



# THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

## AWARDS EVENING 2013 Head Teacher's Annual Report

Al Baraka Grand Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 08 October 2013

Honoured guests, parents, colleagues and students –

Welcome to this year's Awards Evening, which due to the generosity of our Founder and Director, Mme Vera Al-Mutawa, we have again been able to host in this superb ballroom.

### Awards Philosophy

This evening we are celebrating various successes of over 250 prizewinning students from Years 6-12 in the academic year 2012-13.

These students have excelled in a range of different ways. Some, the Subject Award winners, scored the top marks in their end-of-year examinations. Others, the Excellence Award winners, achieved top grades (A, or in some cases A\*) in at least half of their subjects. Yet others, the Special Award winners, had notable successes in extracurricular pursuits. Finally, the Head Teacher's Award is given to one student in each year group who best exemplified the overall achievements and attitudes which we value at The British School of Kuwait.

This awards matrix reflects BSK's core mission: to provide an education that is *academically rigorous*, that is *rounded* in terms of attitudes, soft skills and ethics, and that is *relevant*, in terms of applicability to real world situations – whether professional or personal, whether now or in the future.

This is *Education with a capital E*, in its broadest and fullest sense. Not just examination results; those are vitally important, but there is more to life!

*Real* education is about the empowerment of young people to live professional and personal lives characterised by wise decisions, healthy relationships and a sense of purpose that is motivated more by what one can contribute than by financial reward or status.

### Excellence Awards

After last year's Awards Evening, I sent a letter to the parents of all Year 6-12 students, again congratulating the award winners, but also encouraging those students who had *not* won an award in 2012 to set a personal target to be able to attend this year, and then to do whatever it took to achieve that goal.

I am therefore delighted to report that 95 more students earned Excellence Awards this year than last – so many, in fact, that we could not accommodate the new Year 6 this evening, and will instead be hosting a special Year 6 Awards Assembly in school this Thursday. While unfortunate, BSK philosophy is to enable *all* students to be academically outstanding, so such practical considerations are not going to stop us working towards having even more award winners next year!

### Triple Accreditation

2012-13 was a huge year for BSK.

In March, the school underwent accreditation by three teams of inspectors. For the Kuwait Ministry of Education, an inspection team from the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) in the United

Kingdom; for the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME), an accreditation team from Penta International; and for the prestigious award of British School Overseas status, a team from the UK Department for Education.

The OfSTED team concluded that, since their previous inspection in 2010, “the school has been highly proactive in building further upon the strengths identified at that time.”

The BSME inspection system appraises schools against ten specific criteria, rating them on each as either *below, meeting, above* or *well above* the BSME standard. Of the ten criteria, BSK was rated as *above the standard* in all ten and *well above the standard* in eight of the ten. No other school in Kuwait has achieved such a high rating.

Key conclusions were as follows:

*“BSK has implemented a curriculum that engages students effectively and matches their needs, interests and aspirations. The provision for extra-curricular activities is exemplary.”*

*“Highly effective relationships are developed between staff and the children in order to promote success in learning.”*

*“A brisk pace and confident use of appropriate technology engaged students in their learning.”*

*Students “are proud of their school and thrive on the rich variety of learning experiences...”*

*Student behaviour is “outstanding, enabling good progress to be made in class.”*

*“The care and concern of the teachers extends way beyond the classroom.”*

*“The school works very effectively in partnership with parents...”*

Of course, opportunities for further improvement were identified, and so the Primary and Secondary Development Plans for 2013-14 are sharply focused on addressing the inspection teams’ very useful recommendations.

## **Examination Successes**

It has become customary for me to report to you, at this Awards Evening, about our senior students’ external examination results.

For Year 11, the A\*-C pass rate at GCSE and IGCSE was 91%, with over 60% of those at A\* or A.

There were many truly outstanding results. Farah Abdelhameed and Abbas Ali each obtained A\* grades in all but one subject. Mohamed Abul, Lama Moukhaiber, Areej Bahraluloom, Hussain Al-Feeli, Daneela Jogie, Rawan Moussa and Mohammed Al-Jouaisery all achieved straight A\*/A grades. Alice Shaker had nine A\* grades, and Dana Moukhaiber obtained A\* in eight subjects.

