

HEADMASTER'S SPEECH

CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL AWARDS EVENING

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17TH 2015

How do you capture, compress, distil a whole year of School life into one Evening? It's a pretty daunting challenge, I am sure you will agree. One answer might be this remarkable collection of cups and trophies. And another response might be this splendid 28 page epic Programme with so many names and achievements recorded within it. I have another answer for you in a few minutes. But as well as addressing this theme in these remarks, I'd also like to reflect on another fascinating question: what makes a school outstanding? And more daringly, what makes this School outstanding? Twice in the summer – after both our A level and our GCSE results I was asked by more than one reporter to explain the secrets of our success: “that’s wonderful, Mr Hale, the best A level results in Lincolnshire for 13 years running! Now, what’s your secret, then?” “Congratulations, Mr Hale! 100% of your GCSE students getting 9 A*-C passes, and 100% 7 A*-C passes in each of the last 5 years. Tremendous! Now. how do you explain that? What’s the magic?”

Well, each of us can have our own individual thoughts on that. And it's something I'd encourage you to dwell on. Because, ladies and gentlemen, students, let us be in no doubt that Caistor Grammar School is an outstanding school, is a wonderful community of learning and of caring, is a tremendous place to grow up, to study and to work in. And we should not take this for granted! We should not believe that this comes about naturally as some sort of accident of nature, or that it is a matter of entitlement, or that it is bound to be the case. It is no accident, it happens by design. It occurs because we will it to be so! It is achieved because of the actions of people: the will of the people who work here, who study here, who govern our goings on here, who send their children here, and of people who inter-act with us, and who wish us well. The people make the difference: their commitment, their drive, their talent, their determination, their ambition: that's what makes the difference. We are exceedingly lucky to have such people in our community and I salute and am grateful for all the work of our teaching and non-teaching staff, our students – especially those here

tonight, and especially those who were in Years 11 and 13 last year, and of our Governors, and not forgetting the invaluable role of the parents of our students.

So people make a difference, but so do values: the values that are dominant in this School are really vital to its success. And here my two questions (“How do you capture a year?” and “What’s the secret of our success?”) elegantly come together and combine. It is a core value for us that we want all students to grow through sharing their talents with others in as many ways and with as much activity as possible. We want to grow through sharing in music, drama, sport, DofE, Public Speaking as well as studying! And we want to do our best, be our best selves in every single one of these activities. Even in “the whiteness of a washed pocket handkerchief” as D.H. Lawrence said in his poem “We are Transmitters” and I say to you, even in this Programme: life shimmers through it! Effort has been made, love has been given. And the result is pleasing.

I’ve tried to capture our year and our values too, I believe, in 50 days, 50 moments, 50 marvellous events – with my special top 10 of 2014/15 year at the end. It’s not an exhaustive list or, I imagine, to everyone’s taste but it’s an honest attempt, so here goes....

School Events

Newspaper Days (December and June)	Awards Evening
Junior House Music	First day of the School year
Senior House Music	Last School Assembly
Junior House Plays	Service of 9 Lessons and Carols
Senior House Plays	Easter Service
Senior Prefect Team hustings	Commemoration Service
Y11 into 12 Science Aspiration Day (u)	Remembrance Day
Y10 Work Experience week	Last Assembly done by Senior Prefect Team
11+ testing days	Macmillan Coffee morning
Y6 Induction Days	Y7 Sleepover
D & T Exam Work exhibition	Y12 Challenge of Industry
Art Department’s Exam Work exhibition	House Cross Country
Y8 Orienteering (Maths Dept)	House Pancake Race
Y7/8 Public Speaking Competition	House Tug-of-War (u)
Y9 Balloon Debate	

Trips

Y7 trips to Whisby (Biology Dept)

Y7 trip to Walsingham (RE Dept)
Y7 trip to Conisbrough (History Dept)
English Department trip to Battlefields
Morocco trip (Geography Dept)
China trip (International Ambassadors)
Berlin trip (German Dept)
German Exchange
Art trip to London
Y9 Bowling trip
Ski trip to Italy

My Top Ten

The Good Mental Health Awareness week (u)
Upstanding Day for Y9 (u)
Trip to Beth Shalom and hearing Iby Knill (u)
“Oliver!” (u)
Children in Need Fancy Dress Day
The Superzone Inter-School Athletics
Sports Day
Newlands (Y7)
School Walk
Sixth Form Ball

u = unique to this year

I'm delighted that we have Iby Knill here tonight as our Guest of Honour. She seems to me to be a completely inspirational figure. I know our students who have met her earlier today have found her to be so. Our response to hearing her speak at Beth Shalom last November, was to create an Upstanding Day for Year 9. We'll be doing it again this year, too. I'm sure Iby will have something to say about what this means.

2014/15 was a wonderful year in our School: full of memorable moments. We can be very proud of what we achieved last year. And we can be very proud of our School and what it stands for. It is a cause well worth fighting for!

Thank you.

Roger Hale September 2015