

External – Sixth Form Open Evening 2020 entry

A very warm welcome to you all tonight to our Sixth Form Open Evening. It is a pleasure to see in front of me so many external students interested in joining NSB for Post 16 education. I'm delighted to be joined on the stage by the Director of the Sixth Form, Sarah Bradley Brophy and Dan Wood and Naia Elliot - Spence, Head Boy and Girl respectively.

Tonight is an opportunity for the school to outline to you the nature of the Sixth Form provision at NSB, for you to understand the process of application / admission and of course for you to probe information and to begin to finalise the subject choices that you intend to make.

The first question to ask is why join NSB? Whether or not a Sixth Form is right for a student is normally a gut decision made by that individual however at NSB we are very confident that we can support every student who meets the entry criteria to achieve their aspirational goals. So why does NSB Sixth Form stand out from other providers both locally and nationally?

We have a consistently strong record of academic achievement at A Level. We offer an academic A Level programme with a wide breadth - 24 different subjects - on offer. Achievement in the Sixth Form is measured by a variety of indicators. Attainment wise the average grade per entry and the percentage of entries at Grades A*-B are significantly above the national figure for all schools including those from the private sector with the latter being just under 55% in 2019. Thirty students last year achieved a grade average of 'AAA' or higher in their three A Levels with 4 students last year achieving 3 or 4 straight A* grades. The 2019 national A Level performance figures have not yet been released however our last validated progress score for 2018, i.e. the progress made from GCSE to A Level grades, was strongly positive against the national average. This year the Year 13 students are on track to achieve at almost half a grade per A Level entry higher than students of similar ability nationally. The achievement of our students is so high largely because the quality of teaching at Post 16 at NSB is outstanding - the teaching staff are exceptionally talented and experienced at providing support and intervention which elicits the highest grades from our students but also because of the excellent commitment and attitude of the Sixth Form students towards their studies and to the school in general.

After a highly successful launch in 2017 we are continuing to run our BTEC Sport as a vocational qualification which is the equivalent of three A Levels. The qualification will be taught largely through rugby so it's essential that applicants have a strong playing background and interest in the game. For this course we work with various partners in the community including the ONs and The Saints to support delivery of this exciting course which will open up opportunities for students to both direct employment in a related field or to continue their studies in Higher Education. The results for our first cohort through this course in 2019 were exceptional with an estimated progress score of +0.72 of a grade. We also offer our elite Sixth

Form rugby players (regardless of if they are doing the BTEC or A Levels) the opportunity to achieve the DISE (Diploma in Sporting Excellence) Award in formal partnership with the Northampton Saints which is a course which seeks to fully prepare students for life as a professional rugby player.

It is not just about academic study - there is an absolute wealth of clubs and activities for students to take part in at all levels and all students in Year 12 and 13 follow an extensive Co-Curriculum outside of their lessons – all Year 12 students will have two periods of recreational sport, a lesson of Citizenship and Guidance, a UCAS preparation lesson and a Form Tutor mentoring session as part of their core curriculum. All students will also be expected to undertake work experience at some point during the Sixth Form. In addition, each Year 12 student is expected to take part in at least two extra – curricular activities per week and with over 240 clubs and sessions every week there is something for everyone at every level of ability. The variety of activities on offer is enormous and includes as a small sample the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award, lower school mentoring, personal fitness training, debating and support in the local primary schools as well as a huge selection of sporting, musical and dramatic clubs and societies. All Year 12 students also attend a week long residential, currently in Bude near the beginning of Year 12 which goes a long way to cementing peer friendships and forging positive working relations with Sixth Form staff.

Here's a video which outlines this Sixth Form Co-Curriculum offer....

An absolute unique selling point of our Sixth Form and one of the main reasons why we are regularly the most oversubscribed school in the county at both Year 12 and indeed Year 7 entry, is our extra-curricular performance at an elite level where we have students competing at national and international level in music, dance, drama and sport. On arrival you saw a series of videos which outline our exceptional offer in these areas.

