

OPEN EVENING SPEECH 2016

Good Evening Parents and Year 6 pupils, I am delighted to welcome you this evening. My name is Siobhan Lowe and I am really happy that I am sharing the stage with the young people from our school.

Apologise for the q's and issues with parking, we are incredibly popular and due to the Building works are quite confined with parking. This will obviously be remedied by September when the new block is opened to our students.

Apologise for unpainted areas and other spaces that look incomplete we are in the midst of a refurb with replacement doors, ceilings, lighting etc. - we are investing!

I hope that tonight we will be able to share with you that special ingredient that makes TGS such an exceptional school. I do know that this is very important time for you as you decide on your daughter's education for the next 7 years.

My aim is to outline for you why I believe that TGS is the right choice for your daughter, our ethos and aims and to give you a flavour of how we operate on a daily basis.

Our Ethos is quite simple we enable all of our students to be 'the best that they can be'.

Martin Luther King's call to all men to be the best they can be really resonates with my personal beliefs and ethos

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'

We believe that every student should be given every opportunity to achieve not only academically but personally.

We value each and every one of our students and what they bring to our school community

We celebrate all of our achievements and encourage our students to value each other.

How do we achieve this?

We work hard to provide an environment that is safe and secure and nurturing.

We aim to instil confidence so that our young people are happy and make a positive contribution to society.

We encourage respect for all and a real love of learning.

We help our students to prepare for our ever changing world.

We work as a team; our belief is that we are all in this together.

So Is TGS the right school for you?

We are quite unique in that we are a girl's school with a mixed Sixth form- so girls are used to seeing boys around the school. However, learning in Ks3-4 is in a female only domain.

There was a Newspaper article yesterday that said the following....

Girls in single-sex schools can spend their formative years 'knowing they can do things free from the pressures of worrying about 'what boys will think.....

Some could be put off studying maths, science and engineering because the boys might consider it ‘unsexy’ – barring them from potentially fulfilling and lucrative careers in these fields.

Jane Lunnon, head of Wimbledon High, bemoaned the fact that some girls at co-educational schools ‘wear makeup like armour’ and constantly feel their looks are being ‘assessed by boys’.

She said: ‘ the Boy/girl relationships often does get uncomfortably in the way at this stage - who’s going out with who and who likes who can be very distracting...

Those in all-female schools make better progress than those who attend mixed schools

"Girls are less self-conscious in single-sex schools; they are certainly more confident and more likely to speak up for themselves ... because they are less worried about what others, particularly boys, think of them,"

To put this simply girls in a girl’s school do better.

They are a place where a girl can discover who she is; know her true value and capabilities.

A place where she can find her voice , explore , experiment, try out new things and new roles , follow her ambitions without worrying about what boys think.

We get to know the individual

Here at TGS we have 8 Tutor groups, each class has a tutor; the tutors monitor friendships, groupings and the academic progress that is being made.

Our Tutors and their classes are looked after by Heads of Year, who monitor the academic progress as well as the pastoral care of the year.

It is quite amazing how quickly our students fit in and spending quality time of 25mins every day allows the tutor to really get to know you very well and very quickly.

We work with and listen to our students-

Senior students attend Governors meetings where student issues are discussed and actioned- we have a Senior Executive group of the Sixth form senior prefects as well as the year 11 and we sit and discuss the vision and future plans for the school- our recent campaign s called ‘shout about it’ has been devised by our students to make sure we let everyone know how good TGS is...

We have made changes to the subjects that we teach and also how we teach so that our students learn.

Our Older students run the year councils and conversations and debates are had on, the toilets, the food that we eat, privileges for the older students- Friendly Friday, Welcoming Wednesday!!!

Make up and uniform I believe are hot topics!

We have excellent teachers who are experts in their fields.

We have a very experienced team of staff who are qualified in their subject area- teachers chose to teach here at TGS.

We do teach a traditional curriculum with over 15 subjects on offer, but it is broad and very balanced. As students move through the school we enrich their learning experience even more by adding additional subjects.

Our focus is not just on exams and what grade will be achieved but the progress made by the individual student and developing the skills that they will need for the future-

- Independence
- Leadership-
- Team work-
- Empathy-
- Problem solving-
- Determination/resilience
- Creativity-
- Ability to listen-
- Adaptability-...

