

PRINCIPAL'S POST - OCTOBER 2017

A REVIEW OF THE YEAR SO FAR...

It has been an incredibly positive start to the 2017-18 academic year. And, as I reflect at the end of the first half-term, I would like to reiterate my vision for Erasmus Darwin Academy as we continue to progress through this academic year and beyond: **My vision is that Erasmus Darwin Academy becomes widely regarded as a school characterised by 'Excellence for All' in all areas of school life.** And to clarify, when I refer to excellence in "all areas of school life," I particularly mean excellence in the realms of:

Academic Achievement (through high expectations, high quality teaching and high quality support and intervention.)

Broadening Skills Sets (through participation in high quality visits in the UK and abroad, extra-curricular activities and student leadership opportunities.)

Culture and Ethos (through respectful relationships, high quality care, the celebration of success and no-nonsense rules which are consistently applied.)

Furthermore, since the term started, I have felt increasingly grateful for the way in which EDA staff buy into this vision. On a daily basis, EDA staff show real dedication to the cause of equipping, supporting and inspiring our young people to reach the very highest standards in all that they do. And as I reflect upon on the first half-term of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to share some events/developments which clearly indicate that EDA staff are continuing to provide excellence for all in all areas of school life...

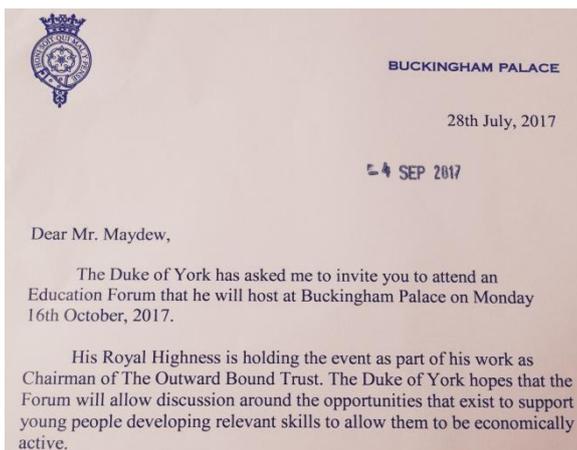
A – Academic Achievement

At the start of the academic year, I shared the news that our examination results were truly excellent and that they had strengthened our status as one of the highest performing schools in the county. And, three weeks ago, the DfE performance tables were published which officially confirmed this:

School name	Type of school	Number of pupils at the end of key stage 4	Progress 8 score & description	Attainment 8 score	Grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs	Achieving EBacc at grade 5/C or above	Entering EBacc	Staying in education or entering employment (2015 leavers)
Painley Catholic College	Academy	193	Well above average 0.76	61.2	67%	61%	85%	97% (191 of 196 pupils)
John Taylor High School	Academy	226	Above average 0.37	54.8	63%	39%	59%	99% (211 of 214 pupils)
Endon High School	Maintained School	140	Average 0.07	52	54%	37%	47%	94% (131 of 140 pupils)
Watton High School	Academy	207	Average -0.13	52	53%	23%	34%	97% (196 of 202 pupils)
Erasmus Darwin Academy	Academy	150	Above average 0.25	51.7	53%	24%	48%	96% (131 of 136 pupils)
King Edward VI School	Maintained School	208	Average 0.02	51	63%	33%	58%	96% (206 of 214 pupils)
Moorside High School	Maintained School	133	Above average	50.9	36%	29%	61%	95% (138 of 145)

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Painley Catholic College	Academy	193	Well above average 0.76	61.2	67%	61%	85%	97% (191 of 196 pupils)
Wolgarston High School	Maintained School	165	Above average 0.43	49.6	57%	35%	67%	96% (194 of 202 pupils)
John Taylor High School	Academy	226	Above average 0.37	54.8	63%	39%	59%	99% (211 of 214 pupils)
The Friary School	Maintained School	194	Above average 0.34	50.7	43%	26%	47%	96% (192 of 199 pupils)
Moorside High School	Maintained School	133	Above average 0.29	50.9	36%	29%	61%	95% (138 of 145 pupils)
Erasmus Darwin Academy	Academy	150	Above average 0.25	51.7	53%	24%	48%	96% (131 of 136 pupils)

