



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

AWARDS EVENING 2016 Head Teacher's Annual Report

Al Baraka Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 10 October 2016

Honoured guests, parents, colleagues and, most importantly of all, students –

Welcome to our annual Awards Evening. Thanks to the generosity of our Founder, Mme Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, it is our very great pleasure to be able to host this auspicious event in such impressive surroundings. We are absolutely delighted that you have all been able to join us here this evening to celebrate the tremendous and varied successes of our wonderful students.

Awards Philosophy

This evening we are celebrating the achievements of over 200 award-winning students who were in Years 6-10 during the academic year 2015-16.

All the students who we will recognise here this evening are extremely dedicated and highly capable young people. As the evening progresses you will have the opportunity to see and hear for yourselves the variety of fields in which they continue to shine.

Some have excelled in specific areas of the curriculum, obtaining the top marks in their end-of-year examinations and thus achieving the status of Subject Award winners.

Many others, having achieved the top grades (A or A*) in at least half of their subjects, will be recognised as Excellence Award winners. New this year will be an additional layer of recognition for some of these all round academic achievers, with those obtaining A or A* grades in over 70% of their subjects receiving an 'Excellence Award with Merit' and those with over 90% A or A* grades receiving an 'Excellence Award with Distinction'.

Yet others, many of whom will have enjoyed notable successes in extracurricular pursuits, will be recognised as Special Award winners, in acknowledgement of their accomplishments in a diverse range of areas including creative writing, debating, drama, art and music, to name but a few.

Moreover, students in each House who have excelled in the Secondary Housepoint Competition, achieving impressive numbers of positive points and minimal negative points, will also be recognised.

Finally, the Head Teacher's Award will be presented to the one student in each year group whom it is felt has best exemplified the overall achievements and attitudes which we value here at The British School of Kuwait (BSK).

Both the sheer number of award winner here with us this evening, and the impressive breadth of curricular, extra-curricular and supra-curricular fields in which they continue to excel, is illustrative of the educational philosophy of BSK. Whilst academic rigour and student progress is undoubtedly at the core of what we do, the BSK experience is about far more than levels and grades. That so many

of our students demonstrate not only enviable levels of academic achievement, but also the enjoyment and successes which come from being involved in extra-curricular activities, taking advantage of leadership opportunities and serving the local community, is something of which we are very proud indeed.

Here at BSK we are of the firm belief that *every single student* should be making the most of the opportunities which they are afforded. Indeed, they all have plenty of chances to do so. Whether that be through pursuing sporting activities, involvement in the arts, participation in service and leadership programmes or any number of other opportunities, there really is something for everyone.

Many of the award winners here this evening serve as especially impressive role models because they continue to strike the right balance. They manage to focus on their studies *and* get involved in enrichment activities. As students who are looked up to both by their peers and our younger BSK students this is of vital importance.

Academics, Examination Successes and University Destinations

The young people with whom we are here to celebrate this evening are all at different stages on an exciting journey of academic and personal development. In no time at all these students will find themselves facing the challenge of public examinations at the end of Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13. Whilst the prospect of such external assessments of learning can, understandably, be somewhat nerve-wracking, there can be no doubt that the students here with us this evening are firmly on track for success.

On that note, and as is customary, I would now like to provide you with an overview of our senior students' external examination results.

When I spoke on this same topic twelve months ago I was in the enviable position to be able to report that our GCSE and IGCSE results, which had always been extremely good, were in fact the best in the history of BSK. That I stand before you today in a position to report even better results this time around is both an honour, and a testament to our students' abilities. At GCSE and IGCSE the A*-C pass rate was a phenomenal 96%. When it came to the "high pass" range of A*-B an incredible 87% of all results fell into this category. At A*-A the figure was a very impressive 69%.

To note but a few of the many individual successes: Monica Elias achieved an incredible twelve A* grades; whilst Yousef Mahmoud and Aikaterini Konstantinidou each achieved an impressive eleven and Sarah Albader a total of ten. Each of these students, and indeed many, many others who enjoyed similar levels of success, are now continuing their studies at AS Level in the Sixth Form.

In Year 12, at AS Level, the A-E pass rate was 95%, with Ahmed El Sharkawi and Ali Aboubih each obtaining five A grades, whilst Angad Bhatia, Dalal Al Mesri, Manan Madhok, Moneer Mourad, Sayed Almoosawy, Tom Holgate and Wissam Damaj each achieved four A grades. Both those who opted to return for Year 13 and those who proceeded to university this year, are now extremely well placed to meet the challenges of their undergraduate courses and future careers.

