

**HEADMASTER'S SPEECH**  
**CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL AWARDS EVENING**  
**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH 2013**

A very warm welcome to you all to our Awards Evening this evening. We are delighted to be joined by the Mayor of Caistor, Cllr Millson and his wife and also by representatives from local schools.

This wonderful collection of cups is a way of measuring the passage of time and also the years of service given by our staff and students. Each year there are more and more of them! But they also are a good representation of the love and caring and the desire to do honour to our School which is to be found within our community. Each cup has a story to tell and each recipient of a prize, an award or a cup tonight also has their own individual achievements and tale which we wish to recognise.

I could talk about this for a long time! In fact, I recall my first Awards Evening as Headmaster 18 years ago now, when I spoke for 45 minutes. I wanted to tell the increasingly uncomfortable audience about every aspect of life at Caistor Grammar School. I have learnt since, though, just how unforgiving those pews are and that less can be more. So tonight I hope for no more than 4 ½ minutes.

Let me firstly then do honour to the students who took external exams in the summer at GCSE and AS level and A level. We are hugely delighted that our class of Year 11 last year, despite the many extra hurdles put in their way by Government and examination boards, managed to join their elder peers in getting 100% in, not just 5 but 7, A\*-C passes including English and Maths but also Science. That is a wonderful springboard for future learning for every single one of our students but it is also a testament to the care and dedication of our pastoral team. I particularly wish to mention Mr Graham Dobson, as Head of Upper School, who I think does a really tremendous job and I wish to include our two Learning Support Advisors, recent appointments in the School but who are already making a huge difference, Mrs Gill Cook and Mrs Deborah Stones. Our AS level students achieved very highly, too, and everyone of

the students who wins a John Kenneth Mason Award tonight achieved 5 As at AS level. At A2, our departing Upper Sixth achieved, quite simply, the best results in the School's history in just about every way you care to measure them. They smashed Lincolnshire records in most categories too. And, again, their excellence follows in a long succession of successful Upper Sixes so that we lead Lincolnshire this year, as we have now done for 11 successive years. You should know that their pastoral leader, Mr Terry McTernan, is revered and beloved by our students.

I would also like to say a few words about Debbie Barnes, who is our special Guest this evening and who is the Director of Children's Services in Lincolnshire County Council. It is an extremely significant and demanding role, particularly in a world where education has been atomised so that there are lots of little ships bobbing around on the sea, each going in their own direction. It takes a very skilful Admiral to find the common ground between them and marshall them into a coherent fleet. It takes someone with great diplomatic and negotiating skills but also someone who has a core of sincerely held beliefs which she won't sacrifice and who is a powerful advocate for these values. Lincolnshire is very fortunate to have Debbie Barnes in this post at this time and I pledge to her the wholehearted support of this School's staff and governors in helping to make Lincolnshire as successful as it can be.

My main message for this year is that Caistor Grammar School should seek to be a shining City upon a Hill. There is a biblical resonance and origin to this quotation but it was made celebrated by the Pilgrim Father, John Winthrop, who inspired his fellow refugees as they contemplated arriving in a New World. What does this mean for Caistor Grammar School? It means that we should recognise how fortunate we are in the combination of circumstances in which we find ourselves. A small school in ancient buildings, even if some of them are brand new. In each year group there are only 94 students. The new Year 7 though come from 39 schools. There are 19 students who are the only student in their school to come to this school. That means, they really want to be here. That means their parents really want them to be here, to. And they are also all very talented. Teachers, too, bring remarkable qualities. Some of our

staff are among the most accomplished you will find in any school or indeed any walk of life in this country. Their stars shine very brightly indeed and we all know who they are. Passion, caring and excellence are their watchwords and they should be ours too; our students, our staff, our governors and the parents of our students. We also have a common purpose to excel and to be as good as we can be. But we must take care to ensure that this is defined in the broadest possible terms. Fundamentally, it is about how we live our lives, about the values we have, about the way we treat other people. I want our students to learn to be good, caring, contributing citizens. I want them to believe in themselves and to believe in the power they have to direct how their lives will be led. I want them to find encouragement from their peers and our staff in this pursuit. It can be uncomfortable to have such high expectations. We are asking a lot of ourselves and of each other but to those to whom much is given, much must be expected. At its essential core, Caistor Grammar School holds that everyone who is here is a special person, who can become a remarkable person. They should seek to shine like beacons in all that they do and our collective shining together will lead to a brightness that inspires our whole community, like that of a City upon a Hill.

I would like to share with you lines from “Caliban’s Dream” composed for the opening ceremony of the Olympics and so memorably performed by our choir on our most special of days on Monday. You can visit our School website to see Francesca Altoft’s excellent photographs put to this music by clicking on the relevant story and you can see the lines repeated in my tweets, which can be accessed from the School website also, via the little bird in the top right hand corner.

“Affirming flame, hear me call.

Through the darkness, hear it call to us all.

And stir again.

This beating heart, come to care.....

Oh,

And the light drives out our fears, And the joy drives out our pain,.....

May your light be ever near us,

Always lead us from the dark, though we may fall.

We will fly.

And with love, ever call.”

Wonderful lives, aren't they? I will end with lines from W. B. Yeats: A poem of remarkable power, and in helping with my aim tonight, great brevity.

### **He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven**

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.