



Post 16 Information Evening Speech

Mrs Barter:

Good evening, and a very warm welcome to our Post 16 Information Evening.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Katie Barter, and I am in my tenth year at the school and my first as the headteacher after overseeing the curriculum as Deputy Headteacher for the last nine years.

I would also like to introduce Mrs Tess Tweeddale, our Assistant Headteacher who oversees the running of our excellent Sixth Form Team, and Priyanka, Emily and Tom who will give you some student perspectives of what it is like to study at RPS.

Our school is a place to flourish. That means academically, but also in terms of personal development and becoming the best version of yourself that you can be. Our values of kindness, community, integrity and the pursuit of excellence mean that students here reach their full potential. For our current Year 11 students this means continuing in the same school that has seen them grow and develop as young adults. For those who are thinking of joining us in Year 12 from another school, it means entering an established, welcoming environment with a proven track record over many years, where high expectations mingle with a sense of warmth and a deep sense of belonging from the very start.

Let's talk about that excellence first: Last year we had fantastic A level results with over a third graded A* or A at A level, an A B grade on average for all entries. Equally strong were the BTEC results, with students achieving an average grade of Distinction. This is testimony to the work that is done by our students, our teachers, support staff and our incredible, dedicated team of Sixth Form tutors, Heads of Year and the school's leadership.

Perhaps more important than results, however, are the doors those results opened for each individual. You can see this for yourself on our Destination of Leavers boards situated in our foyer and outside the Sixth Form. Whether these destinations were apprenticeships, employment or university, those students were able to go out into the world and flourish.

However, this school is much more than being about exam results, and that is the true secret of our success. Our house system; our charity work; our awareness of the world around us via our huge array of expeditions, trips and visits, combined with our reputation for being kind and compassionate; makes us who we are. Great exam results in this environment are the natural consequences of the ethos of the school, something that all of us, staff and students alike, work at every day.

We have received a great deal of recognition for our work over the last couple of years:

We were the Sunday Times Comprehensive School of the Year for the East of England in 2024. In its citation, the newspaper not only acknowledged our results but said that "kindness is key to the

success of this school.” This “fierce kindness, takes energy, effort and resilience and it is what drives us”. Further to this award, our OFSTED report which was published in January 2024 also highlighted the excellence of our Sixth Form. We were judged as Outstanding in all areas. Not all outstanding schools have outstanding Sixth Forms.

The report says of us, and I quote **“Students in the Sixth Form plan and run house activities. They lead on initiatives to improve aspects of the school, such as how to make their community more sustainable. They also deliver the school’s tutoring programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Sixth Form students are excellent role models for others.”**

Working with our Sixth Form students is a great experience for all of us who are lucky enough to work here. Let me introduce three of them to you now: Priyanka - who was a newcomer in Year 12 and Emily and Tom, two of our Head Students.

Priyanka:

Good Evening and welcome, prospective students and parents.

My name is Priyanka, and I am currently a Year 13 student at Roundwood Park Sixth Form. It is an honour to stand in front of you all tonight to share my experience and journey here.

Not too long ago, I was in your shoes, trying to decide what my next steps would be. Fortunately, I was familiar with Roundwood Park as my older sister, who is my biggest role model, had attended the Sixth Form and it provided me a first hand insight into what my life would look like here. Right from the beginning, my heart was set on being a student at Roundwood Park as I felt something really special about the school and environment.

Let me tell you why:

First of all, I am one of the many newcomers who joined Roundwood Park in September 2024. I am currently studying A Levels in English Literature, Psychology and Sociology. And honestly, my transition of coming from Chiltern Academy in Luton into attending a Sixth Form out of my hometown was flawless. The inclusivity of the staff and peers made me feel so welcomed and appreciated, which made the aspect of integrating into a new school environment much more enjoyable and easier.

