



11 September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

As another school year begins, there is once again much to celebrate and much to look forward to as we start the Advent Term together.

We celebrate a summer of continued success and offer congratulations to our Year 11 and 13 students who secured another excellent set of examination results this summer. The dedication of staff, parents and of course the students themselves has enabled them to progress smoothly on to further and higher education, employment and training.

Our GCSE results showed that almost one in three of all grades awarded at St Nicholas were given at the highest level (9-7) compared to 20.8% nationally. 78% of grades were awarded at grades 9-4 across all subjects compared with 67.3% nationally with 84% of students achieving a grade 9-4 in English compared with 62% of students nationally. The number of grades awarded at 9-4 in Maths were 17% above the national figure of 59.6% at 77%.

Our A-Level students once again enjoyed many outstanding individual successes with 46% of all grades awarded at A*-B and one in four of all grades achieved being either A* or A. Continuing our strong history at St Nicholas, all of our prospective Oxbridge candidates also gained their chosen courses at either Oxford or Cambridge Universities. These excellent results are testament to the hard work and dedication of students and staff throughout the last two years and the previous five years of preparation for these crucial examinations. As a fully inclusive Catholic Sixth Form, we are very proud of the achievements of our students

Welcome to New Staff

We welcome a number of new staff to key positions within the St Nicholas community this Term. Mrs Yeates joins us as our new Year Leader for Year 8 and as well as being a Maths specialist, bringing with her a wealth of experience as a pastoral leader from a highly successful school on the Wirral. Mr Deakin joins us as Subject Leader for Physics, and we welcome back Mrs Riddell to the Maths team with specific responsibilities supporting teaching and learning across the department alongside Mr Hesketh, Mr Martin and Mr Barnes. Mrs Davenport joins the English Department as

Assistant Subject Leader and Mr T. Brown takes up post as our newly appointed Subject Leader for Chemistry. This year we also welcome Mr Bradley and Mrs Pardoe to the school's Senior Leadership Team. We wish all members of staff joining us this September a very long and happy time here at St Nicholas.

Teaching and Learning

As a school, we have spent the last few years strengthening and developing our classroom pedagogy and practice together as a staff community at St Nicholas and in partnership with other schools across the Diocese. We are excited to announce that this coming year we are looking to have a



renewed focus on evidence based teaching and learning strategies that will be shared with students and parents. Mr Wycherley and Mrs Pardoe will be leading 'Foundations for Learning' sessions for students across all year groups which will focus on the science of learning and include a termly whole-school focus to support student progress. We will also be holding Parent and Carer information sessions and posting information on our VLE so that you can fully support your child at home. Further details to follow.

All parents and carers will be aware that students are currently given a 'score' for each lesson. These scores are recorded using 'Lesson Monitor' which is an excellent tool to monitor individual student attitudes to their learning. Following extensive discussions with staff and students, the tool has been revised this year to include recording when a student has behaved well but not demonstrated total commitment to learning, and '*coasted*' throughout a lesson - full descriptions of the scores can be found on the School Website. As previously, there is a range of rewards and interventions to support students with their learning, including Reward Trips: full details regarding this will be provided in due course.

In addition to our new website launched last year we are looking to 're-launch' the school's Twitter account this term which will complement our weekly newsletter with regular information and updates. If you are not already a follower of our Twitter feed then please do follow us at @StNicholasCHS.

Summer Building Works

A number of exciting improvements have taken place over the summer holidays here at school. Following discussions with the School Council both sets of toilets in the Crypt have been completely refurbished with new flooring, tiling, vanity units, cubicles and lighting. We have also redecorated every classroom in the English, Maths and RE blocks thus ensuring that the learning environment is as positive as possible for our students on their return.

Extensive work has begun 'behind the scenes' supporting Phase 3 of our ICT plan. New cabling and networking is now underway, and we anticipate all works to be completed by the October Half Term. This will see wi-fi throughout the entire school campus, a significant uplift in network and broadband speeds and the introduction of new portable laptops and chromebooks for students to use within their lessons.

Attendance, Punctuality and Uniform

We would like to thank you for your support in ensuring that your child began the Advent Term with the very highest standards of uniform - the students looked exceptional as they began their first week of the school year.

As always, attendance at school is clearly one of the most important factors in ensuring that students excel academically, socially and spiritually. I would once again like to remind you of our



policy surrounding term time absences, and ask that medical & dental appointments are taken outside of school hours where possible.

As we continue our partnership together, we are, as always very interested to hear the views of students, parents and carers on all aspects of school life here at St Nicholas and we will be holding another of our regular Parent Focus Groups on Wednesday 20th November at 6pm. Please 'save the date' and I will write to you with more details soon.

We look forward to another successful year ahead and full details of school events are included within the 'Key Dates' area of the school website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woods
Headteacher

