

Oldfield Sixth Form Information Evening – Thursday 15th November 2018

Good evening and thank you for attending our Sixth Form Information Evening. My name is Mr Nash and I am the Head of Sixth Form here at Oldfield School.

If you are a Year 11 parent, you should have received our 2019 prospectus in the post and Year 10 parents and External applicants have hopefully collected one tonight. The prospectus includes an application form and course descriptions. All this information is also available on our website where you can also download our application form.

After my speech, please feel free to visit our subject fair where you can discuss specific subjects. Please note that subjects are based in the Canteen, the LRC and in Penn House where you can also see the Sixth Form area. Our Drama teachers are at the Shakespeare festival this evening so Ms Bloomfield has asked that you email her via enquiries if you want to find out more about Drama A Level.

I joined Oldfield as a teacher over 10 years ago and I quickly fell in love with the school. What most impressed me were the students: their willingness to learn; their desire to do well; their commitment to the school. And this was most evident with our A level student. It's also very much true of our Year 11 students who I'm sure will achieve excellent results in their GCSE exams. And it is those students, who we are rightly proud of, that are at the centre of everything we do here in our Sixth Form.

There are three guiding principles for my vision for our Sixth Form: academic success, wide ranging enrichment opportunities and individual guidance and support.

The first of these, academic success, has always been the bedrock of our school. The results simply speak for themselves. And this must be the first thing any student needs to consider when deciding on where they will study: how well will I do? What will I achieve? We were immensely proud that 90% of grades were C or above and that our average grade was B-: that's the sort of success you often see at private schools.

Right across the board, as you can see, from English to the Humanities, from the Arts to the Sciences, our results are testament to the hard work and expertise of our teaching staff. Small class sizes, specialist teachers and individual tailored support ensure we get the best from all our students.

But student attainment is only one way we measure the success of our students and while it's great to celebrate those students who achieved the very highest grades, it's even more important to look at the progress of all our students. For Oldfield, as you can see on this national progress measure, the progress our students make places us in the top 10% of Sixth Forms and colleges nationally- and we have every intention of improving on that in the coming years. Our Level 3 Value Added Score was 0.24 which would have put us near the top of Bath schools last year.

There are many reasons we provide such an excellent A level education for our students but one very important one is our commitment to small class sizes. From September 2019 there will be no A level classes larger than 15 and if we have more than 15 applicants for a subject we will simply run another class. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. Many of our competitors may well be running classes larger than twenty and in the large colleges those class sizes may be as high as 30 or 35. How can students expect to get the one to one support,



feedback and guidance they deserve in such large classes? We understand that quality teaching and learning at Sixth Form is intimately connected to the time and focus the teacher can give each individual.

We have very high aspirations both of our students and the quality of our Sixth Form provision. To give you a student's view on lessons and academic standards at Oldfield, our Head Student, Tom Wills, would like to speak to you.

But life in any Sixth Form is much more than academic success. It is about the wider opportunities on offer: the events, activities and trips that produce the well rounded, enthusiastic student. All subject areas offer their own trips and events-we have run a History trip to Russia; a Physics trip to the CERN laboratory in Switzerland last Easter, and this Easter Drama and Literature students have been offered the opportunity to visit New York.

Beyond that we offer a range of opportunities that ensure our students make the most of their time here and make them the ideal candidate for universities or other post-18 choices. We have a highly successful Extended Project Qualification programme, Duke of Edinburgh, World Challenge, NCS opportunities. I've also put in place an enrichment period, once a week, where students can opt for a specific course ranging from the History of Western Thought, conversational Spanish, sports and fitness, Creative Media and Employability Skills.

Our links with Kingswood school allows for exciting extra curriculum opportunities, ranging from Cantonese to Drama or specialist guidance for our Oxbridge candidates.

We look at our Sixth Form as a cooperative and enthusiastic community- a supportive family if you like- within the wider school community. So, we expect and encourage our students to take part in School Service, helping students from other years with confidence issues or literacy and numeracy lessons, to volunteering at local primary schools or old people's homes.

And our Sixth Form Leadership team provides an opportunity for students to take on extra responsibilities.

We also ensure that every subject area offers clubs and activities for our Sixth Formers and we actively encourage students to attend and, even better, lead activities.

The final area I would like to discuss is support and guidance. Deciding on what you do after your A level studies is one of the most important decisions in your life. We are not an elitist institution- we do not judge our success on how many students get to a Russell Group University. We support our students regardless of their future plans, whether that is in pursuing an apprenticeship or attending Oxford University. For us- each and every student-and their aspirations- count.

And our programme to support students is full to bursting. We have links with University of West of England, Bath University and Bristol University helping students with their UCAS applications and providing information and guidance. Indeed, we take part in the Access to Bristol and On Track to Bath programmes. We also offer some of our students the opportunity of completing the Embark employability and skills award. We have a flexible and successful work experience programme- we have a week set aside for Y12 students to take work experience but we know, especially in those highly competitive fields like medicine and law, sometimes students need to seize the opportunities when they come. We grant every student 5 days' worth of WEX across the academic year.

For Russell Group and Oxbridge students, we have a bespoke programme of support which involves a residential trip to Trinity College, Cambridge; interview and application guidance from admissions tutors and outside experts and a series of seminars designed to broaden and expand students' knowledge. Once again, we work closely with Kingswood school in this respect, making use of their expertise in guiding students to the very top institutions.

We also have our own, in-school, careers advisor, Mrs Williams, who has already met with many of our Year 13 students and has probably met with some of you.