At A Level, BSK students had a 98% A*-E pass rate, with an increase in the percentage of grades at the "high pass" range of A*-B. There were some exceptional performances this year and, as a consequence, our Year 13 graduates have been able to go on to prestigious universities worldwide.

Once again, the UK was a popular destination for our graduates. Former Head Girl Sina Abou Zahr has now commenced her studies in Politics, International Relations and Philosophy at Royal Holloway University of London. Former Deputy Head Girl, Alorika Chakravorty - having obtained an astonishing three A* grades and one A grade – is now reading Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Imperial College London.

Former Head Boy, Hussam El-Nashar has recently commenced his studies in Economics and Mathematics at McGill University in Canada, whilst former Deputy Head Boy, Muhammet Dizmen, is reading Economics at Pennsylvania State University in the USA.

Other Year 13 graduates have also joined British universities to read for degrees in fields such as Aerospace Engineering, Biological and Forensic Sciences, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. Still others opted to continue their studies in Australia, Hungary, Ireland, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, pursuing career paths in fields such as human resource management, nutrition and medicine to name but a few.

Extracurricular Successes

Large numbers of our students also enjoyed notable extracurricular and personal successes during the course of 2015-16. Whilst to list them all for you now would keep us all here all evening, I will nevertheless endeavor to outline just a few of these.

Last year we were delighted to see an impressive number of Year 10-12 students undertaking the challenges offered by the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award programme. As part of the Bronze Award, a total of 42 students enjoyed the adventure of trekking in Ras Al-Khaimah. In addition, a further 20 students working towards their Silver Award travelled to Cyprus, with a further 8 students striving to obtain their Gold Award with an expedition and residential project in Sri Lanka. We look forward to seeing an even greater number of students complete the award successfully this year.

In music, a record forty-eight Secondary students achieved success in their instrumental ABRSM examinations: twenty-one with merit and five with distinction. Furthermore, in January, a number of our BSK musicians participated in the Young Musicians of the Gulf competition in Bahrain. In addition to Hai Wei Li winning the Piano Award, our ten person La Camerata group placed first in the Large Ensemble category, an outstanding achievement given the intense competition from other talented ensembles from around the Gulf.

In languages, four students passed the A1 Level German language examination, three of them after having only studied for a few short months. Current Year 12 student, Renata Gelevska, also passed the B2 Level German examination with a very impressive 85%. This is equivalent to A Level standard, making her achievement all the more remarkable.

Moreover, four of our Upper Department students were awarded prestigious Goethe-Institut scholarships. Dilan Kose, Mihail Vizitiu, Renata Gelevska and Aikaterini Konstantinidou benefitted from the opportunity to develop their language skills and learn more about German culture during their three week visit to Dresden, Germany.

In the dramatic arts, 13 Secondary students earned LAMDA qualifications in performance and communication, with 12 of them gaining distinctions. Those who passed at Grade 6 or above gained UCAS points which could contribute to future applications to UK universities. Many students also took part in our terrific school productions of *Aladdin* and *Fantastic Mr Fox*.

In November, our debate teams took part in the annual BSME tournament in Bahrain and, keen to further expand their involvement in international debate competitions, five of our senior debaters travelled to Slovakia to take part in the Bratislava Schools Debate Tournament. As always, our students demonstrated maturity and resilience in tough fields of competition.

Furthermore, this summer a team of BSK students represented Kuwait when they travelled to Stuttgart, Germany, to take part in the World Schools Debating Championships. Facing strong competition when up against teams from across the globe, Saad Zahoor, Lauren Lilley, Yousef Mahmoud, Maria Sedhom and Yousef Rezk, were commendable ambassadors, receiving much praise not just for their debating skills but for their resounding personal qualities.

Moreover, at the Model United Nations (MUN) conference held in March, BSK fielded an exceptionally strong team. Not only did they have a large number of their resolutions and amendments passed, but they also received numerous individual accolades. That the BSK MUN Team were inaugural winners of the Best Delegation Award, is a richly deserved acknowledgement of all their hard work.

In this year's Gulf University of Science and Technology Mathletes Competition, our team of Tom Holgate, Alorika Chakravorty, Sina Abou Zahr and Alex White took second place in the group category, with Alex White also achieving second place in the individual event. This year, the Mathematics Team also hosted an inaugural Sixth Form and staff event in celebration of Pi Day.

