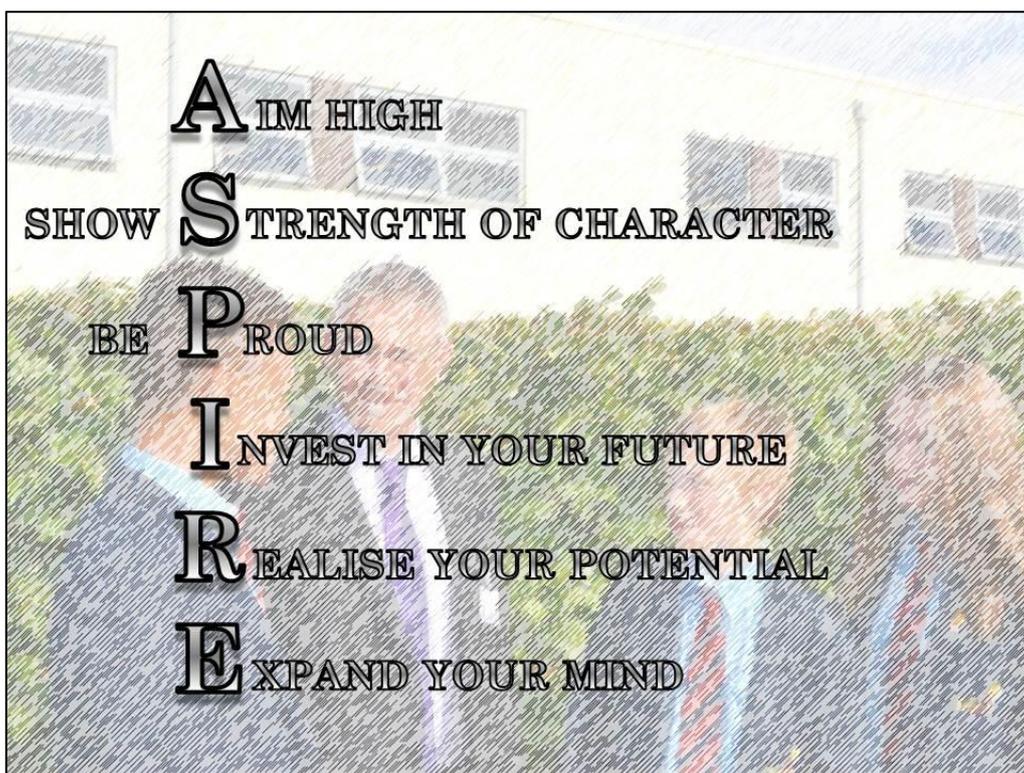


We know that a number of parents were unable to attend our Open Evening on Tuesday 23 September. We have, therefore, decided to put the text of my welcome speech on our website alongside some photos of the evening:

*It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this evening, because it gives us the opportunity to do something we enjoy very much – showing off our school. We can tell you that we are a good school; we can produce glossy brochures showing you we are a good school; Ofsted can come and agree – not once but twice – that we are a good school... but you have a very important decision to make, and we want you to see for yourselves just how good we are. That is why I was glad to see so many people here for our first Open Evening in March and I'm equally happy to see you all here tonight.*

*We have fantastic facilities at The Elizabethan... but please don't be taken in by them. A school is much more than just a building, so please take the opportunity to talk to our staff and talk to our students, because they are the people who make The Elizabethan the school it is.*

*This year, we have adopted a new set of principles which we want students to follow – they are our recipe for success if you like. They don't replace our mission statement, which you can see on the wall in front of you – but mission statements are aimed more at staff than students. We want our students to **aspire**:*



*This is what we stand for at The Elizabethan. Yes, we want our students to be happy... but we also want them to be successful.*

*I don't know if it's a sign of getting old, but the speed the world is changing these days still amazes me. I remember reading somewhere that knowledge tends to go out of date every two years. Many of the jobs your children will do when they leave here have yet to be invented. We say in our prospectus that we want to shape the pioneers and leaders of the future. So how on earth can we prepare them for the future if we don't know what it holds? Simple – at The Elizabethan, we don't just focus on filling their heads with knowledge and teaching them how to pass the next exam. We teach them the vital skills that they will need to compete in the world of the future. We teach them to be adaptable and flexible; we teach them resilience and "bouncebackability"; we give them confidence.*

*This confidence was seen during the visit by eminent scientist and broadcaster Professor Robert Winston last year. He wasn't shown around by us; his hosts and guides were Shaun Hird and Meike Tomlinson, who were both Team Ambassadors and Year 11 students.*

*I'd be a fool to claim that exam results don't matter, so let's get the boring bit out of the way. Many schools saw their results go down this year, in part due to changes to League Tables and what counts and what doesn't. Many schools saw their results go down this year... and yet ours went up. We had more students finishing Year 11 with five good GCSEs including a Grade A\*-C in English and Maths; we had more students achieving the English Baccalaureate. We have more students this year with the grades to stay on and do A-Levels with us at Retford Post-16. Results were also up at A-Level, and our students are now heading the length and breadth of the country to study a wide range of subjects.*



*In the Performance Space*



*Students on computers in the Learning Resource Centre*

*All of this is important, but your children are more than just a set of future exam statistics. Alongside lessons, we have a comprehensive Leadership programme which enables our students to develop the transferrable skills I referred to earlier. These opportunities aren't just tokenistic – there are genuine opportunities in lessons and tutor period, there are a range of leadership posts students can apply for. The ultimate position of responsibility, I suppose, is Team Ambassador, and just as I work closely with the Senior Leadership Team, I would like this junior version to play a more prominent part in the school's leadership too. To this end, I have my first meeting with them this Thursday to plan how they can make a genuine contribution to the running of the school in future.*



*Computing in the ICT Room*



*In the Art Room*

*Many schools locally now have mixed age tutor groups, and I strongly believe that this has helped our Year 7s settle so well this year. I remember being quite scared when I started school – I wasn't the biggest lad, and Year 11 used to tower over me. However, Year 11 don't seem quite so scary when you sit next to them in tutor period five times a week.*

*Our Year 7 is drawn from 27 different primary schools this year; we have nine official feeders, but parents from many other primaries choose to send their children here too. Where possible, we visit each and every one of them in their primary school so that we can get to know them on “home territory”. Links with feeder schools are very good, and there are many opportunities for younger students to get to know our school. It is harder for students who come from out of catchment, but once we have confirmation of who is coming in September, we include these students in as many activities as we can to ease their transition to secondary school.*

*Please enjoy your visit tonight. Our contact details are on the back of the prospectus if you have any further questions or would like to have another look round before making your decision. We have an Open Morning planned for Monday 20 October – you are welcome to phone and visit at any time, but I know we have cleared our diaries on that morning so we are available to show you around.*



*Sixth Form students promoting our Post 16 Centre*

*You can probably tell that I am quite excited to be leading The Elizabethan this year. I am incredibly proud of our academy – I’m reminded a thousand times a day what it is that makes me so proud... another 200 times if I go over to our Post 16 site. Please take the opportunity to talk to our staff and students to see why they are proud to be part of The Elizabethan too.*

**Jason White**

Acting Principal

September 2014