

Sixth from Open evening October 2023 -Student Senior Team Speech transcripts

Danny Davies – Head Boy at Carre’s Grammar School

Good evening everyone, my name is Danny Davies and I am studying English language, history and photography A levels across the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form, hoping to go on to study journalism at university.

I hope this evening so far has been informative about Sixth Form and the jump up from GCSEs to A-levels – speaking from experience, the first thing I would like to say to you tonight is to not be under any illusions regarding the challenges that will be posed by A-levels as opposed to GCSEs. The two years that you will spend in the sixth form will be even more testing of your academic abilities and perseverance than what you are experiencing now with your GCSEs – the courses on offer are designed to bridge the gap between school and university, and the effort that they require reflect the fact. However, the support and guidance on offer across the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form will help you through this period, and the different stages of the journey leading to either university or an apprenticeship, from the transition period at the beginning of year 12 to the exams at the end of year 13.

Even though I had spent the previous 5 years as a student at Carre’s, and already had the familiarity of the school I was going to base at, I was apprehensive about sixth form – the idea of essentially starting afresh, meeting completely new people, learning new things at a higher level and having lessons at different sites was incredibly overwhelming – especially as GCSEs were still the main priority. Therefore, the second thing I would like to say to you, is please don’t feel as though you’re alone if you can relate to what I’ve just described, as I can assure you that you won’t be. If you are feeling apprehensive, the three schools do an incredible job of accommodating for every member of the sixth form, making sure that everyone feels included and welcomed into this new environment.

However, I hope any sense of apprehension you have is balanced with a sense of excitement. While it may seem overwhelming at first, this is your opportunity to start being treated more like an adult, with more flexibility over uniform, being allowed several privileges not afforded to students lower down in the schools, and the ability to choose from a wide catalogue of ‘enrichment’ activities to participate in on a Wednesday afternoon – from the likes of football and basketball to cooking and completing an Extended Project. As well as this, a broad and vibrant range of subjects are on offer for every student, including completely new subjects, opening the doors to any career. For instance, after taking fine art at GCSE, I was adamant that I wouldn’t be choosing the subject again in any format for A-level - something that lasted all of half an hour during the open evening, until I discovered the photography course which eventually became the third of my three options. Because of this, another thing I would like to suggest to you is to have an open mind for the rest of the evening; the most essential part of picking your options is to ensure you enjoy the subject, but even if you already have an idea of what you would or wouldn’t like to do, it is most definitely worth finding out as much as you can about as many courses as possible, as you might just be surprised.

So, to summarise, here are what I thought were the three most important takeaways from the sixth form open evening I attended two years ago. The first is that the work, and the workload, is going to be challenging – however, the three schools across the Sixth Form have everything, from resources to support, to help you successfully make your way through this period. The second is that it's absolutely okay to be nervous about the jump up to A-levels and everything that comes with them, but remember that any anxieties will soon be replaced by the excitement of new opportunities available to you. Finally, have a curious and open mind tonight. Speak to teachers and students in subjects you enjoy the most and would like to choose, but don't discount others without at least finding out more.

Lydia Edwards – Deputy Head Girl at Carre's Grammar School

My name is Lydia Edwards, and I am deputy head girl here at my base school of Carre's. I am currently studying Geography, English Literature and Ethics and Philosophy for my A-levels, and I am hoping to study Politics and International Relations at university next year.

I joined the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form in September 2022, having come from a school outside of Sleaford. Joining from an all girls' school, I was ready for a change of environment and focus when it came to Sixth Form. I have two younger brothers' here at Carre's and their enjoyment and positivity about the school immediately interested me to open my options for my Sixth Form studies. I was sat here just like you are tonight, 2 years ago, feeling slightly overwhelmed and anxious by the thought of A Levels, because it seemed like such a drastic change from secondary school, especially since I was an external student. However, even before starting in year 12, I already felt reassured by the support facilities and friendliness of the Sixth Form, including the induction day in June which made me feel so welcomed into the school environment. The transition work also prepared me for my subject choices and introduced me to the amount and type of studying I would be undergoing over the next 2 years.

Since joining the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form, I have made lots of friends and quickly fitted in to the Sixth Form environment like any other student. I have lessons at both Carre's and Saint George's, so although I was a new student, the different schools were new to everyone in the year, helping me feel that everyone was in the same position as me. Having lessons across the different sites also introduces you to new people and teachers, even if you have been at a Sleaford school since year 7. One of the most attractive features of the sixth form is the huge variety of subjects and courses available, which are open to all students across the three schools. Any combination of subjects and courses can be studied, from A-levels to BTECs and CTECs, demonstrating that the Sixth Form is inclusive, and positively accommodates for every student and their needs.

In addition to this, our weekly assemblies and core sessions give students the opportunity to prepare for their post-18 choices, whether that be university, apprenticeships, or employment. We have many talks and assemblies throughout

the year about future life skills, including many external visitors, which gives us the opportunity to learn about all the options available to us following our A level studies. This truly reflects the inclusive nature of the Sixth Form, as they recognise that although university is the most popular option after school, there are many more pathways available which we are equally educated about.

It goes without saying, that A Levels are called Advanced levels for a reason, they are quite a big jump from GCSE. From my experience, I have found that the biggest difference between GCSE and A Level is the transition from studying 10-12 subjects to doing 3 subjects in significantly more depth. However, if you entirely apply yourself and have the determination to persevere in your subjects, then the hard work really will pay off.

