

OPEN EVENING FAQs 2020

We invited the public to a live Q&A on Twitter, below are the questions we were asked and answered. We have also added a few extra questions that we have been asked privately.



What makes Nailsea different from other secondary schools in North Somerset?

We are really lucky in North Somerset that all schools are great. Nailsea is a real community - we look out for each other - nothing proved that more than the last 6 months. There are no invisible students here at Nailsea - we are small enough to know every individual, their needs and their aspirations and we strive each day to support these students to achieve them.

What is a typical school day in year 7?

Students arrive at 8.30 and will be greeted by staff at the entrance, they should arrive at their lessons at 8.40. Each lesson lasts for an hour and there are 5 lessons per day. We have a 20 minute break in the morning and a 40 minute lunchbreak. During lunch and break Year 7 & 8 share their own outdoor area, but are also free to use the school field. Following lunch students attend tutor time which lasts for 20 minutes. The school day finishes at 3pm. There are a range of in-school and after school extra-curricular clubs available.

How much homework do students get in Year 7?

We are currently introducing a Homework Timetable for Year 7 to get them used to supporting their studies regularly and independently at home. On average Year 7 students will receive two pieces of homework per evening with each taking 15-30 minutes. No homework is set on Friday/Saturday. We have a clear policy of allowing 3 clear evenings between a homework being set and it being handed in. This helps students in their organisation and a work life balance. Homework is set through the Show My Homework website/app, which students, staff and parents can access to keep track.

Do you set for any of your subjects? If so which ones?

Year 7 students are taught in mixed ability groups apart from Maths which is set after liaising with students Year 7 teachers and reviewing external assessments. As students enter Year 9 they are set across Science as they begin their GCSE courses. This is continued throughout Years 10 and 11. Throughout all teaching groups work is differentiated & every student is given the opportunity to succeed.

Do you do any curriculum enrichment weeks, as I know other schools in the area are doing?

Nailsea School believes it is really important that there is enrichment throughout the year and not just crammed into one week. Life at school is about subject knowledge but also about experiences and we pride ourselves on ensuring that these are part of the regular offer for all. Recent enrichment trips include foreign trips to places such as France, Spain, Germany, Washington and New York; visits to London as part of Art and Photography; visits to the Houses of Parliament and numerous theatre trips. In addition we host a number visitors to the school such as Engineers, Chefs, Authors and the Medical Mavericks for hands on experiences.

My daughter would like to know if they are always with the same class throughout the different subjects.

Students are in one teaching group for the majority of subjects. However there are different student groupings in Tech, PE and Maths, making 4 different groups and five including a tutor group.

Do the children get to select a friend they would like to be with in their house and class?

We think very carefully about the teaching groups as students move from primary school. During our transition visits in the summer term there is a discussion about having a familiar face (ideally a friend) within the teaching group and the tutor group. Students from different primary schools are shared across teaching and tutor groups to enable familiar faces to be seen on the first day, as well providing an opportunity to make new friends.

When are detentions issued?

Lots of Year 7s worry about getting in trouble at secondary school, but we make sure our guidelines are clear on what behaviour we expect from our students. We have a clear system of consequences and opportunities for students to rectify their behaviour when things go wrong, so in the first instance making a mistake won't instantly lead to a detention. Students are given reward points (House Points) when they achieve good things and behaviour points when expectations are not met. Students who achieve lots of House Points are able to be selected to take part in the rewards events at the end of each term.

How do you deal with bullying?

We focus on building positive relationships and our ABSolute curriculum and tutor time focuses on respecting others and being community minded. Difference is celebrated at Nailsea school and students are encouraged to see diversity as a strength and our vertical tutor groups enable a family feel.

We have a strong pastoral team who work closely with our students. We work with them to bring about change and deal with any incidents brought to our attention. Sanctions are used as appropriate. We have a strong anti-bullying ethos, students can email an 'anti-bullying' hotline to report bullying or to seek help face to face. In the recent Ofsted report it was identified by students that bullying happens extremely rarely and when reported it is acted upon.

You talk about supporting the top 5-10% of students and the SEN students what about those in the middle. How do you ensure they maximise their success?

The size of our year groups mean that ALL students are known as individuals. Staff can quickly identify ways they can be supported inside and outside the classroom to ensure they are happy and opportunities for success are maximised. Our 'Aspire' ethos means that everyone pushes themselves to be the best they can. This is developed through dialogue and feedback from teachers. Feedback forensically looks at the stepping stones for students to improve. In addition, support is offered outside the classroom, covering both pastoral and academic areas.

What is the difference between 'progress' and 'attainment'?

Progress is a projected measure of how a child develops from their Year 6 starting point. The Government have selected 8 areas or 'buckets' as they are known are used to take a measure from Year 6 to Year 11.

These are:- **bucket 1** = English & Maths (double weighted), **bucket 2** = Ebacc subjects, three highest scores from either Science, Languages, Geography, History or Computer Science and **bucket 3** = three highest scores from the remaining subjects eg PE, Fine Art, Music, Drama, Photography, Media Studies, Criminology, Business Studies, Psychology, Religious Studies, Engineering, Food Technology etc.

If a child has excelled in one 'bucket' area but has failed in another 'bucket' area then those scores cannot be transferred.

Attainment is based on the results achieved at the end of a course eg. GCSE Maths – Grade 9 at the end of Year 11.

Why does Nailsea appear as 'Well below average' in terms of exam results on the school comparison site?

We are not afraid to acknowledge the publication of these and are already working towards improving outcomes in this area. Our exam results -attainment figures remain above the national average and are repeatedly some of the highest in the area. Visit the 'Our Progress 8 score ' section of our website to learn more about these 'progress' figures. ([Please scroll to the bottom of the webpage click here](#)).

What is Nailsea School doing to address the recent 'Requires Improvement' score given by Ofsted?

The Ofsted report acknowledged the strengths of our Sixth form, our pastoral care and our students' personal development. Although we were delighted with these aspects of the report we are not complacent and work is already underway to consolidate and further extend this provision.

One of the key areas identified for improvement was the need for strengthened leadership and capacity for improvement has been created. Key positions have been identified, with additional time given and new roles being created, all having a clear remit focussing on the areas for development outlined by the inspection team. These new positions reflect the changes that were already being brought in and were key to the school's own development plan, prior to the visit. All of these changes will help accelerate progress.

Regularly reviewing this degree of progress is a key element of driving these improvements and the school is working with both the governors and external support to ensure these are as effective as possible.