



Headteacher's Speech

Year 6 Open Evening

5th October 2017

Thank you Jack, Maryum, Crystal and Felicia. I hope you found it informative to hear from some of our young people, this evening, and have been able to gain an insight into the school from a student's perspective.

So... as I've just been introduced, my name is Lynnette Parvez and I am the headteacher here at Kelmscott School. I would like to warmly welcome you this evening, and I hope you find the evening worthwhile.

One of the key events on an Open Evening is the headteacher's speech. For many parents it conveys an important message about the school, its ethos and the type of education the school has to offer. I would like to take a few moments of your time this evening to put across to you, my vision of what Kelmscott stands for, and what type of education your child will receive if they join us here.

I do understand that each of you may have a different reason for coming here this evening. For some, you know the school, perhaps you already have children here and it is a matter of course that your child will attend. For others, you may still be very much in the decision-making stage. You may be considering many schools, of which Kelmscott is just one, **or**, you may not really want your child to attend Kelmscott at all, but you may be curious about what we have to offer – well that's fine – we are more than happy to welcome all parents into our school, to show our ethos, our values and the work of the school on a day-to-day basis.

Moving on... normally on an evening like this, it is usual for the headteacher to talk about exam results and how well the school has done – and of course exam results **are** important, especially as your child gets older, but I think, increasingly you as parents want more from a school than simply an exam factory. Let me state first that Kelmscott does extraordinarily well where exams are concerned. Now that the government measures schools by the progress students make – known as Progress 8 – we have been able to show how exceptional our results have been. It is not an exaggeration to say that our results regularly put us in the top 10%, or better, nationally. Now, I know that some of you parents may be thinking progress is all very well, but I want my child to get top grades – well, the answer is they do – if your child has the potential to get top grades, we will work with your child just like we have with many of our previous students, who have not only achieved staggering results, but gone on to top universities and great careers.

But, as I have already said, we are about more than just exams. At Kelmscott we take the view that we are not simply educating, but we are in fact, preparing the child for life. We believe our job is to educate way beyond the classroom, and we believe that education comes in many guises.

We acknowledge that you, the parent, want more for your children – well so do we!

We want to expand your children's horizons and give them a chance to explore what their future might hold. We want to open their eyes to travel, to theatre, to sports, to the arts and many other things. Which is why we provide so many opportunities; we have trips during the school day, but

many of our staff also give their own time freely to take students out at weekends and in the evenings, and we also have residential trips. Recent trips have included a joint art and language trip to Barcelona in Spain, and a history trip to the battlefields in Belgium.

One of the most important principles we teach students in this school is respect, this underlies everything we do. Respect for staff, respect for each other, respect for their parents, respect for the school and respect for the school rules. We expect students to behave and to treat each other in a respectful way. We teach students, that if they don't, there is a consequence and we expect them to take responsibility for their actions. As a consequence, the vast majority of students for the vast majority of their time are purposeful and engaged in their learning. That is not to say that, just like in all schools, sometimes things don't always go right. I know new parents for example are always, and rightly so, concerned about bullying. I have said it many times; that I defy any school in the country to say that it does not, sometimes, have incidents of bullying. The truth is we do. However, staff in Kelmscott are swift to deal with any such incidents, and students have confidence in our staff. How do I know this? It's in our Ofsted report.

Hand-in-hand with respect comes the ability to care about others and to have empathy. I am always amazed at how caring our students are. Some of them don't come from very affluent backgrounds themselves but they are so willing to give up their time, or sometimes even their small amount of pocket money, to help others. Students regularly raise money for charity and we encourage this aspect of their character; whether it is a school bake-off to raise money for Macmillan, or an Eid event to help other less fortunate, they learn the importance of helping others.

Whilst we encourage students to take advantage of opportunities, we also do not ignore the basics. We put great emphasis on developing their literacy skills. We encourage children to read, and to read for enjoyment. We know that sometimes it's hard for children to work at home, so we ensure facilities are available in school. Come into this school at 7.30am on any morning and already you will see students starting to gather for breakfast club, where they will discuss the morning papers whilst listening to classical music. Look over at the sports hall where you might glimpse those who enjoy sport, already taking part in the early morning sessions. You may catch the sounds of some keen musicians who have come in early to practice their piano skills; or you'll see the older pupils outside the library completing last night's homework. Again, this is all about encouraging them to develop independence and to take advantage of the facilities – after all – it is their school.

We also recognise the fact that many students have very specific needs. Therefore, if your child has special educational needs, has English as a second language, or is a more-able student – and of course, everything in between – at Kelmscott, no matter what their starting point, your child will get the support they need to enjoy high rates of progress to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Another very important aspect that is really important to me is that students are happy in school, and enjoying their learning. I want them to look back when they are older and remember their school days as some of the best times in their lives. I want them to feel safe and to be able to take advantage of all that school has to offer.

Children in this school **do** feel safe and they **want** to come to school. Again, this is clearly written in our Ofsted report – and I believe the overriding reason for this is down to the staff in the school – and I mean **all** the staff. Our teachers are some of the most experienced and talented you can get. Our support workers are skilled and provide the wrap-around care that ensures we support students. We have a school nurse, a counsellor, a family support worker and an attendance officer, as well as many others, but the real value in our staff is that they all care about the children. We are a genuinely inclusive school that puts the children first. In my view a school can have as many shiny

new resources as they want, but if the teachers in those schools cannot teach well, or do not genuinely care about their students, then for me, that is not a good school.

Children thrive when they feel safe and enjoy their learning, where they are made to feel that they can achieve and where opportunities are there for them to take advantage of. I believe Kelmscott is a school where those principles apply. We are not perfect, but I believe we genuinely offer a first class education for your child.

I hope having listened to what I have had to say, you have a better understanding of both my values as the headteacher and the values that underpin this school. I hope that it has come across that we do not put barriers up if we think a child won't achieve; in fact, we go out of our way to try to remove those barriers; but we do expect students to have respect, to behave and to try their very best... we want the same for them as you do as parents.

Lastly I would like to thank you for coming this evening and I hope that you have found the answers to any questions you may have had. If however, you do have any further questions, then do not hesitate to either speak to myself or other senior members of staff, who will be around for a while longer in the hall this evening. Or – and I would strongly recommend this – you come to visit us during the school working day by signing up to any of the sessions available throughout the whole of next week.

Many thanks again for giving up your time this evening and I look forward to working with you in the future.