

Amy Dwyer

What subject(s) did you study during Sixth Form?

I studied psychology, biology and chemistry.

What are you studying now and what would like to do next?

I'm studying medicine at university. What speciality I'll eventually go into is up for debate. I'm torn between becoming a paediatrician (or paediatric cardiologist), an A&E doctor or a GP. *Where* I'll be practising is also up for debate. Norway, Scotland and Ireland are all considerations.

What was your experience of Sixth Form like? (How did you progress, what were your teachers like, support that you received, advice you were given)

[As someone who studied in the lower school] I was known to the school prior to my entrance to Sixth Form so when it came to staff, I had somewhat of an idea of who my teachers were. I would call the relationships with my teachers prior to Sixth Form surface level. It wasn't until once I'd entered Sixth Form that my teachers felt more like a supportive network - *people* that I could go to if I was having trouble academically. I believe this is partly due to the smaller class sizes and partly because everyone sees you as a bit more "grown up" once you've entered Sixth Form.

My personal progression was strong from the beginning though when my grades did suffer, my teachers in those areas were quick to offer support. What sticks out to me is that I wasn't just told to do something to get better. Both teachers sat down with me and talked through my place in the course, offering insights into what they thought was the best move from me to progress all whilst listening to any concerns or suggestions I had myself.

Careers wise, I wasn't always set on entering a medical course and becoming a doctor. One specific staff member gave me the motivation and pep talk I needed to believe that getting into medicine was entirely possible. I still remember that moment to this day. Getting advice and resources from the appointed careers advice staff, I believe, was a crucial part of me passing the medicine applicant requirements (UKCAT, interview).

Overall, the staff were great, the advice I received wasn't always perfect but there were definitely times where I couldn't have done without it, and support was given in the most crucial of times.

What was your favourite part of Sixth Form?

My favourite part of Sixth Form has to be the feeling of community and togetherness. I'm fortunate enough to be attending a university which fosters the same feeling as Sixth Form did but know from friends/other reports that it's a quality that isn't easy to find or create. It always felt like the teachers and staff saw you not just as someone they had to teach but as an individual with ambitions, worries and a personality outside of college.

A close second has to be the huge push towards independent study. I loved it though I know others didn't. Regardless of if you do or don't, the teachers and the support from other staff ensured that it was a smooth transition into this style of learning.

What advice would you give to someone about to move into Sixth Form?

You're going to get *a lot* of opportunities in this step up into Sixth Form. Take them. Even if you don't think you've got what it takes or it'd be better if someone else did it, take it. You'll be surprised what can happen when you start saying yes more to a lot of opportunities that come your way. Sixth Form isn't just about academic growth. It's about personal growth too and accepting things that you wouldn't normally do. There's a lot of chances where you can learn about yourself. When it comes to the timing, Sixth Form, where your options of what you want to study are still fairly wide and you haven't decided on a set path yet, is a safe and nurturing environment for you to grow as a person.

If that isn't enough motivation for you to start grabbing the opportunities that come your way then think - it'd always look great on your CV/university application!