Our staff really do care about the success of their students and devote huge amounts of time to them.

We stream our classes so that

Our students can showcase their strengths and accelerate their learning and receive additional support if needed.

We want to get to know our students, their abilities before we decide their pace of work.

We gradually group our students according to their abilities in Science, Maths and English.

We have Fast track classes and core,

We do not have bottom set classes; we know that girls work well and make faster progress if they work alongside students who challenge them and help them with their understanding.

We do not force our students on to pathways but recognise the individuals strengths and abilities, you may be an aspiring Astrophysicist so may take triple science, you may be a potential Prima ballerina, a gifted dancer but need support in maths , our responsibility to you is to help your light so shine...

We are very aware that we all mature at different rates and some of us take a little longer and need a little help.

We are committed to doing the very best for you-personally as well as academically.

Our Examination results are outstanding

Over 80% of our students achieved at least 5 A*-C GCSE's

Nearly 70 % achieved an A**-C in English and Maths

30% of all grades were at least an A*A

Over 30% of all students achieved at least 5A*/A for their GCSE's

Our progress 8 score showed that nearly all students achieved a half grade more than expected. Given that the national score was negative last year, our students make tremendous progress.

It is far more about your starting point and where you eventually progress to.

Almost all subjects performed significantly above national averages.

As a testament to our successes a great number of our students choose to stay with us for their Sixth form

Our A level results and BTEC results were outstanding with all of our science students achieving a Distinction A*!

Our students go onto study the traditional subjects at uni

- science/tech
- medicine
- Aeronautical engineering,
- biochemistry,

- Pharmacy
- History
- Fine Art
- Teaching

One of our students came to help out recently at @women in science day' she studied Astrophysics and is now investigating Dark matter!

An increasing number were enabled by their vocational experiences to pursue more skills based degree courses.

- Fashion
- Textiles
- Cosmetology
- IT
- Design
- Dance
- Drama
- Midwifery
- Child Nursing
- Social sciences

An increasing number of ours students are involved in Apprenticeships and we work closely with all of students to ensure that they are choosing the right path for them.

We help when needed.

We monitor our student's progress on a regular basis when students are either tested or receive levelled homework's. We look at their Attitudes to learning and spend time encouraging our reluctant learners.

If a student is struggling, we help them with additional support,

1:1 tuition,

Small group work with a focus on literacy and numeracy

Homework clubs,

Mentors,

Paired reading

Saturday school

Some students struggle with their emotions and mental health- we have a club, support group for that.

We employ SSW's who work with our Inclusion dept. to support students who find life hard and there is additional support from our SENCO and her team

We identify students with gifts and talents and provide a very extensive programme for these students. We work with LEH in Twicks and also have a partnership programme with Cambridge and Oxford.

We will do all we can to help you to succeed but it is a partnership, we need you to work hard and we need you as parents to support us.

We are Aspirational, we have high standards.

We set aspirational targets; we have a culture of high expectations and prioritise the pursuit of excellence across all aspects of the schools work. Striving for excellence at all times for our students

We do have over 1300 teenagers here and you can imagine there are occasions when students push our boundaries, we deal with it, we will exclude.

Behaviour and our student's attitude to learning are exemplary and their behaviour outside of lessons is impeccable. Our students from all backgrounds are exceptionally considerate of one another and get on incredibly well.

We have high expectations, not only of dress, our uniform but in how we treat each other. All of us are very proud of belonging to this exceptional school

We will have 21st century facilities

We will have some amazing Facilities- bricks and mortar do not make a school , however we are nearly 85 years old and some parts are well past their sell by date so The first phase should be completed by May 2017 with the second phase in place by 2018.

We are so excited about this new phase in our school history and you will be the first to experience the new builds.

So is TGS the right school for you? A school where

- Staff are committed
- We experience success – not only academically but personally- 2 Olympians, numerous actresses and a NASA scientist!!
A School where
- we care for the individual
- we work as a team
- we are determined to succeed
- we are aspirational
- We have such enjoyment and so much Fun.

We strive for excellence your excellence to **let you be all that you can be**
I look forward to our future working partnership.