In terms of academic success, Roundwood Park has achieved some of the best results in Harpenden, but what truly sets Roundwood Park apart from the rest is the endless amount of opportunities. Within my first month of being a part of Sixth Form I applied to become a house leader for my form, which meant I was involved in school activities like House Charity Week, House Music and now I am a part of the SLG. It really made me feel a part of the strong community here at Roundwood Park. To be honest, I was surprised with the amount of opportunities our school had to offer as it wasn’t something I had experienced before.

Later into the year, I completed a Law writing competition with Rayden Solicitors. This had sparked my interest as it aligned with my future aspirations. At first I had slightly struggled with writing the essay, however after seeking help from my teachers, I was able to write an amazing essay that I am truly proud of and resulted in my success of winning the competition. Originally, my passion for law slowly started to fade away, but after having the opportunity to complete this work experience, I couldn’t thank the school more for providing me with the ability to reinforce my love and ambition for law. As a result I have applied to Warwick and Loughborough universities in

order to study law and carry on my passion. As well as the encouragement and support I had received from my teachers who had helped me along the way.

Roundwood Park isn't just a school of exceptional education and academics, but a place for students to create lasting memories through our strong and dear friendships. I have made memories throughout my time here that I can assure you will stay with me for life. I have also had the unwavering support from our staff members, who don't just view us as students, but as young individuals who can flourish and grow emotionally and socially. Looking back, choosing Roundwood Park was the best decision I could ever have made, as this Sixth Form has truly offered me so much.

Before I finish, I would just like to give a few words of advice: Some of you here may be excited for your next steps whereas others may be anxious or worried, but remember that Sixth Form gives you the opportunity to have a fresh start. Try new experiences, say yes to challenges which may be out of your comfort zone. Be confident, set ambitious goals but most importantly be yourself. If you are looking for a school that will encourage and support you, motivate you to academic success and celebrate your achievements, then I can say with confidence that Roundwood Park is the school for you.

I wish you all the best for your GCSE's this year and for your next steps.

I would now like to pass on to our Head Students, Emily and Tom, but I hope you all have a good rest of your evening and thank you very much for listening to me today!

Head Students Emily & Tom:

Thank you so much Priyanka. My name is Emily and my name is Tom, we are two of the Head Students here along with Molly and Joe, and we would love to give you all more of an insight into life at RPS Sixth Form. Both of us have been at Roundwood since year 7 and chose to carry on with our education here after GCSEs.

E: I am currently studying Maths, Economics and Geography as well as AS Further Maths and I have applied to study Economics at university and currently have four offers from top Russell Group universities and am hoping to go to Exeter or Nottingham.

T: And I'm studying Maths, Further Maths, Physics, and Chemistry, hoping to do Engineering at Cambridge, having just finished my interviews.

Which is a good opportunity for us to mention the UCAS process and the outstanding support we've had along our journey. Mrs Tweeddale and our Head of Year, Mrs Bridgman, are never too busy to give some advice. And that's on top of bookable UCAS meetings for personalised feedback on your application, and alongside just a tiny bit of nagging so we don't miss any deadlines. I found the comprehensive 'early applicant' program for those applying to Oxbridge or any Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary courses has made the whole process so much easier for me, just another reason why we've enjoyed it so much. And if Uni is not for you, we had consistent Future Options updates for work experience and job opportunities post Sixth Form as well as apprenticeship and degree apprenticeship support. I believe two students in our year already have jobs lined up at EY, which I'm only a little bit jealous of.

We both found life at Sixth Form very different to lower school, but in the best way possible. Once you are in Sixth Form you are given a lot more freedom to manage your own schedule and be in control of how you balance academics with free time. At Roundwood there is a lot of help with this transition. You are given study periods when you are able to choose where in the school you want to work. You can choose from the Common Room, Silent Study Hub, Canteen or the Library. With so many options it's easy to find somewhere to either work collaboratively with others, or on your own if you need to focus. There is also a Sixth Form Cafe from which you can buy food and drinks, some of our personal favourites are the toasties and hot chocolates - with marshmallows of course!

