



**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.**

September 2019

Dear Parents

Now that the first few days are over, I am pleased to find time to write to you all and update you on recent news and events.

The start of the new term has gone smoothly and, as ever, it is great to see the new Year 7s settling in. **If friends of yours are parents with pupils currently in Year 6, please remind them that our Open Day is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September and that presentations delivered by the Senior Management Team start at 6.00pm (repeated at 6.45pm).** They are free to look around the site that evening, and tours are available during the school day on Monday to Friday of the following week. Please ask them to contact reception to arrange a tour. **NTS pupils currently in Year 11 (and their parents) will be provided with information separately and in a different format.**

It is typically the case that the first letter I send to all parents at the start of the new academic year contains a lot of information and also some important instructions.

**To make things easier for you I have highlighted any instructions in a text box like this one.**

### Examination Results

After several years of curriculum change, we are starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. However, it is important not to draw too many conclusions at this very early stage from our initial results, especially as information about the national picture with which to make comparisons is very scant and unvalidated at this point. Generally speaking, though, in the light of the information we have to hand, we are very encouraged by the results.

In terms of **GCSE results**, the headline figures for attainment reflect the fact that last year's Year 11 were the first cohort to complete all of their GCSEs on the new specifications (mostly examination only assessment) and on the new grading system of grade 1 to grade 9 (where grade 1 = pass, grade 4 = 'standard pass', grade 5 = 'strong pass' and grade 9 = top 20% of all pupils nationally who achieved the grade 7 threshold). 67% of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 grades of 4 or better including English and Maths – a strong result and clearly a cause for celebration. Equally strong is the figure of 45.4% of pupils achieving 5 grades of 5 or better including English and Maths. 38% of the cohort secured the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a statistic that confirms our decision to encourage a programme of 'gold standard' academic learning in the free choice options system for our pupils, and one that is well above the historical national average. 12% of all entries were graded 8 or 9, which is excellent. The following individuals achieved particularly highly: Katie French (seven 9s, one 8, two 7s), Sarah Shingler (six 9s, four 7s), Philippa Hall (four 9s, three 8s, three 7s), Evie Sproat (four 9s, two 8s, four 7s), Matthew Jones (three 9s, six 8s and one 7), Katie Blackledge (four 9s, three 8s, two

7s, one 6), Kate Southwell (two 9s, seven 8s, one 7) and Rebecca Watson (two 9s, seven 8s, one 6), Daniel Scott (four 9s, one 8, four 7s, one 6) and Matthew Scott (three 9s, three 8s, three 7s, one 6).

Our **BTEC and Cambridge National results** are also very pleasing with the majority of pupils securing Level 2 Passes (equivalent to GCSE grade 4) or higher.

Many congratulations to the 227 pupils who completed their Key Stage 4 examinations last year and many thanks to all the staff who taught them!

At **A Level** the outcomes are very pleasing, reflecting the nature of a truly comprehensive Sixth Form cohort. The vast majority of our cohorts always complete a programme of 3 A Levels or equivalent, with some completing 4 A Levels. A good number also completed an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or Core Maths in addition to their 3, or indeed 4, A Levels. Overall, across all qualifications the average points score per entry (APS) currently stands at 32.8, equating to an average grade of C+. However, the statistics of 71.2% of all grades being A\*-C and 41.4% being A\*-B are perhaps more meaningful in outlining how well the students achieved overall.

In terms of individual successes, there were a number of stand-out candidates this year: Misha Atkinson achieved 5 A\*'s and is taking up her place at St Andrews University to read Biochemistry, Alana Halpin achieved 4 A\*'s and 1 A (Biology, Oxford University), Chloe Waning achieved 3 A\*'s and 1 A (Art Foundation course, Cumbria University), Callum Clark achieved 1 A\* and 3 A's (Economics, St Andrews University), Frances Nutley achieved 1 A\* and 3 A's (Maths, York University) and Aidan Folland achieved 1 A\* and 2 A's (Aeronautical Engineering, Loughborough University).

The indications are that the vast majority of our students have been successful in securing their offers for university, apprenticeships or work-related training, or have chosen to take a gap year. As ever I would like to thank the students for their efforts in securing their grades but also the staff involved in helping our sixth-formers and Year 11 pupils reach their potential and their destinations of choice – particularly Mr Priddle, Dr Lovegrove, Mrs Pearson and our Careers Leader, Mrs Mullarkey.

