



Left: 2002 – Bringing home some silverware at the end of Year Two (under the careful guidance of Miss Ingram)

Right: 2022 – Taken after the Platinum Jubilee Parade

THOMAS'S KINDERGARTEN & BATTERSEA

Alexander Aldridge

Class of 2009

I began my time at Thomas's Kindergarten in the Spring of 1998. I have hazy memories of the walk to St Mary's church wearing a red smock. One day we all went for a walk and came back to find ourselves locked out. To get back in all the children were passed through a small circular window in the door which we of course found terribly exciting.

In September 2000 I started Reception at Battersea. Back then the school itself was architecturally quite different. The playground was tarmacked, the rooftop playground was just a rooftop and we ate lunch in the gym. Lunch was a rather daunting affair with the whole class sitting down on benches either side of long tables. The teacher would sit at the head, plate up and pass the food down the table. I have a vague recollection of part of lunch being conducted in enforced silence (maybe pudding?) which I found very odd.

The move to Middle School was a formidable yet exciting one. The rooftop playground (now built) was an absolute gamechanger for breaktime, we had slightly more autonomy with moving to different lessons and we would venture to Barn Elms for sports. Year Five also heralded the introduction of Latin under the witty and engaging lead of the late Mr Stephen Briggs. His entertaining teaching style ensured

that people genuinely looked forward to Latin lessons which is not something that people from every generation can claim. The Upper School seemed to go in a blur of extravagant plays (Moulin Rouge for thirteen-year-olds?! Very bold), fun trips and exams. Needless to say, leaving Thomas's was a very difficult thing to do.

Between the last hurrah on speech day in 2009 and writing this recollection now, I have had a very happy five years at Marlborough College, took a gap year (which saw a brief stint as a gappy back at Battersea), had a spectacular time at the University of Exeter and a pretty intense (although still enjoyable) time at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Since commissioning into the British Army, I have commanded a troop of armoured reconnaissance vehicles on a number of exercises (think little tanks), run a Covid testing site in Bolton, deployed to Kosovo on an operational tour and marched down the Mall for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. I will always look back on my time at Thomas's Battersea with overwhelming happiness. There was a breadth of education which set the foundations of so many aspects of my life now. The academics, sport, drama, art and trips were invaluable. It was however the teachers who had the most significant impact on me. They provided constant support, both academically and pastorally, and for this I will always be grateful.