There are so many great extracurricular clubs and events to get involved with as well as all the senior sports teams and compulsory games on Wednesday afternoons. During Year 12 you get the great opportunity to help give back to our school community through the Community Award, where you complete 15 hours of volunteering.

E: I did mine by helping to run the Year 7 Dance Club

T: and I did a variety of things helping out wherever with whatever was needed.

You also get the privilege of having Timetabled Home Study in Year 13, which is a blessing on rainy Thursday mornings!

Another thing that made Sixth Form at Roundwood even more valuable is the ability to grow your soft skills, for example with the student leadership government. As Head Students, we oversee the SLG, a team of senior students who organise events, help improve the school and support the wider community. It is an opportunity which we have loved every minute of.

Whether it's running House Music, the Colour Run, assemblies, or speeches just like this, it teaches you invaluable life skills as well as awesome experiences and something jazzy to add to your personal statement. Students from the current Year 12 have just applied, so imagine this time next year it could be you!

My biggest advice would be to choose subjects that you will actually enjoy, you don't want to be spending so much time revising something you can't stand! But apart from that, just get involved in everything you can and make the most of your last two years at school, it really does fly by.

And from me, whether it's joining a club, helping out at events, or building something as part of student leadership, make a memory of your Sixth Form experience because that's what it should be all about, well, besides the exams!

Thank you so much for listening to us share our insights and memories of life at RPS Sixth Form. Hopefully you can see why we've loved it so much, and why we're so proud to represent this school as Head Students.

We hope you have a wonderful evening, thank you. We will now pass over to Mrs Tweeddale.

Mrs Tweeddale:

Good evening, I am Tess Tweeddale and I am very proud to be the Assistant Headteacher in charge of our Sixth Form. I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all this evening and thank our superb student speakers Priyanka, Emily and Tom for sharing their experiences and thoughts with you all tonight.

It is a real privilege to work alongside the Student Leaders in our school, working in Sixth Form with these students is truly a joy. Watching each of our students develop into confident adults during their relatively short time with us is special. As you have heard tonight, if you choose to join us for Sixth Form at Roundwood Park your time will be packed full of opportunities; our Sixth Form offer extends far beyond the academics.

You join a very special community, where we set you up to be a Roundwood Park Leaver, possessing all the traits you see on the slide. People can often think of Sixth Form as 'only two years', but our reach and work as a Sixth Form is in actual fact more like four years at least. My job, as Head of Sixth Form, is actually centred a lot around Year 11, to ensure we support you all with making the right choices for your next steps. My team and I start working with you right now, with tonight's launch, followed by Guidance Meetings for our current students, the Offer Holder Evening for our newcomers, and a very comprehensive Induction to help you carefully select your routes. And after our students leave us, they join our Alumni network and are invited back for a Year 14 Awards Evening to celebrate their many achievements.

Students, the decision about the next stage in your academic journey is exciting, and we are all here to help you this evening to decide if Roundwood Park is the right choice for you, as well as helping support you with your choice of subjects and routes.

Sixth Form is an intense period of transitions, through which my experienced Sixth Form team expertly guides students. Our students are supported as they adjust to often new and fewer subjects, they adapt to independent ways of learning, and they start planning their futures, while also making the transition into adulthood. At Roundwood Park, we believe relationships are key to this success, and we are most proud of our uniquely large Sixth Form team, supported by a wider team of Pastoral and Careers support listed on the slide. I believe that the root of our results success is down to the approachability and availability of our excellent team.

Our Careers Programme, spearheaded by Mrs Gilpin is superb. We offer a unique, Future Options programme to Year 12 that is a huge success. Roundwood Park students are encouraged to explore their future options thoughtfully and select what is right for them, and are supported the whole way via dedicated Oxbridge support, Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary support, Apprenticeship and employment support, and UCAS advice for all students. This has led to enviable numbers on competitive courses and highly ranked institutions and apprenticeships.