#### Teaching groups and setting in Year 8 and 9

In the latter part of the summer term, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Mr Parker, Curriculum Deputy Head liaise to formalise the teaching groups for the following year. For the new Year 8, the Maths curriculum block (including Science and Computing) update their existing arrangements from the setting structure that was implemented in Year 7, and this tends to roll forward into Year 9 as well. However, for the Year 8 English curriculum block (including French, Spanish, Geography, History and RE) it is usually more of a compromise to reach a solution that enables pupils to be best placed within the teaching class structure. With a maximum of 8 classes and classroom capacity in many rooms being 32 seats, there is often overlap between the classes, tending to make them more mixed ability. For the new Year 9, the English curriculum block (especially on the y-half/H, M, W side) is now deliberately more mixed ability, because the data across the different subjects did not support agreeable moves for pupils to either 'move up' or 'move down'.

Practical subjects (PE, Technology, Art, Music) continue to teach mixed ability classes in Years 7 to 9 as normal.

Mr Parker spoke to both Year 8 and Year 9 pupils in their 'welcome back assembly' to explain the situation, and to reiterate the key message that each individual pupil is expected to show an attitude to learning that will enable them to be the best that they can be in every subject, regardless of which teaching group they are in.

### Equipment for Learning

All pupils must now have with them in lessons the following 8 items of basic equipment.

**Writing pen (including spares)**

**Pencil**

**Pencil Sharpener**

**Ruler**

**Eraser**

**Calculator**

**Red pen/ biro**

**Green pen/ biro**

It would be **helpful** if they also had a glue stick, colouring pencils, some highlighter pens, a protractor and a pair of compasses but these items are not essential.

These items should be available for all classes. Most are available from the Mathematics Office at extremely competitive prices. In particular, Casio scientific calculators are available at £8.25 each. Calculators will be useful in several lessons, not just in Mathematics, and we recommend that all pupils possess, and gain familiarity with, a Casio fx-83GTX (previously fx-83GT).

Please note that *pots* of correction fluid are *not* allowed in school; however, pupils are allowed to use the pen-style correction fluid or correction tape provided these are used carefully and sparingly. (These are *not* allowed in examinations.) **Pupils are responsible for all their personal equipment and every item should be clearly marked.**

**All pupils will be reminded in assemblies that they will have until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September to get themselves organised on this front and that the equipment will then be checked every day for one week, and then on random days thereafter. There will be sanctions from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> for those who do not have the equipment listed above.**

We have found that some pupils are held back in their learning as a consequence of being poorly equipped and/or forgetting things, and this recent initiative is designed to address the problem. I hope that you as parents will be able to support us here and help your child become fit for learning.

### Departmental Detentions

Unfortunately, there are instances when it is necessary to detain pupils during the lunch hour because classroom expectations/standards have not been met. Should an individual fail to attend a detention, a letter will be sent to parents informing them of an after-school detention; usually at least 48 hours' notice is given to allow for transport arrangements, if necessary. All pupils are aware of the expectations of departments in NTS and how this sanction can be avoided in the first instance.

### Literacy

The ability to read confidently has a direct effect on academic success and general confidence and motivation in school.

The library is extremely well stocked and open within and beyond the school day. In addition we discretely monitor the progress of any pupil whose reading age is below their actual age and we will prioritise support for those pupils. We do hope you will support our focus by discussing reading at home and encouraging your children to read every day outside school. Some children are reluctant to read. This reluctance often stems from difficulties with reading, choosing books that are too difficult or not being able to find a text that interests them.

We offer, free of charge, small group or one-to-one tuition for any Year 7 pupil who enters the school with considerably less than the expected standardised score in English at the end of Key Stage 2. The tuition gives pupils confidence in areas they often find difficult and off-putting. It also helps ensure that any gaps in understanding are filled so that the secondary curriculum can be accessed. The Learning Support Department will be assessing Year 7 pupils in the first half-term and contacting the parents of pupils who will receive this extra tuition.

