

Prospective Year 7 Evening – for Admission in 2017

Good evening and welcome to Northampton School *for Boys*. My name is Richard Bernard and I am Headmaster of the school. Joining me on Stage are the Chair of Governors Mr Peter Bason and Deputy Headmaster in charge of admissions Matthew Edwards. I am also joined by the Headboy and Head Girl – Conrad Whitcroft White and Rebecca Herring.

I hope you enjoyed the music provided by Alex and Bradley who are in Year 11 and excellent examples of the talent that we have in the school.

Tonight we will describe the ethos of NSB and the expectations that we have of our boys to help you to decide whether NSB is the right school for your son. We will also explain the admissions procedures for **NSB**. The slides and the text of my speech will be available on the school website to ensure everyone receives the same information. On your way in you were given a booklet that again contains essential information when making your application.

But first of all I will handover to Peter Bason, our chair of governors for his address.

The Ethos of NSB

The school was founded in 1541 by Thomas Chipsey and in 1911 moved to its present location. The magnificent frontage on the Billing Road, the mature trees and the immaculate sports fields create an ambience of tradition – of scholarship, of learning. Our distinguished history is all around us – and displayed most prominently in the 1911 Hall which you will see next week. The boys quickly assimilate and appreciate our traditional values. They learn of

our distinguished former students who have gone on to ‘make a difference’ in the world. This gives them the confidence to know that they too can go on to great success.

The school has a distinguished recent heritage too. We were recognised recently as Outstanding in all categories by Ofsted, we were the first Converter Academy in the country, and we were invited by the Secretary of State to become a Teaching School. As such, we not only provide education for your sons, but we also organise the training of new teachers around county schools, and arrange support for schools and teachers where needed.

We have possibly the finest state school facilities in the country, which you will view next week. Less than 24 months ago alone we had the privilege of opening a multi-million pound Human Performance Centre consisting of a 25metre swimming pool, a fitness suite and a huge dance studio.

But as you will hear, exemplary student achievement comes from outstanding student work ethic, the facilities merely make the achievement of excellence easier to attain.

You will find a series of videos on our website which are essential viewing for anyone thinking of applying for a place at the school. Here is one example – Culture and Ethos.

Boys at NSB follow an academic curriculum of real breadth and depth. In Year 7 all boys study English, Maths, Science, DT, ICT, French or Spanish or German, History, Geography, RE, PE, art, music, Dance and Drama. At GCSE level boys study a full academic curriculum – all study English Language, English Literature, Maths, double or triple Science, a Modern Language, a

Technology related subject and then 2 further GCSE options from Humanities, Expressive Arts, or PE based subject areas. As a result of this academic focus far more students at NSB achieve the government acclaimed EBacc qualification than the national average. Students are taught in one of three ability groups throughout Yrs 7-11 although there is flexibility of movement between sets according to student performance. Lessons are 45 minutes long with the occasional double lesson for practical based subjects – this length of lesson has proved to be optimal for maximising boy's achievement.

Our academic record is outstanding – our boys achieve far in excess of national expectations across the curriculum for both attainment and progress levels in comparison to all students – that's boys and girls, and in comparison to boys only. Take for example last year's GCSE results – that's the Year 11 who just left this summer, the national average for boys achieving an A*-C in English was 55% we achieved 84%, the national average for boys in Maths was 61% we achieved 93%. We found out only yesterday that our Progress 8 score, the new key national performance measure for all schools, will be significantly positive, that is well above (over a quarter of a grade above) the national average for all students and far, far, far above the national average for boys progress across the country. Subjects across the curriculum performed outstandingly well with standout Maths results being anticipated to be within the top couple of percent of all schools in the country for progress. In the Sixth Form we now have over 500 students and we offer 26 academic A Levels and we are very proud of our 0% NEET figure at the end of Yr 13 i.e. every student goes on to education, employment or training and normally an average of 5 students per year gain a place at Oxford or Cambridge.

We believe that boys achieve academically when they are busy and involved in the life of the school. That is why we expect ALL of them to take advantage of

the fantastic array of extra-curricular opportunities and residential trips. Boys will be expected to work hard at school AND at home. We believe individual learning, private study and homework to be essential to success.

We have secured incredible national and international success at Sport and in Music, Dance and Drama. Every year we compete in the national final stages of sport competitions – for example last year, we won the U18 National Schools Rugby Vase Championship (a competition for both state and private schools) which was held at Twickenham, we also won the national football U15 age group championship and the Year 7 national indoor rowing championships and we also reached national finals in basketball, cross country, water polo and athletics. The sporting year was crowned when we were named as the number one ranked school in Great Britain for competitive sport by a leading national sports publication. We have a fantastic fixture list for all sports with matches played throughout the week including rugby fixtures on a Saturday. We also employ an army of high calibre sports coaches, many of whom are former professionals, to support our exceptional PE staff. We are very proud of the fact that two of our former students are in the current full England senior squads for rugby and cricket – Courtney Lawes and David Willey. In regard to the Performing Arts our U14 Dance Team recently won the World Street Dance championship for their age group and our Big Band performed in the School Proms at the Royal Albert Hall – a hugely prestigious invitation only event. Many boys have subsidised individual music tuition and many also go on to perform in music and drama on the public stage – in this Theatre and in the local community. Last year our musical ‘Les Miserables’ pulled in capacity audiences for two consecutive nights and I am also delighted to say that two of our students last year performed in leading shows on the West End. There are also countless opportunities for boys to take part in sporting and performing arts opportunities at a recreational level – largely through the framework of our

immensely popular House System. I hope you enjoy some of the video highlights of what I have just described.

