

Good evening everyone and a really warm welcome to you all. It is always such a pleasure to open our doors to the community and to spend time with new and familiar families alike.

This year I have thought long and hard about how to approach my 10th anniversary welcome speech. When I started here in 2014 I could never have imagined how this school would become such a fundamental part of my life and would mean so much to me over such a long time. We hear so much in the media, and with our friends and families about how difficult it is to work in education at this time. And there is no doubt that this is true. I have such respect for the staff here who keep striving for the very best for our young people in the most challenging of circumstances and with so many demands being made of them. What keeps me here year after year is that commitment, passion and pride shown by staff and our students alike day after day. The care and support shown to students and the way students are so kind and engaged in return is what really drives me and the rest of the team to keep going, in spite of the bigger issues around our profession.

The positive atmosphere makes Shuttleworth such a lovely place to be and is commented upon by almost everyone who comes into our school. As an example, over the past couple of weeks we have had people in for job interviews, parents in for tours of the school, outside speakers for GCSE lectures, a careers fair, social care support staff, trainee teachers; without exception all of these people have commented about the atmosphere and positive work going on here.

We absolutely do not work on gimmicks, quick fixes and headline grabbing actions. I refer you back to the 10 years! We work hard day by day, month by month to keep evolving and improving the school. The staff follow the same mantra, with so many now being long serving, committed and always taking on the next challenge with vigour and positivity. We grow our own middle and senior leaders and encourage all staff to take part in high quality development and training.

The passion and pride the staff and students have in what they do and the school as a whole is a real inspiration. I can say honestly, we give each and every student the support, both academically and pastorally, to succeed. This culture is what I believe makes Shuttleworth a unique place to study and work.

Recent years have tested the resilience and strength of character of us all, haven't they. You will see on the news and online how our young peoples mental health, engagement with school and overall well being have been quite severely impacted by the way society has evolved in recent years. As a school we have had to evolve and adapt to these new realities and ensure our young people have the support and opportunities they need to move forward in a positive and productive way. We have put more resources than ever in to our pastoral teams, our attendance teams, counsellors, transition and of course teaching teams.

We can already see how effective these additional resources are in terms of how the current year 7 have transitioned and settled so positively in to life in high school. They have exemplary attendance, contrary to national trends. Behaviour too is exemplary and disruption to learning is rare. I have been taking visitors round to see the year 7 classes and the work ethic and engagement of the students is wonderful to see. The year 7s have thrown themselves in to Shuttleworth life with gusto and have started getting involved with our enrichment programme which launched last week.

We will continue with the same support structures and transition arrangements for the young people joining us next September. To enable students to feel they really have achieved their very best at the end of year 11, we need the work to start in year 6. We have an extremely thorough transition team, who leave no stone left

unturned. They ensure they get as much information from our primary schools as they can. We set up our teaching groups with that information in mind. We assess reading, writing and other key skills across the curriculum as students join us. Teachers then adapt their teaching in light of these baseline assessments. We do not pigeon hole children based on primary school information, we use it carefully to plan for any support that might be needed or any conversations we might need to have with you as parents before your child starts. We carefully set students using SATs and reading data. Groupings are different for maths and English as students can have differing strengths.

In advance of starting, students are invited in for a transition day in June and we host a parent information evening that day. Your child will also be invited for a weeks summer school at the start of the summer holiday. Once you have a place confirmed with us at the beginning of March you will receive regular contact and updates right through to September.

I have spoken year after year about how daunting the decision of which high school to choose can be for many families. As Burnley schools are now all oversubscribed, first choices become all the more key. **We are now full as a school.** Our admission number for next year stands at 220 so demand will be tight. Please contact us via the email transition@shuttleworth.lancs.sch.uk if you would like to discuss admissions or need any help. Details are in your bags. Please note the deadline for applications is 31st October. You won't then hear anything until the 1st March, when the allocations are released.

The success in the classroom is as a result of the sheer hard work and relentless drive of our teachers and students. Year 6, if you do choose Shuttleworth please do so on the understanding that you will give your best in school every day right from day one and the staff will

respond in kind. We want you to leave Shuttleworth knowing you've given your best and you can be truly proud of your achievements, no regrets.

We work with our young people and families to ensure they can achieve their absolute personal best and guide them in setting up a whole of exciting options for themselves once they leave us. I believe one of the most empowering things we can do for our young people is to make sure they have choices and options for their next stages in life.

A huge benefit of our growth over recent years has been the recruitment opportunities it has given us and the ability to have subject specialists across all subjects, large and small. We are very fortunate to have over a dozen specialist staff in each of maths, English and science alongside a talented team of specialist Spanish and French staff, music teachers, historians, geographers, computing and creative arts staff. We have specialisms covered across all subject areas in school and are able to offer an ever widening range of subjects at GCSE.

We also recognise how vital it is our young people have the widest possible range of life skills and real world experiences throughout their time at high school. This is where our award winning careers programme and our school enrichment programme come into their own. Right from year 7 onwards students take part in a whole host of activities such as university visits, employer visits, careers fairs, Duke of E, speakers, productions. Alongside this we offer a wide range of residential trips across the 5 years, we have a year 7 and year 11 weekend camp and annual trips to places such as London, Edinburgh, Barcelona and Eurodisney. You will hear more about this as you go around this evening and speak to staff about our curriculum and enrichment offer.

Alongside our highly skilled teachers we are very fortunate to have a whole team of student support staff, which I alluded to earlier. We have non-teaching Heads of Year for each year group who are there for your children throughout their time here. We have attendance staff, inclusion and safeguarding officers, a librarian, a school nurse, and emotional support through our nurture and counselling. Furthermore, your child will have regular sessions on well-being, health and other key topics throughout the academic year as part of our programme in form time programme. I know children and families have found this network of support invaluable when challenges outside of school have impacted on our young people's mental and physical health.

I make no apologies for having extremely high expectations of all staff and students here at the College - it is our moral duty to ensure students get the most out of the five years both academically and personally. This means we are very strict around uniform, behaviour and homework and staff plan and assess carefully to meet the needs of all students. However we understand teaching is only truly effective if we work with the whole child particularly on developing aspiration, independence, and of course a love of learning. Our motto, *Think big, chase dreams, succeed together* encapsulates this belief. Staff and students alike are expected to lead by example by demonstrating our values of achievement, resilience, perseverance, community and pride in all they do.

Finally, it is my firm belief and that of all the staff here that high school must challenge all young people – whatever their ability. It must enrich their lives and it must truly equip them to be successful in whatever field of work or study life takes them to. Our commitment to this begins the first time your child walks through our door and continues until July 2029. I look forward to bringing many of you into this community over this year as part of the class of 2029!