Out of **125** secondary institutions in the county, we have the **4th highest** Attainment 8 score and we rank **6th** for our %Grade 5+ in English and Maths. More importantly, the tables also confirmed that we were one of the highest ranked schools in the county for progress, being ranked **6th** out of **125** for our overall Progress 8 score. And, what is particularly pleasing is that our progress scores are really strong for **all** groups of students of **all** abilities and for **all** subject areas. Our progress scores really do show that we are truly inclusive and that we pursue academic excellence for **all**.



B – Broadening Skills Sets

'B' could also stand for **Buckingham Palace** because that's where I was invited on October 16th in order to participate in a national education forum. This 'royal invite' was in recognition of the excellent work that EDA does with students **out** of the classroom, in terms of broadening their horizons and skills sets.

During the event, lots of very important and influential educationalists and business leaders confirmed that what schools offer **out** of the classroom is just as important as what happens inside the classroom. This is to make sure that our students leave school with a well-rounded, broad set of skills and experiences which will help with future employability (and not just with a

narrow suite of academic qualifications.) Therefore, as a school with a well-established tradition of extra-curricular excellence, this was both reassuring and inspiring as it demonstrated that we are at the leading edge of educational thinking and in-step with the national agenda.

Indeed, our tradition of extra-curricular excellence has shown no sign of abating during the last half-term:

- Our rehearsals for *Grease!* have begun and are now in full swing, with every indication that this production is going to be bigger and better than ever.
- Our Awards Evening saw more students than ever receive awards for their Duke of Edinburgh exploits.
- Outstanding sporting success has continued. Only last week I received news that the Y9 football team had won the league whilst remaining unbeaten for the whole season!
- The Flexible Learning Day in October saw students visits Bletchley Park for the first time.
- Following the success and popularity of the Iceland visit, I have approved an Academy visit to New York. And the number of visits planned for 2017-18 is higher than ever.
- Our Autumn Concert was a great success, showcasing the talents of many of our up-and-coming musicians.
- We had a charity fundraising day for Breast Cancer Awareness on the last day of Half-Term. This which was dreamt up, planned and managed by a 6th Form student and it led to nearly £2000 being raised!

(Further details of the above, plus details of many more extra-curricular events, will be shared in the December newsletter.)

C – Culture and Ethos

The Academy has continued to be an extremely friendly, calm and orderly environment this half-term. This is despite the fact that, owing to our growing popularity, we have the highest ever number of students on site on a daily basis.

Measures we have introduced to help keep the academy calm and orderly on a daily basis have worked fantastically:

- The one-way system around part of the main building has meant changeover between lessons has continued to be extremely orderly
- The 'two lunch-sittings' system, together with increased staff on duty at lunchtimes, have combined to keep lunchtimes calm and positive.
- Our new behaviour policy has led to even more clarity and consistency in the way that behaviour expectations are communicated and the way that student behaviour is managed by all staff.
- The physical changes made to the main entrance and reception area, as well as helping to keep our students safe, have helped to set a more calm, measured and professional tone upon entry to the Academy.

So, this half-term has set the tone for another highly successful year at Erasmus Darwin Academy. And, I feel extremely proud that our ongoing success has been recognised at parliamentary level, with an invitation for our school to feature in the government's annual Parliamentary Review of education. This is a process whereby leading schools share the secrets of their success in order to help raise standards nationally. Therefore, together with a small and select number of schools in England and Wales, the success of Erasmus Darwin Academy will be acknowledged, discussed and analysed by the Prime Minister, the Schools' Minister, the Education Select Committee and a range of other influential educationalists. - **WOW!**

As I get older, I am increasingly aware that we only have one life and that young people only have one chance at their education. Therefore, I am determined that all students who attend EDA will have an education which is characterised by excellence; an education which makes a positive and lasting difference to their lives; an education which they will look back upon, one day, with real pride.