandez De Luna, PTA Member

*"Ed is a committed Catholic headteacher who leads by example and witnesses to what he believes. This is beautifully informed by an incisive mind, a wonderful sense of humour and a delight in people. Undoubtedly one of his most significant contributions to CISC is his voice - his passionate and joyous rendition of 'The Wild Rover' is legendary at the CISC conference."*

Dr Mo Glackin, General Secretary  
Catholic Independent Schools' Conference

*"An outstanding and wholly committed leader and a wonderful caring and kind person."*

Jatinder Birdi, Trustee





The  
Princethorpe  
Foundation



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