



Exam Success at Kensington School

It is the height of summer in an eerily quiet Barcelona. Many residents have left for the beaches of the Costa Brava.

However, in one building of a near-deserted Pedralbes there is much frenetic activity; the British education system perversely chooses the hottest days of the year to publish the outcomes of A Level and GCSE courses.

Exam Results Days are always a strange mixture of anxiety, apprehension and anticipation for both students and teachers. Even if the latter have been preparing exam candidates for many years they still worry about what the results will be – sleeplessness is not just because of the night-time temperatures.

These are high-stakes tests. Do well at A Level and you can start packing your bags for your first-choice university; excel at GCSE and you can look forward with confidence to the demanding sixth form courses.

Although we have an unparalleled reputation in Spain for year-after-year securing remarkable examination results we appreciate that, to borrow a sporting metaphor, 'you are only as good as your last match'.

It is of little use for this Class of '21 to know that their predecessors did brilliantly. For them only this year's results matter.

Even in normal years, Results Days are the climax of long periods of prolonged and conscientious study when normal teenage life is put-on-hold as academic pressures dominate.

But, as we all know, this year has been anything but normal. Indeed, for the past 18 months this group of youngsters have had to face unprecedented and relentless challenges as they tried to stay focused on their studies.

It has been really tough for them.

Despite the valiant efforts of everyone, lessons were disrupted as bubbles had to isolate with positive cases. Learning fluctuated from the unfamiliar remote process to conventional in-class lessons. The long months of home confinement came at a critical time during their preparation.

The oft-quoted context of 'challenging times' simply does not do justice to the situations they had to face.



I am thrilled, therefore, to report that our young people have done brilliantly in their exams. Despite all the hurdles they faced their resilience, determination and sheer doggedness has resulted in yet another year of our students achieving outstanding grades.

At A Level an incredible 70% of all exams were graded as A or A Star with, as normal, an overall 100% pass rate.

For a school to have well over two-thirds of its results in these top two categories is a source of much pride and pleasure for us. We continue to punch-above-our-weight as is clear from the fact that these outcomes are some 25% higher the national average for schools in England.

Our upper sixth students can now prepare to go up to some of the leading universities in Europe.

In the UK Imperial College London, University College London (UCL) and the universities of Glasgow, Manchester and Sussex will soon be welcoming our alumni. Prestigious seats of higher education in the Netherlands and Ireland are also chosen destinations in addition to, as always, the globally recognised ESADE Business School, a stone's throw from our building.

Not to be outdone by Year 13 our Form 5 (Y11) GCSE candidates also achieved record-breaking success.

For the first time in their lives they were being subjected to relentless pressure in the form of continuous teacher assessment in the most trying of circumstances. But with strong family support and a group of conscientious, meticulous and very experienced subject specialists they are now able to celebrate a splendid pass rate of 98.5%.

However, as an academic school it is not just passing that matters. Our focus is quality.

The previous best-ever statistic of 71% A or A Star (grades 7, 8 & 9), set in 2016 and 2019, has been exceeded by 3 percentage points. Our figure of 74% is remarkably 45% above national averages. These young people now have a beneficial head-start when applying to university in 2023.

To conclude, our reputation for being a leading European international school for academic excellence has been further boosted.

My very warm congratulations go to all our deserving pupils and their wonderful teachers who, in true Kensington spirit, worked tirelessly together to overcome adversity and fulfil potential.

These exam results reflect Barcelona's summer - Hot!



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Our celebrations may have disturbed the August peace of Pedralbes. But, to be fair, we do actually have something to shout about.

- Mr Michael Bayes, Headmaster