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24 April 2009

Dear Parents

It is with great sadness that I write this letter to you; a letter that I hoped I would never have to write.

Unfortunately, the recession has hit the school badly and we have already seen a significant number of pupils leave because parents have lost their jobs. The first day of this Summer Term brought in more unexpected letters of notice and currently the projected number of pupils for September is just under one hundred, at least thirty-five below our break-even point. With little likelihood that the economic situation for parents would improve or the number of pupils in the school would rise for the following year I have had to come to the most painful of decisions.

It is therefore with deep and heartfelt sorrow that I write to tell you that Baston School will close after 76 years at the end of this Summer Term.

This has been the hardest decision of my life; one that I have tried very hard to avoid having to make, particularly as my own daughter should be entering her final GCSE year at Baston in September. This could not have come at a worse time for her and as a parent I appreciate more than most the problems and anxiety that this decision will cause.

We have looked strongly into all other possibilities of continuing to run Baston. We have considered running as a Kindergarten and Junior School and taking Year 11 for one more year but with four small year groups predicted in the Juniors in September this sadly was just not economically viable. We also considered a phased closing where next year we would continue to run Upper Kindergarten, Years 2, 6 and 11 so that no pupil would have to leave in their final year of a Key Stage. Unfortunately, this route was fraught with potential employment problems and again was not financially acceptable. Sadly there does not appear to be any other possible solution.

Mother and I would like to thank all parents and pupils who have supported the school throughout its life. During our combined 72 year association with the school, we believe it always brought out the best in all the pupils and provided an excellent grounding for the girls who have passed through its doors. We would also like to express our gratitude to our staff both past and present for without them the school would never have been so successful.

I shall be in contact on Monday with the heads of other local independent schools and I know that most of them have places available in almost all year groups so I am confident that all our pupils will find a suitable school in which to continue their education. Mrs Jefferys and I would be willing to meet with any parent to offer any assistance that we can. A list of the local independent schools with contact details will be put on the parents' pages of the Baston School website by Monday.

We will do our very best to make this last term for Baston and for your daughters a term full of all that is good about the school so that when they leave at the end of term they can look back fondly on all that they achieved here.

Yours sincerely

Charles Wimble MA (Cantab)  
Principal