In science, for the first time at BSK students took part in the British Science Association's Crest Award Scheme. This involved ten of our Year 9 students working on projects under the mentorship of students in the Sixth Form. Their projects were showcased at the Science Fair in March and we look forward both to developing further our involvement in this rewarding programme.

As ever, BSK students were active in the field of visual arts. As well as participating in the Landmark "Art Olympiad" which took place in January, BSK students also had the opportunity to showcase their work as part of the terrific Art, Design and Technology Exhibition in March. Then, in April's Kuwait Times Art Competition - "Kuwait is Beautiful and Green" - for the second year in a row, Deputy Head Girl Roseanne Ismail took first place overall. This was an astonishing achievement as the competition attracted over 12,000 entries.

Furthermore, our collaborations with external organisations continue to go from strength to strength. Last year volunteers from INJAZ Kuwait taught three courses from their Junior Achievement Worldwide programme, allowing students in Year 8 to learn more about Personal Economics, Year 9 to develop their understanding of Personal Finance and Year 10 to explore ideas pertaining to Careers Success. In June, we were delighted to be awarded the accolade of 'Top Private School' partnering with INJAZ Kuwait in 2015-16.

BSK students also continue to be involved in the Junior Docents Programme, ran by the Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah. For 2016-17, our current Year 11 docents will serve on the Teen Council Executive Committee, their remit being to organise and implement programmes specifically of interest to school students.

Sporting Successes

2015-16 was yet another excellent year at BSK.

Sports Day was a great success, with more students actively participating in events than ever before. A total of twenty-two school records were broken throughout the day, providing evidence that athletic performance continues to go from strength to strength at BSK.

In BSME competitions (where British Curriculum schools from across the Gulf participate) we took part in the Under 13 competition where our students represented BSK and Kuwait superbly, with particular success in the athletic events on the track. We look forward to further success this year as our Under 13 and Under 15 teams have been invited to compete in the UAE and Bahrain this year.

Moreover, out of a total of eighteen ISACK team championships, we made the semi-finals on no less than sixteen occasions, competing in ten finals and winning eight of these over the course of the year. Very impressive indeed, I am sure you will agree.

Such success is only possible due to the hard work and dedication from the students at BSK. As a consequence of demonstrating such commitment, a total of twenty-four students were awarded their Sports Colours last year, a further improvement upon the previous year and demonstrative of the growing success that BSK students are achieving in this field. With the foundation of success clearly evident, the opportunities for further sporting success at BSK are clear to see.

Secondary Developments

In March 2016 BSK was inspected by the United Kingdom's Department for Education and the UK Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) for continuation of its status as a British School Overseas. The result of this re-accreditation visit was that BSK was awarded the premier ranking of 'outstanding', placing it among a very elite group of international schools. That the lead inspector recognised BSK as being "a very, very special school" comes as a very welcome acknowledgement of our continued efforts and innovation.

On that note, and whilst 2015-16 was undoubtedly a fantastic year, I would now like to take a moment to look ahead.

For the academic year 2016-17, specific development foci within the Secondary phase of the school include: the continued expansion of student data-tracking and performance management systems; making further refinements to differentiated provision and supporting individual students in maximising their potential; developing further the strength of home-school partnerships in order to support learning; and a renewed focus on encouraging all students to enhance their educational experience through involvement in extra-curricular activities, leadership and service.

In addition to welcoming a wonderful set of new teachers to the Secondary phase at BSK, we are also delighted to have a number of colleagues taking on new roles of responsibility. We wish each of them well as they take on the exciting challenges of their new roles and we look forward to seeing even more great things from them.

Concluding Remarks

The time has now come for me to draw this address to a close, but before I do so I would like to say just a few words more.

To our fantastic award winners - I would like offer each and every one you my sincere congratulations. You have done extremely well indeed and I know that you will continue to work hard to achieve your very best. That BSK continues to stand apart as Kuwait's Premier School is down to you. With fantastic students who strive to do their best, supporting and encouraging one another to succeed, it is little wonder that BSK continues to enjoy the reputation that it does. I know you will all keep up the good work and I look forward to hearing all about your many successes yet to come.

To my colleagues - thank you for taking such good care of our students. The unwavering dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism you continue to show in all academic and pastoral matters relating to our students is critical to their development in so many ways.

To our parents - thank you for placing your trust in us. To have the opportunity to work in true partnership with you as, together, we strive to provide your children with the very best education really is a privilege. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to you all. The tremendous value of the encouragement and support you provide for your children simply cannot be overstated.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening. Thank you all very much.

Emma Bowie
Head Teacher