In the creative arts, internal school productions abound together with students having many opportunities to play or perform on the wider stage. This academic year a large number of our Sixth Formers performed at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the hugely prestigious National School Prom and we have ten students in our current Year 13 who have already attained a place at the most prestigious Music Colleges in the country for September 2020 entry. In Dance we have performed 3 times in 4 years at the national finals of the prestigious UDance as the sole East Midlands representative, and our Y12 dance students were also invited in 2019 as one of two schools to perform in front of HRH Prince Charles at The Royal Albert Hall as part of a major Children and the Arts event. In Drama lots of our Sixth Formers performed in a wide range of productions including our sold out school musical The Sound of Music which was played out over 3 evenings to packed audiences.

In sport the achievements are almost endless but to give you a flavour - we have been ranked as the number one or two school in England for competitive sport every year for the last seven

years including top spot in three of the last six. In the last three years we have won the national rugby competition for all schools both state and private, the U18 Vase at Twickenham, the national U16 Basketball title, the national U15 football Cup final and the English School Boy u18 1500m title and we are competing in the latter stages of national cups in many sports again this year including the Semi Final of the U18 National Schools Cup for rugby against Warwick and the last 32 of the National U18 Cup for both Football and Basketball. Two of our Sixth Form students last year competed in the 2019 Junior Commonwealth Games winning two silvers respectively (a third younger student won a gold) and several of our current Year 13 students are looking at professional contracts with top level professional franchises sport inclusive of the Saints rugby team and the Loughborough Lightning netball side. In fact two of the Saints first team squad in Olli Sleightholme and Connor Tupai, were very recent NSB Y13 students from 2018. Twelve NSB students in 2019 represented their country for sport including, this year, one boy for U18 England rugby and one boy for U17 England football.

From a pastoral perspective, students will be placed into a tutor group which has a mixture of internal and external students. The Form Tutor will have overall responsibility for monitoring each student's academic performance and their behaviour, attendance and adherence to the smart Dress Code. They will meet with the students daily and will also undertake bespoke individual mentoring with each student in their care. The Form Tutor will be the first port of call for parents if there is any issue which needs to be discussed. When students are not in lessons they are expected to work or to be undertaking their extra-curricular activities - facilities are provided in school for this however students may seek to study at home in their non-contact lessons if they so wish. If a student is under-performing, however, then they will lose this privilege.

We are blessed to have facilities which rival any other state school in the country and most private schools. We are extremely fortunate to have benefactors who have funded state of the art buildings such as the one that you sit in at the moment and the brand new music facilities and also the £5 million swimming pool, dance and fitness complex housed in the Edward Cripps Human Performance Centre which opened just over five years ago. Although high quality facilities are not the sole link to high grades they certainly help support our students in achieving their ambitions.

Probably the most important set of statistics relate to what students do when they leave NSB at 18 - because in essence that is our core purpose - we prepare students highly effectively for life outside of school. We have 0% NEET (Not in education, employment or Training) ie every student who has left NSB in the last two years has gone onto a viable and positive pathway. On average, 80% of our Year 13s go on to University with 81% of this cohort securing places at the elite Russell Group universities, inclusive of Oxbridge, in comparison to a national average of 60%. Eight students had an offer of a place at Oxbridge in 2018/19 and we have had 20 Oxbridge interviews this year with the results due out next week. We have a full time Careers

Adviser on site who provides exceptional advice, support and guidance to all of our students and all of Year 12 /13 have the opportunity to participate in work related learning / experience to help inform their future career choices. For those students interested in employment rather than university routes we hold an annual careers fair at the school to support networking and potential applications.

And of course you don't have to take my word for it. As you may well know at our most recent full Ofsted Inspection we were graded as outstanding in every category. Most pertinent to you was the fact that the Sixth Form was also graded as outstanding overall and in every sub-category. You can see some of the quotes from the inspection report on the screen but I would urge you to read the full report before making final decisions about the Sixth Form that a student would like to attend. We also recently received the hugely prestigious national educational establishment of the year award at a national education awards ceremony at the National Conference Centre in Birmingham which in effect means that we were given the award for the best all round school in England. The presentation of the award was part of the video being screened when you came in. In 2019 we were awarded school of the year for Northamptonshire.

