

# From the East End to Eton, brainbox son of a Bangladeshi migrant

By **Eleanor Harding**  
Education Correspondent

THE son of a Bangladeshi immigrant from one of Britain's poorest areas is to follow in the footsteps of Princes William and Harry after winning a place at Eton.

Kaashif Kamaly, 15, will swap Forest Gate in the East End of London for the public school after winning a two-year £76,000 scholarship.

He will take up a place to study A-level maths, chemistry, English literature, biology and history next September.

Kaashif - who has a 21-year-old brother and a nine-year-old sister - insists he won't forget his roots.

'My family have struggled their entire life to make a better future for me and my siblings,' he said. 'I am a product of that environment. I haven't known privilege like many of the pupils at Eton.'

'I have this extraordinary opportunity that I will grab with both hands but it won't change who I am and where I have

## 'Extraordinary opportunity'

come from, nor would I want it to.'

His mother Shewly Begum, 43, was born in Sylhet, Bangladesh, and came to Britain when she married his father, Shahrabu Miah, 45, who was born in the UK but had Bangladeshi family.

Mr Miah is an immigration officer at Heathrow despite being disabled. Kaashif said: 'My dad has a lot of injuries, shattered knee and slipped disc, but has instilled ethics that you have to work, you have to pay your way.'

'He crosses London every day to work. He is always at work trying to make life better for his family. He is my hero.'

He said life in Forest Gate has been tough because of crime and gang wars. 'If I were to tell people about some of the dangers we've had to face such as the crime rate and the risk of having your possessions taken off you, they would be quite surprised.'

'At night time it can be dangerous in places where you are easily cornered and isolated. But my

parents have always taught me how to be safe.'

Kaashif attends Forest Gate Community School, where over two-thirds of pupils are on free school meals - a government poverty indicator. It is rated outstanding by Ofsted and was ranked 14th best in the country for GCSE results. Kaashif, who is predicted to gain A\*s in all his GCSEs, said:

'Eton is a fantastic school, but what the teachers have helped me achieve at Forest Gate Community School is even bigger.'

'The pupils at Eton are sons of kings and queens, lords and judges. In this area there are many, many social problems. Gangs, drugs, crime, poverty, these are common issues in Newham. Teachers won't have had to help



Forest Gate Community School: Rated outstanding



Eton: Kaashif has won a two-year £76,000 scholarship



Kaashif Kamaly: Going to Eton 'will not change who I am'

pupils at Eton deal with that.' His mother encouraged him to apply for Eton and he went for a residential visit which involved three exams and six interviews.

'It was magnificent,' he said. 'It was quiet, it was reserved. Everyone was so nice and accepting. The difference in backgrounds didn't matter.'

Kaashif is the second pupil from

Forest Gate Community School to win a scholarship to Eton. Ishak Ayiris, who earned a place there in 2014, is now studying at the School of African and Oriental Studies.

Headteacher Simon Elliott said: 'We have students who despite coming from one of the poorest areas have the same belief as pupils at top independent schools, that nothing is out of their reach.'