**If you believe your child shows these traits, please do not hesitate to contact the school and we will support you in getting your child to read.**

### Staff changes

These current members of staff have recently taken on positions as follows:

Miss Hays	(Citizenship Coordinator)
Miss Hatton	(Temporary Assistant to AH in Science in absence of 2 i/c)
Mrs Northwood	(Temporary Assistant to AH in Science in absence of 2 i/c)
Mrs Jones	(Head of Art: she resumes her role following maternity leave)

We have welcomed the following new permanent staff:

Mrs S Banks	(Teacher of Maths)
Mr B Irving	(Teacher of Science)
Mrs Harris	(Finance and Administration)

Temporary leavers:

- Mrs Galley (Acting Head of Art): maternity leave

Temporary replacements:

- Mr McGowan (Psychology maternity cover for Miss Southwell, starting October)
- Mrs Faria (Teacher of Science)
- Miss Blackburn (Art maternity cover for Mrs Galley)

(Miss Hanabury, temporary Maths TA, now has a permanent contract.)

(Mr Cope now has a permanent contract in the Learning Support Department.)

### Prize Ceremonies

For Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 ceremonies will be held in school in extended assemblies starting at 9.15am and lasting approximately half an hour:

Year 11	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 10 prizes)
Year 10	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	(receiving Year 9 prizes)
Year 9	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 8 prizes)
Year 8	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 7 prizes)

We will hold our formal senior prize ceremony for the Sixth Form on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm in St. Mary's Church. Prizes will be presented to last year's Year 11 as well as to the Sixth Form.

### Friends of Nelson Thomlinson School (FoNTS)/PTA

There will be a meeting on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September at 5.30pm in the school library for current and **prospective new members** of our PTA. The dates and venue of future meetings will be confirmed nearer the time via ParentMail and on our Facebook page. Please come along and see what they do.

### Building works

Major projects have been the Science block upgrades, which have proved more time consuming than anticipated, and unfortunately, this has resulted in some projects being deferred until half term. Most

of the painting and carpeting that was scheduled has been completed; in particular, the ground floor of H-Block is now looking much smarter.

### **Data Collection Sheet (just for Y7 and new pupils from other year groups)**

**The Data Collection Sheet will be issued shortly. Please amend or complete this as appropriate. (PARENTS OF YEAR 7 AND NEW PUPILS ONLY)**

The Data Collection Sheet is issued yearly for you to check and confirm that the information we hold about your child(ren) is correct. During the year, if there are any changes to personal details you are required to inform us to make sure we have as up-to-date information as possible. This is imperative in situations where your child may be ill and we need to contact you urgently. We often like to celebrate our successes by including photos of NTS pupils in our prospectuses and newsletters but it is obviously important that you give us permission if you feel comfortable doing so.

**You are therefore required to complete the Digital/Video Images Permission slip. (PARENTS OF YEAR 7 AND NEW PUPILS ONLY)**

### ParentMail

91% of families have registered for a ParentMail account. Although you don't need to have registered to receive messages from us, you will be unable to 'interact' with the system unless you have done so. This includes responding to any forms or questionnaires we send out and installing the free NTS ParentMail app. We are finding the service an efficient and speedy way of getting information out, and would encourage you to register if you have not already done so. We will therefore shortly be resending instructions to all those who have not yet registered. If you need any help with this, please contact the school.

### Download our free school app to your mobile device and pick up important messages instantly

Once registered, we should like to encourage parents to download our ParentMail app as there are a number of benefits both for you and the school:

- It is free and easy to download
- All messages from school will be sent securely
- No need to search through a busy email inbox for important messages
- Messages arrive as an instant alert on your mobile device
- Some parents do not have an email address, only a mobile number, which means that unless they download the app, we are still having to send out paper copies of letters

To download the app for free from either the Apple store or the Google Play store, simply search **ParentMail**.

### Health & Safety inspection

In June, the school had a Health & Safety inspection. There was a thorough examination of our policies and procedures together with interviews with staff and governors. We are pleased to announce that NTS achieved an overall rating of 97%. 38 different categories were scrutinised with 25 of them receiving 100% scores. The safety of our pupils is at the core of everything we do. Rest assured we are working on the 3% to get an even better result!

### Lost Property

The School Office receives large amounts of lost property that we are unable to return to the owners because items are not named. This is a shame as it means extra expense for parents to buy replacements.