The statistic I am most proud of, however, is that 96% were placed at their first or second choice universities last year. This led to many smiles on results day. We are proud of all our destinations for every single one of our Roundwood Park leavers and do not celebrate one university over another. We celebrate all of our Roundwood Park Leavers on our Destination Board, and we measure our success by the smiles and confidence we see when our leavers return to us. Our Destinations Boards really do speak for themselves.

We know from research that at Sixth Form, success primarily relies on choosing the right courses. My role is to help you arm yourself with all the information so that you can research and make that choice.

I urge you this evening, alongside your subject talks, to spend some time talking to our wonderful students about their KS5 journeys, and to visit the Student Subject Fayre in the Canteen, and our Sixth Form Common Room, which will have an array of stalls and is manned by members of our team.

So how do you choose your subjects? On the Sixth Form area of the school website you will find our prospectus, alongside information for every subject on offer, including Entry Criteria and suggested suitability for each course, and I encourage parents and students to spend some time thoroughly reading these areas.

So, what do you need to do to book your place in Sixth Form?

We have three main routes for students wishing to study with us, which I shall walk you through now. The real secret though, of course, is hard work, resilience and obtaining strong GCSE results.

To join our Sixth Form, we use Average GCSE Points Scores, or APS. Students will need a minimum of an APS grade 4 to join our Sixth Form.

We are proud of the three routes we have on offer, designed to help you succeed, and designed to match your ability to your potential. So, take time to reflect on your mock results and predicted grades, and how this might impact your choices.

Route 1 requires an average of 5 or more points and gives access to a full suite of A levels, which means 3 A levels unless Further Maths is studied as a fourth A Level.

Route 2 requires an average of 4.5 points or more, and allows for a mixture of A levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications.

Route 3 requires an average of 4 points or more, and gives access to the full suite of BTEC Level 3 qualifications.

All routes allow completion of three A level equivalent standards, and give access to degree study at University or Degree and Higher Level apprenticeships.

You should also note that ALL courses are studied for two years and may not be changed throughout your Sixth Form.

Most importantly, students, for you now, is to make a broad and informed choice of subjects; choices that first and foremost you will enjoy, but that also play to your strengths and that speak to your future goals.

You may make choices like Chloe, Evan or Ruby, all of whom chose A Levels that played entirely to their strengths and interests, resulting in high grades and opening the doors to Natural Sciences at Durham, Geography at Oxford and Medicine at St Andrews.

Or make choices like Jake, who chose Maths and PE A Levels alongside the Foundation Diploma Business BTEC, and is now at Lancaster University. Or like Jacob, who chose the Double BTEC Business Diploma alongside A Level Art, and has successfully secured a coveted apprenticeship at Mercedes, complete with company car. Or finally, perhaps you'll choose the full suite of BTECs like Gracie did in Business and Health and Social Care, opening doors to Business Management at Leicester.

So, take time tonight as you visit the subject talks, and talk to our staff and students. Make sure you feel you understand what would be required of you before making your choices. Rest assured that we have built into the application process, opportunities to meet with staff for you to discuss your choices further.

The deadline for applications is Friday 6th February, and you will find our application form on our website. There is a summary of key dates behind me which will set you on course to your Roundwood Park Sixth Form journey.

At this point, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to keep working hard at your GCSEs. All the study habits that you are honing will be essential for a smooth and successful transition to level 3 studies.

We are so proud of our offering here at Roundwood Park, and look forward to showing you some of this tonight. From our engaged student leaders to our expert KS5 teachers, from our warm and approachable team of staff who love working with Sixth Formers, to our wide choice of subjects, routes on offer and enrichment options. We hope that you will use this evening as an opportunity to explore our Sixth Form offer, whilst also helping to hone down which subject routes would be right for you.

So I conclude by returning to the values Mrs Barter spoke about at the beginning of this talk. We know that if you choose us you will be supported kindly, join an engaged and diverse community, develop your integrity by our extra opportunities, and pursue excellence in your outcomes and future options. We know that you will find our Sixth Form a place where you can quite simply flourish.

Thank you for your time and I hope you enjoy your evening.