



The Nelson Thomlinson School
Wigton
Cumbria
CA7 9PX

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

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

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Dear Parents,

Medication in school

Parents are reminded that all pupil medication should be handed into the Main School Office where it will be administered as required. *Paracetamol*, *Ibuprofen* or cold remedies should not be brought into school and carried around by pupils; a system is in place in the Reception for the distribution of *paracetamol*.

Parents of children who require medication in school will be asked to sign a permission form detailing when this should be administered.

Our "Prevent Duty"

The radicalisation of young, often vulnerable, children and adults is a source of worry for parents, schools and the Government. In the news, we see and also hear constant reminders of religious extremists, atrocities in Syria, terrorism and so on. We also have to remember that young people can be radicalised by other groups, for example "far right" groups that try to entice people into forcing their racist or other beliefs onto others through acts of violence or terror.

In The Nelson Thomlinson School the safety of our children is at the heart of everything we do. The values that permeate everyday life in NTS promote a sense of community, support for others and preparing young adults who have a strong sense of decency: we refer to this as NTS-ness.

To help further support our pupils, the staff at NTS will undertake training on the "Prevent Duty" which is government advice for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.

Behaviour on buses

After the half-term break, I should be grateful if you would remind your child of the importance of good behaviour on buses to and from school. Bus drivers will clearly do what they can to monitor the situation here, and Sixth-Formers have also been asked to report instances of bad behaviour directly to members of the Senior Management Team.

Dropping off /picking up pupils by car

Parents are politely requested not to drop off their children in the bus bay. This is potentially extremely hazardous. It also creates potentially dangerous conditions for buses if parents pause immediately outside the main gates to the school, on either side, to drop off or collect their child. Ideally, you should park *temporarily* (given the parking restrictions on Lowmoor Road) at least 30 yards from the entrance to the school to drop off or collect your child, or even further away, somewhere in town.

Reports/Progress Reviews

Parents of pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 will have received their Attitude to Learning (AtL) grades already, and parents of Year 11 pupils and Sixth Form students will receive them as part of their child's Progress Review. Although the format of our reporting system and the way we present progress data has not changed, the structure of when we report to parents has been further refined to ensure that data is, as far as possible, presented at the most appropriate times during the course of the academic year. This information is contained within the letter in the report book from Mr Parker, Deputy Head (Curriculum). In due course, parents of pupils in all other year groups will receive the same information – as and when Progress Reviews are distributed.

Targets and GCSE Grades

By half term, all pupils in all year groups will have had their curriculum targets set, outlining the goal posts to aim for during this academic year in each subject. For Years 7, 8 and 9, we are using revised NTS 'levels', and expect a typical pupil to make no less than two sub-levels of progress during each year.

For the Sixth Form, targets have been set for minimum expectations at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 respectively, bearing in mind that all Year 12 students will sit AS examinations at the end of the year, regardless of whether they are studying a 'new' two year A Level, or an 'old' AS/A2 course.

For Years 10 and 11, targets are set to represent the minimum expected grade for the end of each course. For Year 11, these are on a scale of A* to G for GCSEs, Pass, Merit or Distinction for BTECs and Level 1, 2 or 3 for Entry Level courses.

However, for Year 10, there are new GCSEs underway in English Language, English Literature and Maths using the new scale of Grade 1 (lowest) to Grade 9 (highest). There is no direct comparison for grades on the 'old' A* to G scale and grades on the 'new' 1 to 9 scale. The latest guidance that we have suggests that Grade 1 is roughly equivalent to the bottom of Grade G, Grade 5 is roughly equivalent to a *good* Grade C, and Grade 7 is roughly equivalent to Grade A. The top 25% of pupils nationally in each subject may achieve the new Grade 9.

Our advice to pupils and parents is not to try to make comparisons, as the 'rough equivalencies' will change over time as more 'new' GCSEs replace their 'old' counterparts. All pupils should simply aim to do their very best so that they may beat the minimum target grades that have been set in each subject.

Year 11 striving for success events

We want every pupil to succeed at the highest possible level, regardless of ability. We know that examinations can be stressful, and that revision and preparation for examinations is challenging and requires maximum willpower to ensure it is time well spent. With these points in mind, we are putting in place a number of events to help pupils achieve success:

- November 4th, by invitation from 6.30pm to 8.00pm – Y11 Study Skills evening for those ‘at risk’ in English and/or Maths.
- November 20th – ‘Mindset for exams’, interactive workshops presented by external speakers to all Year 11 pupils in groups of 60 spread across the school day.
- Year 11 Intervention sessions – Many subjects will be inviting specific pupils to attend extra sessions at lunchtime and/or after school to help them improve their knowledge, understanding and skills, maximise outcomes in Controlled Assessment/coursework, revise, and refine examination techniques. These sessions will begin soon, and continue across the curriculum throughout much of the academic year.

If you receive an invitation for your child to attend the Study Skills evening, or Intervention sessions in any subject, we would very much appreciate your support in ensuring that your child makes every possible effort to attend. With your support, together, we can help to maximise your child’s chances of achieving the success they deserve.

Re-accreditation of our International School Award

You might be interested to know that we recently received a letter from the British Council informing us that **The Nelson Thomlinson School** has been successful in being re-accredited for the International School Award. **Below are some extracts from the assessor’s report:**

You have produced an imaginative curriculum that is based on the core values of global education. The work you have devised and delivered with your Taiwanese partner school, in particular, is effective and promises to flourish into a strong and sustainable collaboration in the future as you progress through your international work.

The emphasis you place on working in a focused way with schools in Taiwan is commendable. Your long-term impact evaluation and future plans are impressive and all demonstrate clear vision and a commitment to maintaining and extending international education in your school. This will have a positive impact generally on your students and the wider community, as you have already seen for yourselves.

Congratulations on the work you have done so far and best wishes for your continued success in the future. Well done! We hope that the scope of your excellent international activities will continue to develop and benefit the school community; your support, commitment, creativity and innovative international work is greatly appreciated.

Much of the credit here should go to Mr Broster and Mrs Johnson.

Teaching School

We also received a letter from Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary, congratulating us on becoming a Teaching School – “a testament to your exceptional leadership and your unwavering commitment to raising standards in our schools.” She goes on to say, “Thank you for all that you have done so far, and continue to do, to improve the life chances of children and young people. I hope that you will continue to strive for excellence and wish you every success for the future.”

In essence this means that the work we have done with other schools to raise standards generally in the county has been recognised and that we now have the authority (and associated funding) to continue our collaborative work in a more formal capacity, sharing good practice for the benefit of all concerned, inviting teachers from other schools to observe the work we do and running training courses for teachers from across the county.

Thank you for your continued support as parents and I wish you a restful half-term break.
Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Northwood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr DS Northwood
Headmaster