



Founded 1714

The Nelson Thomlinson School Wigton Cumbria CA7 9PX

...still "outstanding"
(Ofsted, May 2013)



Tel: 016973 42160

Fax: 016973 49160

Email: admin@nts.cumbria.sch.uk

www.nts.cumbria.sch.uk

Headmaster:

Mr DS Northwood, M.A., M.Ed.

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

It has been a long and difficult term in many ways and I am sure that your children are looking forward to the Easter holidays as much as the staff are. In this context it is all the more remarkable that so much has been achieved by pupils in terms of the school production, competitions and other extra-curricular events. Do read the school newsletter that you should have received yesterday; it says so much about the school and the dedication and commitment of both pupils and staff.

Les Misérables

The quality of this year's musical production is perhaps best summed up by the words of our Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Lynch, who described it as the best she has seen in 32 years. The performances of the leads and the supporting cast were impressive indeed, with the two male leads, Cameron Mitchell and Jamie Dodd, being outstanding. I found it hard to watch the performance without grinning from ear to ear and I admit to shedding the odd tear here and there. Many parents came up to me afterwards saying how proud I must be and congratulating me as the Head of 'such a fine school'; I quickly pointed out, of course, that whilst I was naturally very proud indeed, I am also very lucky to have such hard-working, dedicated and talented staff and pupils. It was a truly memorable event and one for which Mrs Carroll and Miss Raven deserve particular credit.

Girls' uniform

Many of the stores where parents purchase school uniform have stocked 'skinny leg'-style trousers in the so-called "school section". This has caused some confusion for parents during the year who have bought these items believing them to be acceptable. In the school prospectus it states very clearly that 'classically-tailored plain black trousers' are to be worn. High fashion or 'skinny leg' trousers are not acceptable at NTS and should not be purchased over the forthcoming weeks or months when you are buying school uniform.

Uniform generally

Canvas shoes or plimsolls are not acceptable at NTS. The prospectus clearly states that 'black traditional-style plain shoes (low heeled)' should be worn. In future, now that this has been clarified, we will speak to individuals and their parents if standards are not adhered to.

Homework

Last time I wrote, I mentioned the issue of homework. Just to update you, we have reviewed and amended the school's homework policy and I have spoken to my colleagues about the importance of setting appropriate homework and on the correct nights. Equally, I would like to reinforce the importance of pupils writing their homework down, in detail, in their planners every time they receive some. I should be most grateful if you, as parents, would check your child's planner – even more often than once a week if necessary – to ensure that things are working as they should. I am very happy to be contacted if there are problems on this front and I would much rather nip things in the bud than allow things to fester.

Staff changes

I am sad to say that Mrs Graham, teacher of Science, has resigned. Classes are being covered by qualified professionals and we are doing all we can to minimise the impact, particularly on examination classes. There have been a number of other changes to staffing recently:

- Mr Walker (currently Assistant Head of Sixth Form) was appointed Head of Sixth Form (starting September 2014), replacing Mrs Lynch who retires at the end of this year
- Dr Lovegrove (Science teacher and Staff Governor) was appointed Assistant Head of Sixth Form (starting September 2014)
- Mr Noble and Miss Milligan will join the Science Department in September 2014 to replace Miss Dunne (currently on a temporary contract and wishing to pursue her charity work next year) and to fill the gap left by current non-specialist staff who will be moving across to other departments
- Ms Castle (temporary) was taken on this year to replace Mr Richardson in the ICT department
- Miss Hayton was appointed 2nd in Science (following Mrs Love's promotion to Head of Science at Newman School)
- Mrs Hudson was (re-)appointed Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Mr Ahart will be teaching History and RE from September
- Miss Rice and Mr Blackwell will be covering maternity leave in the Geography Department
- Ms Symes will be joining the History/RE Department as a Teaching Assistant from May following the imminent departure of Claire Duncanson (who will be pursuing a promotion at another school)
- Mrs Brown will be joining the Maths Department as a Teaching Assistant from September following the imminent departure of Ms Gilhooly (who will be spending more time with her family)

Mrs Puskar (Modern Languages) and Mrs Dixon (RE) have been appointed as Tutors in the Professional Development Department.

I am particularly pleased with the new appointments and wish all the staff above the best of luck in their new roles.

The recent allegations concerning a suspended member of staff

I have been instructed by the police and the local authority not to divulge any information whilst investigations continue. I am pleased that the media attention has died down for the time being but I am also aware that the matter is not over and I am grateful for your continued discretion here. The member of staff was suspended immediately, without prejudice, and has a right to anonymity.

Governor positions

Two Parent-Governor positions are currently available. Russell Thwaites has expressed his wish to stand and we are therefore looking for an additional recruit here. Should we end up with more than two candidates, we will need to hold an election. Please contact the school reception if you are interested in the post.

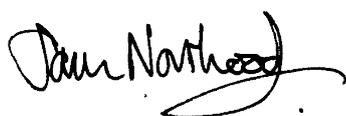
Sixth Form Mezzanine

The new Sixth Form mezzanine is on schedule, with building due to commence in the May half term and expected to take approximately 12 weeks. This is to accommodate the ever-growing Sixth Form, which has long since suffered from inadequate space in terms of both social and study areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of what we do here at The Nelson Thomlinson School and urge you, once again, to contact the school if you think we could improve the service we provide.

If your child is in Year 11 or in the Sixth Form, could I please ask you to impress upon them the importance of revision over the Easter break? It is obviously a time for them to relax but it is also an opportunity to consolidate what they have learnt prior to the examination season.

Kind regards,



Mr DS Northwood
Headmaster