

Headteacher's Talk- Delivered at Open Evening 27th October 2018

Sarah Price, Headteacher



Introduction

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and Year 6 students and a very warm welcome to King's School. We are delighted you have decided to visit us tonight and we hope the evening gives you a good insight into our community and helps you make the important decisions you need to take regarding your choice of secondary school.

We are fortunate in Brighton and Hove to have a number of good secondary schools. I expect you are doing the rounds of them at the moment. They will all rightly tell you about their high expectations of students, their good results, and their vision for excellence. Tonight I want to explain to you why we are distinctive at King's and why we might very well be the best option for your child.

I firmly believe that this school is special and different – I hope you get a clear sense of that difference tonight. We are a small, and very happy school with a big heart and clear ambition. In this presentation I want to outline to you the five key factors that I believe mark us out as distinctive: our Christian ethos and Biblical values of Love, Forgiveness, Respect and Responsibility which permeate and drive everything we do; the small school feel we actively cultivate and nurture; the academic stretch and support we provide for all our students; our heavily invested and passionate staff team; and the support we receive from our sponsor, the Russell Education Trust.

Who am I?

Before I speak to each of these five points I think it's important that I give you a sense of who I am. I know that parents and students do not choose a school on the Headteacher alone – far from it – but as the leader of this school you will want to know that I have the right character and qualifications to lead a community that will help to develop your child successfully during their teenage years.

First and foremost I am a practising Christian and a member of Holy Cross Church in Hove. I am a person who is motivated by a deep rooted desire to serve others and ultimately to serve God.

I graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge University in 2004 with a degree in English Literature and went into the Civil Service Faststream as a parliamentary clerk working in the House of Lords. After four years there I decided that teaching was in my blood and on my heart and that I needed to pack in my comfortable civil service lifestyle for a lifetime spent working with teenagers! I trained as an English teacher at the Institute of Education in London and relocated to Brighton in 2009 to start my teaching career. I worked for four years at St Wilfrid's school in Crawley as an English teacher and Pastoral Leader. I was thrilled to join King's when it opened in 2013 as an Assistant Headteacher and Head of English, drawn by its Christian Ethos and emphasis on high standards. I became Headteacher in January 2015 and my passion for this school remains as strong now as it was when I joined the founding staff. It has been the privilege of my life to date to grow this school and to see the original vision for it become a reality.

As well as being a Headteacher, I am a wife and mother to a pre-school aged child which makes life very busy! I live with my husband Jon and daughter Edie in the Hangleton area of Hove and we are well settled in the local community here. With any spare time I do have I take to the roads and trails as a keen long distance runner which gives me plenty of material for school assemblies!

My little girl, Edie, turns three next week. It seems impossible that she has reached that age already! This time next year I will be starting to look for a primary school for her and I know the time will fly by until I am sat where you are touring the local secondary schools. I can imagine that I will feel much as you do – anxious, excited, and desperate to make the right choice for my sensitive and thoughtful girl as she enters the difficult teenage years. I know now that I will want a school that will see her as a whole person, with talents, hopes and vulnerabilities. I will want a school that will help her reach her academic potential whilst preparing her for everything else that life will bring her. I will want her to leave her secondary education as a responsible, caring citizen – happy in her own skin and prepared for a rich life. I believe that King's will offer us that option in 8 years' time for our girl, as it does now for your children.

Ethos and values

Turning to King's School's five main differences, I'm starting with our ethos because it is the bedrock of everything we do. Students see our Biblical values role modelled and promoted daily by passionate, professional staff. They engage in a daily act of collective worship, either in tutor time or in an assembly. These are distinctively Christian but inclusive and accessible to all. Through them we aim to promote discussion, exploration and respect for faith. Our ethos drives our approach to

behaviour management which focuses on character education; educating the whole child and helping them to develop into responsible, caring members of the community who learn from their mistakes. We look to give our students opportunities to serve the community – within school and beyond our gates – believing that it is through service and sacrifice that character is best developed.

High standards and academic challenge

Our approach to learning starts with high standards. We have uncompromising expectations of all students – our students deserve them and we believe they are the foundation of achievement in the classroom. We expect excellent attendance, positive behaviour for learning and smart uniforms.

We have high expectations of academic progress for every student – there are no excuses. Regular tracking of student progress and ongoing close communication with parents ensures no child gets left behind. This is a school that seeks excellent progress for all and is fully committed to realising student potential, regardless of starting point. Students follow a traditional but current curriculum with a clear emphasis on maths and English. Most students will obtain 10 GCSEs by the end of Year 11 and full details of our curriculum are in your information booklets this evening.