Ali Khajah got 6 A\* and 3 A grades. Hee Soo Yang and Ayah Ismail also achieved 9 A\* or A grades each. Additionally, Hamidreza Shamohammadi, Sumati Butterworth, Marianne Ayoub, Nikhil Varghese, Mira Moukhaiber and Mahmoud Abul Burghul all got 8 A\*/A grades each.

In Year 12, at AS Level, we equalled our previous record pass rate of 98%.

Straight A grades were achieved by Zeyad Al-Tamimi, Omar Alabd Mohamed, Aly Emam, Tala El-Roz, Hridya Moorthiraj, Shahd Alzard, Mario Youssef and Nicholas Zogbh, with Ankita Handa, Ishita Handa, Huda Alkotob, Pranit Wadkar and Raneem Ismail just one grade away.

Indeed, some 38% of AS Level subject entries were at the top grade – by some considerable margin, a new BSK record.

At A Level, Year 13 students Savitri Butterworth, Holly Shropshire, Aya Mahmoud and Amro Gazlan all achieved straight A\*/A grades, with four other students only one B grade away from that level of achievement.

The A Level results were so good this year that not only did we have a 100% A\*-E pass rate for the fourth year in a row, and 100% A\*-D for the second year in a row, but for the first time, BSK students achieved 100% A\*-C.

The vast majority of our Kuwaiti Year 11 and Year 12 students obtained their desired scholarships and have joined approved university courses.

Significant numbers of our Sixth Form students joined fine British universities, including the Universities of Exeter, Aberdeen, Strathclyde, Newcastle and Imperial College London.

In Canada, which in recent years has been senior students' second most popular destination, BSK graduates joined the University of Toronto, McGill University and Dalhousie University.

Other university destinations included the United States, the United Arab Emirates and Bulgaria.

The range of subjects was as broad as ever – although perhaps inevitably, in the current global economic climate, there was a stronger focus on career-aligned courses than on purely academic pursuits. Medical and biological fields, including Life Science and Dentistry, were the most popular this year. Electrical, Computer, Mechanical and Chemical Engineering, together with related fields such as Architecture and Petroleum Geology, were in second place, and courses in Economics or Finance were the next most popular.

### **Extracurricular Successes**

On the extracurricular side, and in their personal lives, many BSK students had noteworthy successes. The following achievements are just since January of this year.

Leena Albader and Ishita Handa were part of Team Kuwait at the World Schools' Debating Championship held in South Africa in January. Ishita captained the team.

In February, Sina Abu Zahr, Fanninda Onggono and Ranli Liyanage received Star Awards for their outstanding involvement in the LoYAC writing programme.

In March, Karan Bhasin came third in the Emirates *Junior Open Golf* Tournament in Dubai.

In April, Aikaterini Konstantinidou came fourth overall in the *H2O Long Course Spring Swimming Cup* in Qatar.

In May, Fanninda Onggono was placed tenth, out of 1200 entries, in the senior category of the Chevron Art Competition.

Also in May, Angad Bhatia and Alexander White achieved very high marks in the Goethe Institute A1 German examination and were awarded full scholarships for a three week summer study programme in Germany.

Finally, just last month, Roseanne Ismail won first prize in the 12-15 year age category in the British Council's *Young Learner Art Competition*.

### **Sporting Successes**

2012-13 was also a breakthrough year for sport at BSK.

Alexandru Moraru, Aikaterini Konstantinidou, Mai Aguib, Nathan Gevao and Maya Alhuneidi all won gold medals in ISACK swimming galas.

At the BSME Under 15 Games, held in Qatar in February, Moneer Mourad and Josh Brocklehurst won bronze medals.

At the BSME Under 13 Games, held in Oman in March, Yousef Al-Kasaby and Nathan Gevao won gold medals, while Maryam Thowfeek, Matthew Nakouzi and Metin Yilmaz won silver.

BSK sports squads were ISACK champions in Under 13 Boys' 5-a-side Football; Under 13 Girls' Football; Under 13, Under 15 and Open Boys' Volleyball – a clean sweep; and in both Under 13 and Under 15 Girls' and Boys' Basketball.

