

September 2019

JG/LH

Dear Parent or Carer,

I would like to wish you a warm welcome to a new Academic Year at Alder Grange School. If you and your child are joining our school community for the first time then you are particularly welcome to the Alder Grange family.

As this is my first letter as Headteacher I wanted to say how proud and privileged I am to take up this post. I have been a member of staff at Alder Grange for over 21 years and cannot imagine working anywhere else. I love the school and feel passionately about maintaining the strong reputation Alder Grange has. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr Hampson for his many years of service at Alder Grange and also to tell you my priorities for the coming year.

Firstly, I am delighted to share news of our examination results. Both GCSE and sixth form results are the best we have had, and we were all delighted to celebrate with year 11 and year 13 students. You may well have seen some photographs on social media or in the local press.

Sixth form results were strong and we are very pleased to share that 34% of students achieved the highest grades in either A Level or Applied courses. The highest grades of A* and Distinction* were achieved in a wide range of subjects: History, English Literature, Psychology, Maths, Sport, Health and Social Care. There were many individuals with outstanding results and an incredible 78% of our students are continuing on to Higher Education this year. We have students studying a wide range of courses from nursing, English Literature, International business, Sports and Professional Musicianship in all parts of the country from London to Newcastle, even one studying in the USA. I would like to mention Jade Rawstron who achieved three A* grades, Charlotte Forbes who gained three As and Nicola Elliott with double distinction*. All three achieved these very high grades through determination and hard work during every year of their time at Alder Grange; they should serve as an inspiration to pupils in lower year groups. We wish them and all the class of 2019 all the very best in their next steps and look forward to seeing them soon.

GCSE results were equally pleasing and the best we have seen for some years. Year 11 worked really hard for these and despite the pressures of new GCSE exams have achieved outstanding results. An impressive 77% gained a pass in English and 68% in maths. 63% of pupils gained 5 or more grades at 4 or above. We are proud of all of them and delighted that so many are staying with us to continue their studies in the sixth form. I would again like to mention a couple of star performers: Jess Morrissey who gained an amazing 5 grade 9s, and Rhea Kellar, Harrison Peak, Jack Trippier, Nifa Rahman who also achieved some of those

elusive grade 9s. We are just as proud of those who gained other grades and whilst I would love to list all the amazing achievements there just is not room. Needless to say those who worked hard have been rewarded with great progress. I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff at school who have worked tirelessly to support these young people through their exams, and to the parents who encouraged and supported them through what is always a stressful time.

Alder Grange is not just about examination results however, and as we move in to a new academic year I would like to encourage all pupils to get involved in the wider school life. A new school year is a great time to try a new club or activity or get involved in something new.

My priorities as Headteacher are to focus on a number of key areas. Firstly; Wellbeing: pupils will notice a new wellbeing hub, quiet space and a number of new initiatives to promote both physical and mental health in school. In addition I intend to focus on maintaining high standards of behaviour and in particular to increase rewards for the vast majority of pupils who do as we expect all the time. We are also reviewing and making some adjustments to the curriculum to ensure all pupils receive the best possible combination of courses for them. There are some new courses beginning in September, particularly in Key Stage 3, so look out for these on timetables.

I hope to involve more parents in sharing their views on these key issues, and will be inviting you to some 'Parent Voice' sessions during the year. These will replace parent drop ins and be focussed on different topics each term. As a parent myself I fully appreciate how important strong links between ourselves and you as carers are. I would look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the year, and if you have any queries, questions or issues do not hesitate to get in touch.

I hope it is clear that we have high ambitions for your child's success, and value the partnership between home and school. It is important, therefore, that we keep you as fully informed as possible about developments that affect your daughter or son and there is much we need to pass on to you at the beginning of the year. Enclosed with this letter are details of key information and where to find it. We ask you to return, the attached reply slip covering them all. Please do sign and return it tomorrow.

We will endeavour to keep you up to date with developments, particularly through the school website and through social media (both on Facebook and Twitter). In addition, I would encourage you to sign up for the 'ParentMail' messaging system to receive reminders and important messages from school during the year.

I wish all our pupils a happy, successful and rewarding year, and look forward to meeting you at parents' evenings (and other events) during the year.

Yours faithfully,



Joanna Griffiths
Headteacher