

## High News – Friday 14 July 2023

And just like that – we are at the end of the summer term and this academic year. How did we get here?! The last High News of the school year traditionally contains a list of thank yous, and this year will be no different.

Whoever believes that a term slows down as you near the end simply has not been in school for a very long time! We have charged to the finish line with such a flurry of highlights and memorable moments that it all feels like quite a whirl. We have had four and a half days this week, but it feels like a month's worth of activities, and our young people and staff have truly embraced the energy, resilience, risk taking and collaboration that we often talk about.

From Speech Day and Prize Giving on Wednesday to Cultures Day on Thursday and our termly Celebration Assembly this morning, the whole building has felt alive with activity this week. There were many happy chants of 'school's out' at midday, at what felt like a mass student exodus! Yesterday, School was still business as usual, with last minute work on reports going on, lesson planning for September and general sorting out of cupboards, drawers and boards, whilst most students were busy clearing out their lockers and bidding farewell to their form rooms.

For the vast majority of our pupils, the last day of term meant exuberance for the adventures, experiences, (and lie-ins!) that the summer holidays bring. However, for some students, this excitement was tinged with a genuine sense of sadness. Our Year 13 students had their final ever 'school day' at Northampton High, which was an emotional realisation for many of them at the Speech Day and Prize-Giving ceremony. Some of our Year 13s have been at Northampton High for a couple of years, and some of them have been with us since joining Nursery more than a decade ago. However long they have been with us, we are very sad to see them leave. We look forward to celebrating their successes on Thursday 17 August when their A Level results are published and we also hope that they stay in touch – our doors are always open! Whatever they take away from here in terms of qualifications and memories, they will also take the courage to stand up for what they believe is right and show that behaving with kindness and integrity, respect and care for others, is a way of life that works. We bid them farewell with our love, respect and good wishes for all the future holds for them in the years ahead.

The events of the second half of term have borne testimony to the vibrant and fantastic culture we have here. With exams and assessments behind us for another year, the school has played hard. There can be few schools who can manage three dazzling performances of the school musical, 'The Wizard of Oz', where we experienced a whirlwind of imagination and wonder, a touchingly delightful Creative Arts Festival where each performance, exhibition and activity was a testament to our students' passion, dedication, and boundless imagination, numerous sporting fixtures where we also proudly emerged as champions in the GDST Tennis Rally, a fun-filled and exciting Sports Day with several records broken, many memorable residential trips and educational visits (one overseas to Switzerland), becoming the first Pony Club Centre in the country run by a school, DASH debates where strong oracy skills were on show from our Year 10 and 12 students, REACH cross-curricular fortnight based on 'The Unexpected' theme where Year 7 and 8 students were inspired to think for themselves and showcased their learning through a piece of 'Open Prep', several welcome days for pupils who are joining us in September and hundreds of lessons; all in the space of six weeks.

The last highlight is a quiet one: it is the reports that I have had the pleasure of reading over the past few weeks. Our pupils have worked very hard this year and their progress is commendable. Every tutor report references some involvement in school life, as well as the pleasure tutors take in their form group's company.

Apart from the enormous investment of time and energy our teaching teams put into these activities and events a huge demand is placed on support and administrative staff, especially the marketing, school office, catering, cleaning and grounds teams. They come up trumps every time and I never cease to wonder at their enthusiasm and commitment to their roles in the knowledge that they make such a difference to our pupils' educational experience. I thank all of the staff for giving our students such a memorable end to the term and for looking after them, educationally, pastorally and socially throughout this year and every year. Northampton High is a busy, thriving, happy place to work and everyone here plays their part in making that so - and thank you to all staff for going the extra mile on so many occasions.

As I think back over the last year I am again struck by how many students overcome huge personal challenges to get themselves up, dressed and into school for a day's learning by 8.30am. Whilst the light summer morning starts might be slightly easier, it is never fun when the alarm goes off at an unearthly hour and it is still dark outside. Bravo to each and every one of you. Your resilience, determination and commitment now will pay dividends in the future. What's more, you thoroughly deserve the long summer holiday which stretches ahead of you. Do use it wisely - rest, relax and recharge. But read lots of (different) books, explore the great outdoors, do a few good deeds for others, make some new friends and catch up with old ones, promise yourself to really exploit this nearly eight week holiday to your advantage. Ditch the mobile phone addiction (well we can at least try). Share your news with us when you return - we will be waiting to hear all about it.

I am very proud of our students and I will be eternally grateful to have made the decision to join such a special community and to have the opportunity to lead our school. Thank you to you, our parents, for entrusting your children to us and for the support you give us. It is your children who make Northampton High and we are very proud of them. Schooling is perhaps one of the biggest decisions you make as parents. It may well be the most expensive. Be assured, we do not take that commitment for granted. We understand that it is a bond which we must continually earn and renew. Your expectations are justifiably high; I trust we are not just meeting them, but exceeding them. If we weren't, I know you would tell me.

This is a good moment to highlight the extraordinary work of my Senior Leadership Team who have been outstanding this year. Whilst I like to take the credit really, I know that it is them who really manage the difficult task of running the various sections of the school and I am grateful for their support this year which has been exceptional. They are the brains behind the operation and do an incredible job. I could not wish for a better nor more engaged and enthusiastic group of Senior Leaders.

As always, the end of the school year brings the departure of a number of teaching colleagues. Mrs Jo Carr leaves us after ten years at Northampton High and she has done a wonderful job and provided the girls, especially our Sixth Formers, with leadership and security. We thank her for adding to the mosaic of life at Northampton High and wish her well for what lies ahead. Mrs Nicky Gill is taking on a new challenge after adding so much to the lives of young people in our school. She has been an inspirational Science teacher and we wish her well with her future endeavours. We thank them both for what they have

done for our students and all that they have given to our community whilst we have been lucky enough to have them here.

Those two highly significant dates loom large for our Senior students. A and AS Level results will be released on 17 August followed a week later, on 24 August by GCSE results. I hope to see many of you here at school on one, or even both, of those days! We wish our students the very best of luck with their results and know that whatever the envelope reveals on the day, all will be well in the end.

We return to school on Wednesday 6 September for an 8.30am start. All that remains for me to say is I wish you all a restful and happy time through the relaxing weeks that lay ahead of us, whether abroad or closer to home, as we recharge, refresh and re-energise. And so, until we come together again in September, happy holidays!

With best wishes,

**Dr Lee**  
**Head**