



BECCLES FREE SCHOOL

"Providing a foundation for life"

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Dear Parent and Carers

Welcome back to Beccles Free School after what I hope has been a pleasant summer. You may well have seen the wonderful news coverage of our Year 11's excellent GCSE results that were much cause for celebration. The students have worked remarkably hard and achieved great results.

This year saw the first set of results with the new demanding GCSEs, that nationally saw a drop in performance in English and Maths. At Beccles Free School, it was a different story with our best results yet. Overall 64% (3% higher than published due to remarks!) of students achieved a Grade 4 or above in English and Maths with 42% achieving a Grade 5. Over the past two years we have worked tirelessly to bring English up to the already excellent standards in Maths at the school. Students and staff did this. Overall in English 82% achieved a Grade 4 or above (equivalent to a C), with 65% achieving the new strong pass of Grade 5. At Beccles we are determined to challenge all students, so are delighted that a third of students achieved a 7,8 or 9 (equivalent to an A, A* or above). In both English and Maths, students achieved above national averages and expectations.

Overall, this year's results were the best for the school in the majority of subjects. Other highlights include 90% C or above in Technology; 100% in Chemistry, Biology and Physics; and 93% in the Philosophy and Ethics. In October, we will receive our Progress 8 results from the Department for Education. These are calculated based on performances nationally. Our own calculations suggest that performance for all students look to be positive; in particular results for Pupil Premium students looks to be very positive. I am really looking forward to being able to share these results with you officially, but in the meantime I am proud of the staff's commitment to provide "a foundation for life" for our students.

This was the first cohort to work with the school for the last five years and benefit from our curriculum and longer day. For example this flexibility enabled them to get much more time in Maths for their numeracy, with English and the Humanities improving their literacy. As an example two students who joined the school with the lowest Key Stage 2 scores, have left with 7s (the equivalent to an A grade). With the increasing focus on interventions and support in the school, it is exciting to consider what our current students can achieve.

Successful school needs strong teachers and at the same time inevitably some teachers will progress on to further develop their own careers. Since I joined in Easter 2015, I have



worked closely with the Trust to strengthen the staff team and ensure high quality specialist teaching takes place in every subject area. To that end I am delighted to say that from September we will have expanded our Science team to include AnnaMaria Hultka and Andrew Ball as well as Olivia Griffiths, a highly experienced Science Technician. Gavin Butler will take over the role of Subject Leader. However, we will still be working with Simone Field who is coming back to cover paternity leave in the first instance.

Mr Don Daniel has secured an exciting promotion in a very different school that works with young people who have not engaged in mainstream education .We wish him well. Equally, I am pleased that for the past year Mr Milton has been working with him with Robocup and coding and Mr Ward, himself a Technology specialist, has supported with coursework moderation etc. Indeed, Mr Don Daniel has, typically for him, offered to come in and support with coursework in the holiday revision sessions. Similarly whilst Liz Forrester is retiring this year, we will still be working together. Liz will come in and work with the art groups and Clare Cooper-Adams, who joins us a teacher of Art and Technology. Mr Ward will teach Key Stage 4, as he had for many years, prior to joining Beccles.

The English team continues to expand and develop. We were incredibly fortunate to appoint Catherine Rodden eighteen months ago, who will now join the Extended Leadership Team and become subject leader, replacing Chris Morris, who has become the Head of Education at a care home. Lauren Morris will continue to support us with GCSE English. Finally the team sees Jenny Goodwin and Jenny Shervington join us. The excellent results last year were a result of the whole team including Clare Barratt and myself working together to support the students, and following our success, we will definitely continue in that approach.

New staff bring new opportunities and I am looking forward to Jenny Goodwin introducing Latin in Enrichment to challenge our most able. Across the different subjects 21 percent of grades were As or above. Similarly I have been reassured by positive feedback from parents regarding Modern Foreign Languages over the past year. The team now consists of Amy Bojang who will be introducing German for Year 7, and Heather Chapman (formerly Sadler) who is supporting individuals with Spanish and Italian. Maresli Saiko has left languages teaching, but will continue to support future trips and events.

I am proud to be part of a determined leadership team that is committed to supporting students and staff in achieving the very best. Consequently, I am delighted that, from September, Catherine Rodden will be leading on literacy, teaching and learning, supported by Jenny Shervington, and Shona Power will lead with curriculum and transition. Sam Puxley is a welcome addition to the team, increasing capacity in PE and Sport, as well as in the classroom. Sam was the school's first Head Boy and joins us as a Sport and Education Apprentice.

Student voice is an integral part of the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust. Consequently we have revised our approach to the Personal Education Plans and the tutor system. Each morning will begin with twenty minutes tutor time, rather than line up, so that students receive a more personalised start to the day. The relaunch of the PEP will help

students, staff, parents and carers to share a clearer understanding of the achievements and aspirations of each individual student at Beccles. Alongside listening to students comes expectations of students. All students must wear the correct uniform and be fully equipped for their learning.

One of the loveliest things about results day was having the chance to share the success with parents and carers. The support of parents with our Revision Champions programme meant that we worked together as a community to support revision and learning in school and at home. Across the progress evenings attendance of parents and carers from Year 11 was always above 80% which meant we could talk meaningfully about working together. It is perhaps fitting that the final word in a letter to parents should perhaps come from parents. Comments from three sets of parents resonate with what we want to achieve:

"The school has been brilliant and so supportive for both our children. The school knows each student so well, which is something you wouldn't see in a bigger school, and there's a real sense of community. We wish the school every success." Sam and Andy Thornton

"Alex moved to the school mid-way through Year 9 and we are so pleased to see she has flourished. She has really come out of her shell and she has enjoyed doing so many new things. We can really see the light has come on and she transformed into a confident young adult". Wayne Hammond and Amity Rimington-Hall-Hammond

"It's great that the school has a balance between academic ambition and a unique, holistic approach to learning. Lily's journey has been a dream- the school is a nice environment for success and we are grateful as a family. Lily's two siblings are looking forward to starting here in September." Dominic and Rachel Taylor

Thank you for your support and commitment to the school. I wish you all well at the start of the new academic year.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Youngman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr N Youngman
Headteacher