**Therefore, please can I remind you that you should clearly name each item of uniform, sports kit and any other clothing brought to school, preferably with a name tape but otherwise with a marker pen such that the name will not fade in the wash.**

All items of lost property are kept in the school office for a half-term and are then disposed of, either to the clothes bank or to a charity shop.

### **Reminders:**

#### Driving in the School Grounds

- If you are bringing your child to school by car in the morning or collecting them at the end of the day **please do not drive through the school grounds**. (Pupils arriving by taxi or with physical disabilities are exempt from this.)
- If you are bringing your child to school by car in the morning, please do not stop in the bus bay - you are likely to cause problems for the large number of buses that deliver our pupils to school.
- At other times when you visit the site for an appointment or to pick up a sick child **please remember that there is a one-way system in operation at all times through the school grounds**. The entry is adjacent to the bus-bay and the exit is onto the High Street. Please also remember that we have a barrier in place during the following times: **8.30 – 9.20am; 11.10 – 11.35am; 12.25 – 1.35pm; 3.25 – 4.00pm**
- Please be aware that there are county parking restrictions in force on Lowmoor road.

#### School Buses

If your child comes to school on a bus, sensible behaviour is obviously expected and this includes sitting down on a seat with the **seatbelt fastened**.

#### Photographing pupils at events/matches

Whilst we appreciate parents supporting sporting and other events held in school, and understand that you may want to take photographs, please try to ensure you only photograph your own child, and do not put photographs of any other children onto Facebook or other social media without permission from their parents.

#### Authorized absence

I should remind you that *only in 'exceptional circumstances'* can I grant authorized leave of absence for pupils. Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays. You will be interested to know, perhaps, that there is a direct correlation between good attendance and good examination performance. I am pleased to say that attendance rates for the current year groups are good but clearly this needs to be maintained if pupils are to give themselves the best possible chance of achieving their potential.

#### Term Dates, Examinations and Parents' Evenings

These are printed below. Please keep them for reference.

Finally, I should take this opportunity as I always do to remind you of the following paragraph taken from the school prospectus:

"We continue to be ambitious on behalf of *your* children - *our* pupils - and continue to expect in return your support on matters such as homework, behaviour, uniform and respect for others. It is equally paramount that you tell us when you have concerns or when we might have got something wrong. The School continues to pride itself in its attention to detail and when things do need fine-tuning then I would like to know."

Please do, therefore, support us in our work but also challenge us – politely, if you would - as and when you see fit. I am as keen as ever to provide the best possible education for your child.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Northwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mr DS Northwood  
Headmaster

## **Holidays 2019-20**

Half term      Monday 21<sup>st</sup> – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October  
Christmas     Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January (Staff CPD Monday 6<sup>th</sup>)

Half term      Monday 17<sup>th</sup> – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February  
Easter         Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April

Half term      Monday 25<sup>th</sup> - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May  
Summer        Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July

**Please note that the May Day Holiday falls on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May not Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May.**

## **Parents' Evenings**

Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	Y6 Open Evening
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Y7 'Settle Evening'
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	Y13 Parents' Evening
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Y12 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> November	Y11 Parents' Live and Learn event
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> November	Y11 Parents' Evening
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Y8 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	Y8 Parents' Evening (HMWG)
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Y11 6th Form Information Evening
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> January	Y7 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	Y7 Parents' Evening (HMWG)
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	Y10 Parents' Evening
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> February	Y9 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Y9 Parents' Evening (HMW)
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June	New Y7 Parents' Information Evening
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	HE & Careers Information Evening for Y12 Parents

## **Exams**

Week beginning Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Y7 CAT tests
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November	GCSE English resits
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> , Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> & Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	GCSE Maths resits
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	Y11 Art Mock exam
Weeks beginning Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> November & 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Y11 Mocks
Week beginning Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> January	Y13 Mocks
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> , Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> & Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Y11 Maths Mocks
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Y11 English Mock
Week beginning Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Y10 Art exam
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> – Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> April	GCSE Art exam
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> - Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	A-level Art exam
Weeks beginning Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Y10 exams
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May until 12 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> June	GCSE and A-level exams (provisional)
Week beginning Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Y7 exams
Week beginning Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June	Y8 exams
Week beginning Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June	Y9 exams
Week beginning Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Y12 exams