



CENTRAL
FOUNDATION
BOYS' SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1865

Headteacher's Address at CFBS Open Evening 2011

Welcome to Central Foundation Boys' School – thank you for taking the time to come to see us.

Open Evening is a challenge for a school – we have to try – outside of school time to capture the essence and the spirit of the school and, I hope, on your tour you have obtained a real feel for us.

In my talk I want to give you an understanding of what I am about but more importantly what we are about at Central Foundation.

Central Foundation is a very special school and one reason it is so special is that the founding purpose of this school, set almost 150 years ago, remains at the core today of everything that we look to achieve.

Our founder, William Rogers, a man of remarkable energy, a priest who had his church in the area, a very poor neighbourhood, set this school up specifically so that the boys living in this area would have exactly the same opportunities as any young person whatever their background. Over the 150 years again and again the

achievement of our students has proved that that the school is fulfilling its founding purpose.

I am sure you will have seen on our website that our ex-pupils include leading lawyers, architects, musicians, business men and politicians. This year, a fresh batch of Central Foundation students are heading off to the best universities in the country, including Oxbridge colleges.

That is a bold ambition that our students will have the best education here, as good as or better than they would receive at any school be it a top state school, a free school or a private school.

To achieve this we have set ourselves eight very challenging aims.

Our **first aim** is for every single one of our students to achieve outstanding outcomes in their education. Whatever their level, they should achieve better in this school than they would have anywhere else. Ambitious, but we are well on the road to achieving that:

- Ofsted said the academic progress of our students last year was outstanding – well, this year was a significant improvement.
- With a lower ability year group than the previous year we have achieved 65% 5 A* to C GCSEs including English

and Maths. Those are all proper GCSEs because we run a traditional GCSE based curriculum for our students.

- In Maths, 79% of students achieved a grade C or better and in English 78%. To put that in context, our Year group was just below national average by ability – in an average school, still a good school, that group would have been expected to achieve about 54% in Maths. In other words, there are 34 students at Central Foundation who would not have achieved a Maths GCSE if they had gone to an average school – that is not a failing school – that is a school that is performing on the average.
- At the top end, over a whole class of students achieved 5 or more A's and A*. You will have seen the extraordinary results of our top performers in our brochure pack.
- We are equally proud that every single student finished Year 11 with 5 or more qualifications.

At Central Foundation education extends beyond qualifications.

I would partly subscribe the Einstein's definition of education that it is what remains after one has forgotten everything one learnt at school.

We know that qualifications alone are not all that students need to allow them to fulfill their potential – life skills such as leadership and team working alongside confidence, self-esteem and respect for others are at the core of what we do.

Every Tuesday we do what appears to be becoming rarer in schools, we have an assembly for the whole school where we gather together and we talk, listen and learn about our fundamental beliefs, about how we should be as young men and as a school – honest, trustworthy and respectful of adults. In this weekly central gathering, we set out our culture and our way of doing things spreads out into the classroom, the playground and into everything we do.

Our **second aim** is to provide inspirational teaching. The heart of a good school is outstanding subject teachers. Our aim is not some outstanding teachers, it is not to avoid having poor teachers – it is that every teacher is outstanding. You have two ways of achieving this. The first is for us already in the school to seek to constantly improve by having rigorous performance management and training and being very honest with ourselves.

The other is through recruitment. The advantage of being a successful school is that lots of outstanding teachers want to join you. Last year due to the expansion of our Sixth Form we were able to recruit 8 new teachers. We had over 400 applicants. Our criteria for selection are simple, are the applicants outstanding individuals and can they show they are able to be as good at supporting struggling Year 7s as they are at ensuring that many of our students achieve A* at A level. I see every candidate teach and I can report that they are a remarkable group of young people committed to transforming young peoples' lives. They all are from Russell Group universities including Oxford and Cambridge.

Our **third aim** is to provide a world class curriculum for the students. OFSTED of course said our curriculum was outstanding but we continue to develop it. Whilst based around traditional subjects, it must reflect the world as it is today and prepare the students for the future. We believe

that students progress best when the work is clearly targeted to their level and that this is best achieved where students are set by ability. So from when students join us in Year 7 most classes are set.

Our aim here is that the opportunities are on a par with any school. So our focus on sport, Art, Drama and Music is fundamental to this school. We have appointed wonderful and inspirational leaders in these areas and we are now backing it up with financial support. Through our connection with the Dulwich Trust we are ploughing an additional £50,000 a year into these areas.

Our **fourth aim** is to provide outstanding pastoral care; care of the individual must always rank alongside our academic ambitions – unhappy boys do not succeed. Again, OFSTED judged this area of the school to be outstanding, a judgement of which we are justifiably very proud. However, we are always developing this. We have now introduced a tutoring system. Students each have a tutor who takes responsibility for only 15 students. The tutor meets with the boy's parents in the summer term before they start at Central Foundation. From these beginnings comes a relationship that lasts throughout the pupil's career at the school, giving them and their parents a direct and personal connection to Central Foundation.

Our **fifth aim** is to ensure the highest standards of behaviour, uniform, attendance and punctuality: students only learn in a calm and safe environment. We have a very straightforward approach to behaviour based around two rules:

- the students respect at all times all of the adults in this school
- the students never treat another student in a way they would not want to be treated.

We have a similar simple approach to behaviour in lessons. This school is full of students who see education as a key to their futures and they should not be held back by the behaviour of others. Students who disrupt learning are removed immediately from lessons and if it continues we have a centre where those students can go to be educated until they learn to behave in lessons.

Our **sixth aim** is to place our community and especially you, the parents, at the centre of our work here. Our partnership with you, the parents, is very important. This has two important aspects. Firstly, to provide you with all the information you need on the progress of your son and the information you need to support your son. Secondly, to provide you the opportunity to shape what we do here. This is our response to Free Schools – the government providing you with the opportunity to set your own school up. Instead, why not join us in shaping an existing institution that is

already part of the community. This is your school, William Rogers set this school up for your community. This term we are holding our first parental forum where parents will join us to shape the work we do.

Our **seventh aim** is to construct an inspirational physical environment. We will develop our historical school campus in a way that will enhance the education of the students and improve the quality of their lives. We already have high quality facilities but we have secured the multi-million pound funding for the whole scale redevelopment of our campus in time for our 150th anniversary. The beauty of our site is that we can do this in stages without disruption to the students' education.

Our **eighth and final aim** is to provide ground-breaking advice, information and support to all students for their next step beyond Central Foundation. We will keep on developing our capacity to support students into work, training and education. Of huge significance to supporting our students is our Sixth Form which was, of course, graded as 'Outstanding' last year.

Ofsted said our partnership work was outstanding and we have extensive business partners. You may have seen us featured in the national press last week for our ground breaking partnership work with the UK's leading law firm, Slaughter & May. They are funding an extensive programme

to ensure that every student is capable of progressing to a top university does so.

So that is who we are, what we have achieved so far and what we will achieve in the future. If you are considering us, a brief work on admissions. Students sit series of tests to allow us to place them into four ability bands. This ensures we have a truly comprehensive intake each year. Our catchment area is very wide covering the whole of Islington but extending east and west, and more and more students are travelling from south of the river.

Thank you once again for coming and for taking the time to visit us, and good luck in your search for the right school. Myself and other senior staff are available for questions and of course we would love to see you again on our Open Days on the 4th and 5th October.