

Sixth Form Open Evening Speech

Good evening ladies and gentleman, my name is Joe Barnes and I joined John Hampden Grammar School's lower sixth last September.

Just to give you a little bit of information about myself; I was at the Misbourne, a local upper school, up until year eleven. However the school advised me to investigate Grammar schools for the sixth form, and so I applied to the Royal Grammar School, Dr Challenors and John Hampden.

I was offered a place at all three schools, however I was most impressed with the warm and welcoming environment at John Hampden. I was given a tour by two upper sixth students and what struck me was how proud they were of their school.

After my GCSE results and an interview with the Head of Sixth Form, I accepted my offer at John Hampden.

Now if I'm being honest, towards the end of that summer holiday, I did start to get nervous. I was worried I would not be able to cope with a faster work ethic; I did not know any of the students at the school and knew that by this stage many close friendships had already been made.

However, I made a conscious decision to go out of my way to be as friendly to as many people as possible and to work to the best of my ability. I really could not have been in a more rewarding environment. I secured a leading part in the school's production of *Les Miserables* after auditioning in my first week. I found this a brilliant opportunity to meet new people and I also joined a number of the lunch time clubs the school has on offer.

I tried to put in as much as I could to this school and while this often left me feeling exhausted at the end of the day, I really cannot stress how much this school is willing to give back. After three months, I was one of five in the year to be voted onto the student leadership team by my peers and I was particularly proud to be made a Deputy Head Boy of the school in April.

Academically, I have found the transition easier than I expected. You have no reason not to do well at this school as long as you are willing to put in what you hope to get out at the end of your A Levels. Being here for over a year now, I have found this a welcoming and friendly environment and I cannot praise the school enough for guiding me through the difficult process of change so comfortably.