To finish, I'd like to recommend my 3 best tips for sixth form study. Firstly, ensure you select the subjects that you truly enjoy, because you will be studying them for 5 hours a week for 2 years. By choosing a subject you enjoy, you are likely to put in the effort and have the motivation to meet the demands of the subject. Secondly, sixth form is a more independent learning environment than lower school, your week is not as structured out for you, meaning you need to take responsibility during your study periods. As Mr Smith with often tell you, 'There is no such thing as a free period'. Thirdly, make full use of all the opportunities available to you. Such as prefect roles like myself, careers talks, work experience and much more.

Essentially, the more you put in the more you will get out. The more opportunities you embrace within sixth form mean you will get undoubtedly more out of your experience and better prepare yourself for the next stage in life, whatever that may be.

Hannah Middleton – Head Girl at Kesteven and Sleaford High School

Hello, my name is Hannah, and I'm proud to be the head girl at KSHS. I am studying Maths, English, and History at A-level. I am going to tell you all about the extra-curricular opportunities that are available to you in sixth form, which can help break up your week, and means you don't just spend all your time in lesson.

For example, 10 hours a week will be spent doing independent work in supervision sessions or in free periods, and some will be spent in Enrichment. This is when, on a Wednesday afternoon, the entire year group engages in one of the many activities on offer. This could be playing sports, cooking, volunteering, or really whatever you are passionate about. I chose to complete an EPQ which gives you the chance to produce a piece of work on a topic of your choice, and I found it to be a really valuable opportunity as I produced something I was proud of. Enrichment means that you can spend time your friends, make new ones, and improve your skills at something not always offered in lessons.

School trips are also offered to enhance your education, or as part of engaging students in worthwhile experiences that can supplement their time in school. During my time in sixth form, I have been lucky enough to complete my Gold DofE

Expedition, as well as go on a trip to Borneo for 3 weeks. Both of these experiences have produced fantastic memories of my time within school here and allowed me to overcome new challenges I hadn't encountered before as, believe me, camping in rainy Yorkshire for a week was not easy. Academically, many subjects offer trips throughout sixth form which support in-school learning and allow you to fully understand and engage with the topics you are taught, making them a worthwhile opportunity, as well as a bit of fun.

Alongside these opportunities, support is given to us through activities in form time and core sessions every week. The 5 values of VESPA, with those being Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice, and Attitude, are used to create a foundation of positivity regarding schoolwork and studying within school. This helps us to create effective and healthy study skills, which we can put into practice every day.

You also have the chance to put yourself forward for a role of responsibility in school. This could be being a subject prefect, a well-being ambassador, or having a role in the student senior team. Taking up one of these roles allows you to give something back to the school through helping others and being involved in the processes that you don't always notice are going on around you in school. It is a highly enriching opportunity which contributes to your own personal development as you prepare for your future beyond sixth form.

While sixth form can seem daunting as the next big step you take in your life, Sleaford Joint Sixth Form ensures you are supported throughout, and these extra opportunities are just one part of that. Thank you for listening and know that I am more than happy to chat to anyone about any queries this evening. On a final note, I want to wish all of you the best of luck for the future, and the coming year in particular, regardless of where you go and what you choose to do.

Alexander Corbould – Deputy Head Boy at Carre's Grammar School

Good evening, everyone. I'm Alexander and I study Maths, History, German and Extended Project across all of the schools in the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form. I've been at Carre's since 2017 and, afterwards, I hope to study History and German at university. This evening, my job is to tell you what it's like to study across all three schools in the sixth form: Carre's, KSHS and St George's. Of course, not everyone will study at all the schools. However, it was one of the things I was most worried about when I was sat where you are two years ago, and I'd like to assure you it's not as scary as it may seem and has actually been a great thing for me.

Honestly, when I first got my timetable, my heart sank when I found out I only had one lesson at Carre's. After all, I'd spent all of my time in secondary school there and knew the teachers and the school well. The idea of finding my way around not one, but two new sites was terrifying to me. I remember my first German lesson at St George's well. I had no idea where to go and knew no one in my class of 8. Walking in alone was a bit daunting, but we all soon became firm friends and now have the real closeness which a small class can offer you. Nonetheless, no matter how many study your subject, you get to know everyone really quickly, and the teaching is always excellent.

As for KSHS, my maths teachers couldn't have been more understanding of me timing the walk down the hill badly and arriving sheepishly to their lessons late. They made the academic transition so smooth for me, and everyone in my new classes was so welcoming. I can honestly say that having new teachers and different people in my classes has created a more fulfilling intellectual environment and opened so many doors socially.

A big concern in my first few weeks was the walk between the schools. How long would it take? Who would I go with? What would I do if I got there early? To answer the first question, the walk from Carre's to KSHS is about ten minutes, and St George's is exactly in the middle of the two. After a few weeks, the second and third questions were answered as I got to know people at my new schools. You'll find that more people than you think are in your option block, and you can walk with them, and sit with them at break or lunch. Even if that's not the case, I cannot emphasise enough how quickly you make new friends, and there's soon no shortage of people to sit or walk with.

What I can say about the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form is that it really offers the best of both worlds for students already at one of the schools. You get the familiarity of your old school but get to experience a range of teaching styles and meet a variety of your contemporaries who share your interests and passions. Even if you've never visited Sleaford before, the environment here is amazing and you'll fit right in. I really hope I have done a little bit to make you less anxious about going to the different sites, and I'd like to end by saying that you should choose subjects you enjoy without worrying about where they are taught- moving around the schools really isn't that scary.