Studying subjects at A level can be stressful and demanding. Life can be stressful and demanding. Here at Oldfield we have an excellent support network that ensures students feel listened to and cared for. Our tutors are immensely experienced, I have an open-door policy whereby a student can see me at any time- and there isn't one student here tonight who hasn't taken advantage of that. Mrs Fortune- who works with me in the Sixth Form office- is always at hand to give guidance and support. She is indispensable.

Vitaly, if you were a student at Oldfield for your GCSEs then you know the staff and they know you. The same staff who helped you achieve what will be fantastic results in your GCSE could be the same staff who teach you at A level.

We are not some over large, bureaucratic institution that cares more about the number of bums on seats rather than what students achieve at the end. Too often perhaps students mistake bigger with greater freedom when too often what bigger means is neglect. That is something I guarantee does not happen to our students at Oldfield School.

Beyond that our recently refurbished facilities provide students with great places to study as well as social areas for break and lunch. Please make sure you take a look during your visit of Penn House if you haven't already done so.

To give you some more idea about life in the Sixth Form, may I introduce our Deputy Head Student Freya Spear and to give a flavour of how external applicants fit in here at Oldfield, our other Deputy Head Student Tom Templeton.

We believe that here at Oldfield School we have a curriculum offer designed to get the best out of each and every one of our students. We ask that all students choose to study 3 A levels across the two years.

However, for the very high achieving student, we will consider that student taking four full A levels and we will discuss that with students at the consultation stage. If you think you are one of those students, and that means you are on track to achieve grades 7-9 across the board, please email me and I can discuss your options.

We have a wide variety of A level and Level 3 qualifications on offer- 26 subjects in total. Some of these will be very familiar to students, others less so. Some subjects, such as English Language are completely different at A level than they are at GCSE. Some, such as Sociology or Psychology, are not currently studied at GCSE by Year 11 students. It is work while gathering as much information as possible during the course of this evening and from our subject guidance in the Prospectus and on the website.

The subjects marked with an asterisk indicate that these subjects are facilitating subjects- choosing these will mean you keep your options open when applying for University places or other Post-18 pathways.

We also want our students to have a breadth of study so we have also developed the **Oldfield Offer**. During the consultation process, once we've received your A level choice, we will discuss with students and direct them to take one of three pathways.

- **Extended Project Qualification**
- **Arts Award**
- **Further Maths AS**
- **Core Maths**
- **Sports Leadership**

The EPQ is an independent research project highly valued by universities. It allows students to focus on a topic close to their interests or future plans. It is worth more UCAS points than an AS.

The Arts Award, which again is fully accredited, allows students who have an interest in Art, Dance, Music or Drama but have opted instead to take other subjects for their three A levels.

The Further Maths AS option is aimed at the 7-9 level student intending to study Mathematics or the Sciences at degree level.

Next, Core Maths. Many of the reformed A levels have a higher level of Maths required in their syllabuses, such as the Sciences and Geography. This option is for those students who feel they need to keep their Maths skills up to spec but aren't taking Mathematics as an A level option. Once again, the qualification is worth half an A level.

Finally, we are introducing Sports Leadership this year, a Level 3 qualification designed to give those students with an interest in sports an opportunity to flourish.

Our entrance requirements are very clear. In order to get a place at our Sixth Form you must have 5 good passes at GCSE. At least three of these should be grade 5 or above whilst the remaining two could be at grade 4. Students should also achieve a 4 in Mathematics, English Literature and English Language.

Entrance requirements for specific subjects are detailed in the prospectus but as a rule of thumb you'll want to achieve a grade 6 or better at GCSE in any subject you are thinking of studying at A level.

However, we will look at each and every application on its own merits. We do run retakes in Mathematics and English in our Sixth Form so, if you have good GCSE results but have narrowly missed out on one of those, we will still consider you.

A key question students always ask me is what A level subjects would be best to study. There isn't one easy answer to that question and in keeping with our ethos of putting the student first, this is a question we deal with

on a 1:1 basis- part of your post application consultation is dedicated to this very question and making sure students are choosing the right options for them.

But here are some key tips. Play to your strengths- if there is a subject or subjects where you are on track to achieve very highly, then that is an indication of the sort of A levels you should be choosing.

If you don't really have a specific career sector in mind- and at 16 there's no reason why you should- I'd advise you to keep your options open and choose two facilitating subjects.

If on the other hand you have a specific ambition in mind- medicine or the law for example, then research those options and find out what A Levels Universities are looking for.

So how do you get a place in our Sixth Form? Firstly you need to fill in the application form and hand that back by December 21st . The incentive for getting your responses in by the deadline is that we will take your choices into account with our blockings. You can do that by email or by hand. We will then arrange a consultation with you personally to discuss your choices and make sure we can provide a positive Sixth form experience that is tailored to your needs. An application will also guarantee a place on our Sixth Form Experience Day. Finally, we will ask you to attend our Induction interview to give you a greater sense of life at Oldfield Sixth Form.

For the rest of the evening, please feel free to wander around our subject fair and talk to staff and students about individual subjects. I'll be here if you want to ask me anything, as will be the Head and Deputy Head students and our Student Heads of Houses.

We are keen to hear your views on our Sixth Form and this evening. So if you'd like to fill in one of our evaluation forms, please do. Alternatively, if you're not a form filling kind of person, please feel free to email me on g.nash@oldfieldschool.com

Have a good evening and thank you for listening.