Already, this year, the Under 15 Boys' 5-a-side Football squad has taken an ISACK shield!

## **House System Developments**

In last year's report, I promised you that I would ensure that the important developments in the Secondary House System were taken to the next level.

At that time, although much improvement work had been undertaken, the House Competition was still essentially an individual pursuit. There wasn't enough of a team dynamic.

The next stage was to ensure that a win for one student would be a win for the House, and conversely that a loss for one would cause other members of the same House to want to support, encourage and to help resolve the issue. I referred to this as the *positive peer pressure* effect.

Since then, we have appointed Secondary House Heads and have extended the student leadership system to include House Captains in the Sixth Form and in each of Years 6-11. The House staff and student leaders will work together to motivate and support students, maximising the number of positive points awarded and minimising negative points.

We have increased the visibility of the House system, most obviously through the England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales staircase designs in the Inner Courtyard. We have increased the sense of identification of students with their House by printing their House flag on student identity badges.

To help bond students in the same House, and to really cement the *housemate* concept, we reinstated a much improved form of House assembly and a system involving Year 7-11 *housemates* working together in the same PSHE lesson.

Students who are at Bronze, Silver and higher achievement levels are now acknowledged each week on the BSK Facebook page. The number of *likes* and comments are steadily increasing as the system really takes hold.

Behind the scenes, lists of students' positive, negative and overall housepoints are now emailed, each week, to class tutors and House Heads, so that they can intervene or broker housemate partnerships. One student at a time, in a highly social way, attitudes are being transformed. The House system has now matured, and this will be its breakthrough year in terms of student outcomes.

## **Raising Standards**

Two years ago, I spoke about the need to maintain high standards – of attendance, punctuality, correct uniform and standards of appearance, being properly equipped for school, and of course behaviour.

At that time, we had just introduced a system giving class tutors clear front-line responsibilities for these matters.

The focus by the Secondary Leadership Team and class tutors on high standards is still just as strong. Attendance levels are increasing steadily, and our 95% attendance target is currently being

achieved in each of the three departments. Moreover, there is now virtually no unauthorised absence.

Punctuality has improved markedly, although there is more to be done.

Uniform infringements have reduced very significantly, in part due to the *zero tolerance* approach taken within the sanctions system, but more importantly because of increasing student awareness and acceptance.

Each of these standards contributes towards creating a sense of order, a strong work ethic and a learning environment in which students thrive. Such standards will always be a key focus.

### **Quality Staff**

My final theme relates to the quality of the academic, pastoral, leadership and support staff at BSK.

A key strength of the Secondary team is its continuity. The three Department Coordinators are unchanged from last year. Only two Subject Coordinators, from a team of seventeen, left the school this summer. We have the same Assistant Head Teachers, Assistant Department Coordinator, Examinations Officer, Student Performance Coordinator and Senior Teachers as last year.

The Senior Management Team has been strengthened with the addition of Mr Kefah Al-Mutawa.

The Secondary Leadership Team (SLT) has been strengthened with the addition of Mr Jonathan Storer.

For those of you with children in Primary, the Year Heads structure is little short of revolutionary.

The Secondary Development Group – an advisory team including the Subject Coordinators – has been strengthened by the addition of the Assistant Coordinators for Design and Technology, Arabic for non-Arabs, and Islamic Studies for non-Arabs.

I can honestly say that the teachers who joined BSK this September are the finest group we have ever employed. We have now seen them all teach, and they are every bit as good as we had hoped.

The policies and procedures by which we operate in Secondary have reached a mature, settled state. Our development plans are clear. The staff share a vision. We trust one another. We respect one another's total commitment.

These are great times to work at BSK, and even better times to be a BSK student!

### **Concluding Remarks**

Warm congratulations to this evening's prizewinners. You've done brilliantly! Keep it up!

Thank you to my colleagues for their professionalism and untiring efforts on behalf of the students.

Thank you, parents, for your crucial role in supporting and encouraging your children. We really appreciate the strength of your partnership with us.

Please enjoy the rest of your evening. Thank you very much.

**Andrew Moulden**  
Head Teacher