It is wonderful this year to be able to share with you our first GCSE results from our founding cohort who sat their exams this summer. A breakdown of our results is included on the handout in your prospectuses. Our founding cohort did exceptionally well and produced a set of results that exceed national averages on every measure. 75% of our founding cohort of students achieved 5 or more good grades, including English and Maths. Our core subjects performed especially well with 83% in English and 81% in Maths at grade 4 or above. The average grade for our students per exam was a grade 5 (described nationally as ‘a strong pass’); 40% of all grades were at grade 6 or above and 10% of all grades were the prestigious top grades 8 and 9. Our progress 8 figure (to be published later this academic year) will be strongly positive, meaning that our students made very good progress during their five years with us from their respective end of KS2 starting points, and those students were with us for the full five years since our opening in 2013 appear to have made progress in the top 5% nationally. This is a remarkable achievement for any school and especially so for a new school on a temporary site – the results are testament to the hard work of King’s students and the dedication and professionalism of their teachers. Please do interrogate these figures with us tonight; we would be delighted to share the success of our founding year group with you in more detail.

However, we know that a rounded education can't take place solely in the classroom so we put a lot of thought and love into our extra-curricular offer. We run a comprehensive extra-curricular programme afterschool every weekday with clubs ranging from basketball to dance and illustration club. These allow students to nurture interests and talents and enable friendships between year groups. We have four annual enrichment days where the whole school is off timetable and engaged in trips and extended learning days in school. We run a bi-annual ski trip and this year have trips running to the Somme, to Paris and even to Thorpe Park and Harry Potter World!

Small school feel

We are a small school and will continue to be a small school by Brighton and Hove standards when at our full capacity of just over 1000 students and we actively promote and nurture a 'small school feel'. We have a smaller than average class size of 25 and tutor groups of 25. We know all our students; we know their names; we know what comes easily to them and what they find challenging; we know about their hopes and dreams for the future and we learn how to get the very best from them. No student 'slips through the net' here and all are properly seen as individuals and valued as uniquely precious.

Pastoral care is a clear priority for us. Happy children learn well. We create a nurturing, caring environment for students and employ non-teaching pastoral staff who have a wealth of experience and a heart for the job. However, we don't leave pastoral care to specialist staff and tutors; we embrace it across the school and we see the benefits of this approach daily.

RET

We are part of a small, dedicated and very successful educational Trust – the Russell Education Trust. The Russell Education Trust has five schools across the south of England and we all benefit from the Trust's expert guidance and support which includes the provision of subject specialists to train and support our teachers and to monitor our students' learning. Results for those schools within our Trust that had Year 11 students last year were fantastic in terms of progress and attainment. Our Lead Advisor from the Trust, Anthony Easton, is here this evening and he knows the school well if you have further Trust related questions

OFSTED

Our approach to education is successful. As Headteacher I am bound to say that of course – but our results bear that statement out and Ofsted agree. In June 2015 they rated us a good school with outstanding behaviour and safety and outstanding leadership and management. They described the school as “an exceptionally

harmonious community” and praised the students’ behaviour and the “uncompromising” vision leaders and governors have for the school.

Site and travel

Next year we will be moving our successful school onto its new permanent site. The site in West Blatchington is due for completion in early August 2019 and works are currently running well ahead of schedule. We are being provided with a brand new, three-storey building, equipped with a new sports hall, drama studio and specialist technology and Science rooms. We will also have sports facilities on site, including a football pitch and several hard court multi-use games areas. We have been talking with Brighton and Hove buses and the LA regarding public bus travel to the site and are pleased to be able to say that we have agreed direct routes from the central Hove areas and Portslade areas to the site in the mornings and we are continuing to work with them on a good solution to afternoon travel.

Parents and students

At this point I would like to introduce you to people who can tell you honestly about the daily reality of life at King’s, as parents and as students. Mr Knight has a son in Year 11 and a daughter in Year 9 and Mrs Kendrick has sons in Year 10 and Year 8 and a daughter in Year 7. Our two student speakers, Trinity and Nicholas, joined us this September in Year 7.

Conclusion and admission

If you like what you have seen and heard this evening and King’s is your first choice for your child I would urge you to put us first on your preference forms. We have an admissions help point running tonight in Room 12 so please do speak to the staff there with any specific questions you may have regarding our admissions policy. I hope you enjoy meeting our staff, governors and students this evening. I hope you get a glimpse of our special community. I very much hope you will want to join us next year to start your King’s journey.

As you leave now you will be able to re-join the route you are taking around the school site. Thank you for your time.