Learning will only occur in a well disciplined environment. As such, we expect behaviour in classrooms to be exemplary, enabling students of all abilities to learn. Behaviour around the school is excellent – outstanding conduct is the norm and the expectation.

We believe boys respond to challenge, whether that be struggling with mathematical concepts, arguing a debating point, facing a vertical mountain face, or being confronted with a seemingly impossible music score! We challenge and support our boys who find learning difficult, and we challenge our most able students through our Gifted and Talented programme. ALL our students are of equal value, whatever their background, talents and abilities.

We expect students to show a generosity of spirit through our Charity Week and through our link with a disadvantaged community in Malawi. On average 20 sixth form students each year spend over 3 weeks of their summer holiday working and providing support in a Malawi school. We believe our boys should take a broad view of the world, and their responsibility in it and for it.

We want to encourage youngsters to become our future leaders and we have an extensive residential education and D of E programme to support this. We have a robust and active student leadership team which plays a strategic role in the development of the school. We also expect full participation in our House system which is an essential part of life at NSB, not a bolt-on extra!

As Ofsted said: “The outstanding curriculum and opportunities outside of lessons enables students to achieve highly and to develop the personal skills they will need in the next stage of their lives”.

All these opportunities are only possible because of an exceptional staff – staff who in Ofsted’s words ‘have excellent knowledge of their subjects and who forge excellent working relationships with the students of whom they have the highest expectations’.

We believe that engaging parents in their sons’ learning is crucial. We will expect you to help maximise attendance and to ensure your son is punctual. We will provide you with all of the information that you need to help support your son in achieving his potential both academically and outside of the classroom. We will not grant Term - time off for holidays. We will expect you to support our policies, and to work WITH us in developing your son as he grows from a child to a skilled and responsible young man.

When you ‘buy in’ to NSB, you buy into the whole package. We expect boys to be proud of the uniform, and parents to be the gatekeeper for their son’s appearance! We expect parents to keep abreast of your son’s progress via secure access to the school website. We will also notify you of any detentions and other key reminders via text message.

If you believe your son is ready to commit to rising to the challenges that will face him, and he has the determination to succeed – then he will excel at Northampton School for Boys. It is clearly a hugely important decision – matching your own son to the ethos of a school and I know that you will not take the decision lightly. It is a possibility that NSB is NOT the school for him!

This is my third year as Headmaster of the School. I have worked at four secondary schools over 22 years including seven years as Vice and Acting Principal at another similarly outstanding school in Northamptonshire. I also have inspected many schools. I can honestly say to you that this school provides the highest standard of educational provision and opportunities that I have seen and if your son approaches the school with the right attitude he will flourish.

But you don't have to take my word for it – here are two of my student leaders:
Head Boy – Conrad Whitcroft White and Head Girl Rebecca Herring

Mr Edwards

I hope you now have a good idea what NSB stands for, and what life will be like for a Year 7 boy at the school. But a word for the boys in the Theatre!

PLEASE DO NOT BE COMPLACENT. We provide the opportunities – but **YOU** have to **SEIZE** them. Do not imagine you will be successful just by being here. **YOU** need to **MAKE** it happen. You will be successful – whichever school you go to – if you try your very best.

NSB students aim high. You won't all achieve straight A grades, but students leave here as confident, responsible, motivated and independent young people. They are ready to make their mark in society. They are ready for the challenges that lie beyond. We hope to see you here in September so that you can maximise your potential both in and out of the classroom. There really is something for everyone in this school.

One final word about admissions if you wish for your son to attend Northampton School for Boys as your number one choice then you must put it

down as first choice. The equal preference system correctly rules out any notion of application tactics so simply put down the three schools that you want to apply for in your preference order. Your son will be assessed against the admissions criteria for each of the three schools that you put down and if he gets in to more than one of them then he will go to the one that you have put down as the highest preference. I would also like to re - emphasise that the Common ability test is not a pass or fail test. Boys please don't worry about it just simply do your best – your score will place you in one of five ability bands and we take an equal number of boys from each band. We are an inclusive school and we welcome applications from students of all abilities.

I look forward to seeing you all next week at our open evening on Thursday.

If you have any questions at this stage we will be outside the Theatre when you leave.

Thank you very much for coming - have a safe journey home.

Goodnight.