There has been a recent big shift in A Levels nationally which is pertinent to Year 11 students joining the Sixth Form in September 2020. Modular A Levels have now been completely replaced by linear A Levels where all the public exams are sat in that subject at the end of Year 13. The reasoning behind this national switch from modular to linear is to allow students to study a subject in more depth and to prepare students more effectively for studying the subject at University.

The NSB Way Ahead booklet gives clear advice as to how to choose appropriate combinations of A Levels. If you know what you want to do at University then your choices are largely already made for you as Universities will stipulate A Level subjects and the grades that you need to achieve to gain a place on a stated course – you can find this information out through the course finder section on the UCAS website, however, if like many young people at this stage, you are unclear on what you may wish to do post 18 then pick the subjects that you are going to enjoy and have the greatest chance of being successful in.

Due to the national changes and the increased demands of the linear A Levels the majority of students will select and study three subjects over the course of Year 12 and 13. Universities are looking for quality grades from three subjects rather than diluted grades over 4. Exceptional candidates who wish to study a fourth A Level will be able to do so but will have to meet stiffer entry requirements of minimum Grade 7 at GCSE for relevant subjects in each of their four A Level subject choices. It is relevant to note at this point that the majority of the 20 current year 13 students who were invited to interview at Oxford or Cambridge, study a total

of three A Levels rather than 4. Students can also choose to study a Core Maths qualification which is broadly equivalent to half the volume of an A level in addition to their A Level subjects and an Extended Project Qualification in Year 13.

So what next - external students need to complete an on-line application form which allows you to indicate your 3 or 4 subject choices. As per our Admissions Policy a minimum of 60 places will be offered to external students and this will be determined by a process defined in our Admissions Policy which Mrs Bradley Brophy will go through with you later. All external applicants who are not offered a place are entitled to be put on a Waiting List and to appeal the decision. Each place offered will be dependent on minimum academic entry criteria being met, which is currently a minimum of 3 Grade 6s and 2 Grades 5s at GCSE plus the entry requirements for each individual A Level selected which is normally but not always a 6 or 7 in a related GCSE. For the vocational Sports course the requirements differ slightly. All of the entry requirements for each subject are listed in the 'Way Ahead' Booklet in your pack.

It is important for students to remember however that GCSE grades are not just for entry into Sixth Form your grades will follow you throughout your career – you will need to indicate them on all application forms that you complete and they will be given full consideration by any Universities that you apply to with several of the most demanding and competitive courses citing that 7, 8 or 9 grades at GCSE need to be achieved in virtually all subjects. Once a student has decided on the subjects that they wish to apply for they need to complete the options form on-line which Mrs Bradley - Brophy will go through later and submit it by 5pm on Friday January 24th. If a student wishes to study four A Levels then the fourth subject will be considered after the initial offer of a place.

It is important for me to state at this point that the number of classes planned for next year allow for places for our external applicants in all of our subjects, including in highly popular subjects. I must also stress that due to our allocation system which maximizes the numbers of offers that can be made before classes are full, we are highly likely this year to significantly exceed our Published Admission Number of 60 students. As a guide, initially last year 150 external students were offered a place at the school. All students who are offered a place will be invited to a guidance meeting prior to September in order to confirm the subject decisions that have been made and all successful applicants will be invited to an induction day after your GCSEs on either June 25th or 26th. If you don't get offered a place initially, make sure you go on the waiting list because after the GCSE results come out in the summer places will become available where students don't achieve the academic grades that they need. To drive home that point, after last year's GCSE results were issued almost all students who remained on the waiting list and who got the requisite grades started at NSB in September 2019.

Well that's a lot from me and I now think it's a suitable time for the Head Boy and the Head Girl opportunity to reflect with you on their time in the Sixth Form to date, followed by Mrs Bradley Brophey.