

WH/RNM

9 September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

2019 EXAMINATION RESULTS

Congratulations to all of our examination candidates. We have had a brilliant year with exceptional results at both GCSE and A Level. We are delighted for our students; they have been rewarded for all their hard work.

At GCSE our students produced record results, achieving an indicative Progress 8 score of +0.43. This means that, on average, students at Boston Spa Academy achieved half a grade higher in each of their GCSE subjects than other students nationally! This is an absolutely spectacular rate of progress for the academy, demonstrating the powerful impact for our students of Boston Spa joining The GORSE Academies Trust.

In the 'Threshold' measure for English and Mathematics we had 79% of students passing both English and Mathematics at GCSE. Passes at grade 4 in English were 16% above the national pass rate, while in Mathematics they were 22% above. Nationally less than 3% gained a grade 9 in Maths, but at Boston Spa 19% achieved this grade.

There is a real consistency across the other GCSE examinations. Passes at grade 4 were 8% above national; grade 5 were 12% above; grade 7 were 10% above and at grade 9, where the national figure was 4.5%, our students gained 7.8%.

At A Level we retained, for the third year, our place as one of the top two schools in the city, with our students achieving an outstanding 36.32 points per entry. This was really pleasing, but the real joy was seeing our Year 13s achieve their goals and take up so many places at top universities.

We are really pleased with all of these outcomes. They are outstanding, but there is no complacency at Boston Spa Academy. Our commitment to see these results as the foundation for further success and ever increasing levels of achievement is absolute.

ELLIOTT HUDSON COLLEGE BOSTON SPA

We are delighted to be welcoming our post 16 students into Elliott Hudson College Boston Spa this week. It was brilliant to see and hear their responses as they walked into brand new facilities on Thursday morning.

The capital investment from The GORSE Academies Trust has created an incredible transformation; the buildings are unrecognisable. In addition to the brand new classrooms, the

toilets, the diner, the social spaces and study areas have all been rebuilt, with a particular focus on bringing access to state of the art IT facilities for our students. There will be some pictures on the [blog](#) and Years 12 and 13 know they are being looked after very well. This is just the beginning of a collaboration of excellence.

PERFORMING ARTS STRATEGY

Thank you for your responses to my letter during the holidays about our [Performing Arts](#) strategy. These are really exciting developments for our young people. We have the last few places available for LAMDA qualifications in Speech and Drama; these are a fantastic opportunity, and if you are interested please email info@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk marking the subject as 'LAMDA lessons'. If you have already requested these lessons then your child's place is secure and you will hear from us shortly.

COMMUNITY CHOIR

As a part of our Performing Arts strategy we are keen to see the arts take a key role at the heart, not just of our school, but also on our communities.

One key aspect of our work is to launch a brand new community choir for adults and older students who wish to sing for pleasure. This will be led by Mr James Rodgers, an experienced musician and teacher. He is a former pupil of Boston Spa with long standing links to our communities. He is extremely passionate about coming back to work in our locality and to be bringing this new project to our families.

Once the community choir is established they will determine their own repertoire, but it will begin with a combination of musical theatre, light classical music and popular songs. Rehearsals will be held at Boston Spa Academy on alternate Tuesday evenings from 7.30-9.00pm and culminate in a first performance at our Christmas Concert on Wednesday 11 December. The first rehearsal will be on Tuesday 24 September, and cost will be just £1 per rehearsal. There is no need to book in advance, and no particular musical expertise is required; we will be pleased to welcome all on the first evening. If you have any questions please email info@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk marking your email 'Community Choir'.

SUPPORT FOR MORE VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

At Boston Spa Academy we take very seriously our responsibility to support that relatively small number of young people who experience particular barriers to their learning, often caused by factors outside school. Our success in these approaches can be seen in the 2019 outcomes and the way our students progress after Years 11 and 13.

After careful and strategic consideration, we have determined that while we have done well for these young people, we can do more. One factor in making this decision is that the service our young people have been receiving from the Leeds City Council cluster during the last two years has not been meeting our expectations. After very diligent and careful research in partnership with senior colleagues from The GORSE Academies Trust, we have decided that we will withdraw our funding from the cluster and will invest that money in a contract with private provider called Place2Be from 1 January 2020.

Place2Be will provide us with earlier intervention and a broader range of bespoke and targeted support with professionals of a greater expertise than that which the cluster has been able to

provide. The transition from the cluster to Place2Be will be smooth and it will provide the quality and range of professional service that we believe our students deserve.

Our commitment to support vulnerable children is absolutely unchanged, indeed it is because of the very importance of this commitment that we have made the decision to make this switch. Mrs Spink will remain at the fulcrum of the support that we provide, and will be able to answer any questions that families might have.

BUS TRANSPORT

We have received a few concerns from parents about the difficulties with the new bus services; we have been disappointed that this has, for some, been the student experience. We are monitoring the quality of delivery very carefully and will be meeting with the service providers over the next week to make sure they understand both the concerns parents have shared and the standards we expect.

EXERCISE BOOKS

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of our exercise books; reminding our students that the 'grade is in the book'. We will again be maintaining our focus of the quality of written work through the 'Magnificent 10', which are the academy expectations for the presentation of written work. To protect the quality of the books we expect each to be retained inside a plastic cover. Students will need ten which we will give to them. If these are lost or damaged students will need to buy replacement from Student Services at 25p each.

PRAISE AND RECOGNITION

At the heart of our Positive Discipline Policy is recognition, reward and the celebration of what our students achieve, and we are really pleased that so many students have earned the opportunity to go to Lightwater Valley on 20 September. This is a genuine cause for celebration, and we are pleased to also invite our new Year 7s to join us. For students not going on the trip it is the usual full school day, in uniform, with five taught lessons and routine expectations throughout.

Another aspect of our celebration of students is the introduction of a Prize Presentation Evening. Invitations will be sent out for this event later this term, which takes place on Wednesday 20 November. I offer my congratulations in advance to all who receive an invitation.

OPEN EVENING

Our Open Evening for Year 6 families is on Tuesday 17 September, when the academy will close at 12.30pm. This is an important evening for us as we share with our communities the outstanding results at GCSE and A Level, the exceptional extra curricular offer and our exciting plans for the future. Sir John Townsley and I will be speaking at 6.00pm and again at 6.45pm. Please feel free to share the date within our communities.

The best way to appreciate what is being achieved at Boston Spa Academy is, of course, to hear from our students and many will be involved during the evening. We are very appreciative of the support we receive from families on this evening in making sure that students are safely brought to and from school for the event.



Thank you for your going support for Boston Spa Academy, we value it very much and look forward to working in partnership with you through this year

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CW", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
Principal