



# THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

## AWARDS EVENING 2015 Head Teacher's Annual Report

**Futouh Ballroom, Regency Hotel, 13 October 2015**

Your excellencies, honoured guests, parents, colleagues and, most importantly of all, students –

Welcome to this year's Awards Evening. Due to the generosity of our Director, Mme Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, it is our great pleasure to be able to host this event in such auspicious surroundings. We are delighted that you have been able to join us this evening in order to celebrate the impressive and varied successes of our students.

### **Awards Philosophy**

This evening we are celebrating the achievements of over 240 award-winning students who were in Years 6-10 during the academic year 2014-15.

The students here this evening are hard-working and capable young people who have excelled in a variety of different ways. Some, having obtained the top marks in their end-of-year examinations, are Subject Award winners. Others, having achieved the top grades (A or A\*) in at least half of their subjects, will be recognised as Excellence Award winners. Yet others, many of whom will have enjoyed notable successes in extracurricular pursuits, will be acknowledged as Special Award winners. Finally, the Head Teacher's Award will be given to the one student in each year group whom it is felt has best exemplified the overall achievements and attitudes which we value at The British School of Kuwait (BSK).

Both the number of awards presented here this evening, and the breadth of curricular, extra-curricular and supra-curricular areas they cover, are a testament to the stated mission of BSK: to provide an academically *rigorous* education which is *rounded* in terms of the skills, values and attitudes it seeks to engender, as well as being *relevant* to the ever changing world in which we live. These students serve as tremendously positive role models to both their peers and the younger students in the school. We thank you, our valued parents, for working in partnership with us on this most important of tasks - the education and personal development of your children.

Here at BSK we are of the firm belief that *every single student* is capable of the types of success which would lead to them being invited to an Awards Evening, whether that be next year or at some other point in the future.

That we are here this evening celebrating the successes of so many students attests to both higher achievement levels and ever improving attitudes to learning amongst our student body. There is not one student in the current Year 7-11 who could not, if they showed sufficient determination, achieve these same standards. Our steadfast belief in this principle is what drives us to do our utmost to get the very best out of each and every student, whatever stage of their education they are at.

Our baseline expectation that all students are actively *engaged* in the learning process is something we need not remind these students. They know that this is the only way in which to achieve

everything of which they are capable. That the vast majority of them take this to the next level, approaching their studies with *independence* and *maturity*, really does speak for itself.

## **Academics, Examination Successes and University Destinations**

These young people are on a journey of academic and personal development which will, in no time at all, lead them towards the challenge of public examinations.

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

In Year 11, the A\*-C pass rate at GCSE and IGCSE was 95%, with 79% of those in the "high pass" range of A\*-B.

Whilst our GCSE and IGCSE results have always been extremely good, this year they truly were outstanding. To note but a few of the many individual successes: Alexander White achieved an incredible twelve A\* grades; whilst Thomas Holgate, Angad Bhatia, Ali Aboubih, Saad Zahoor and Dalal Almesri each achieved nine. All of these students, and indeed many others who enjoyed similar levels of success, are now continuing their studies in the Sixth Form.

In Year 12, at AS Level, the A-E pass rate was 91%, with both Hussam El-Nashar and Rishi Kumra obtaining five A grades each, whilst Alorika Chakravorty, Raghad Alyousefi, Farah Alyetama and Ahmed Fahmy 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 further their studies.

At A Level, BSK students had a 100% A\*-D pass rate, with an increase in the percentage of A\* grades obtained. 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.

Former Head Boy Ethan Harradine obtained two A\* grades and two A grades, earning him a place at Harvard University to read Liberal Arts. Mridula Agnus Moorthiraj performed similarly well, earning a place at University College Dublin to read Medicine. Hee Soo Yang secured a place at the University of California, Los Angeles to read Mechanical Engineering.

Our former Deputy Head Girl, Farah Abdelhameed, has recently started her degree in Medicine at the University of Birmingham in the UK, the strength of her application having secured her an incredible *three* offers to study Medicine at UK universities - an exceptional achievement.

Also heading to the UK, Ali Khajah is now studying Biochemistry at King's College and other Year 13 graduates have also joined British universities, including the University of Cardiff, the School of Oriental and African Studies and the University of the Arts London. Still others opted to continue their studies in Canada, Australia, Hungary, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

## **Extracurricular Successes**

Many BSK students also enjoyed noteworthy extracurricular or personal successes during the last academic year. Whilst to list these comprehensively would be close to impossible, I will outline a selection of them for you now.

In 2014-2015 we were delighted to see an impressive number of Year 10-13 students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award: 48 at Bronze Level, 22 at Silver and 22 at Gold. We look forward to seeing an even greater number of students complete the award successfully next year.

In music, a record 45 Secondary students passed instrumental examinations: seven with distinction and twenty-two with merit. Furthermore, in February, La Camerata and Hai Wei Li competed at the Young Musicians of the Gulf competition in Bahrain. Hai Wei won the Runner's Up Trophy by placing second from amongst 64 other talented musicians from around the Gulf.

In languages, five students passed the A1 Level German language examination. An incredible ten students passed the higher A2 Level, a significant increase in entries when compared to previous years. That thirteen of these fifteen qualifications were at Merit or Distinction is remarkable.

In the dramatic arts, 22 Secondary students earned LAMDA qualifications in performance and communication, with 18 of them gaining Distinctions. Those who passed at Grade 6 or above gained UCAS points which could contribute to future applications to UK universities.

Last October, Leena Albader, Joseph Collier, Rishi Kumra and Saad Zahoor made it through to the final round of the BSME Debate competition, and this summer, they travelled to Singapore to take part in the World Schools Debating Championships, where they competed against other teams from across the globe. The debating society is currently working hard in preparation for the BSME tournament next month and, in December they will be taking on their teachers in an innovative student-teacher debating competition.

Moreover, at the Model United Nations (MUN) conference held in March, Zamil Zaman, Mark Sedhom, Verda Hussain and Zoha Baig all won honourable mentions in their commissions, as did Hussam El Nashar in the Security Council, where he had 3 clauses passed. Our first timers at MUN also did themselves proud, with Dorar Meshal, Gamma Onggono and Lauren Lilley all winning awards for the most improved delegates in their commission.

In this year's Mathletes competition held at GUST in March, our team of Hee Soo Yang, Hamidreza Shamohammadi and Mohammed Reda Chaker won first place in the group competition, with Hussam El-Nashar winning second place in the individual event.

In the field of visual arts, BSK took a team of artists to the Landmark "Art Olympiad" last January, where Deevya Swain and Maria Elias both took first place in their respective categories and Bardya Rezai was awarded a special prize for creativity.

Then, in April's Kuwait Times Art Competition - "Kuwait is Beautiful and Green" - Deevya Swain and Jana Hussain both won prizes in their age categories, whilst current Year 12 student Roseanne Ismail took the special prize and first place overall.

Finally, our collaborations with both the INJAZ and Junior Docents initiatives also continue to go from strength to strength.

Even after the close of the academic year, a number of students opted to take advantage of summer programmes at universities and institutions across the globe.

Current Year 12 student Alexander White spent some of his time at the University of Cambridge, where he not only completed a course in Computer Science and Mathematics, but took part in Community Outreach work, helping to organise a fundraising event supporting the building of schools and the training of teachers in Ghana.

Racquel Araujo-Aikman, currently in Year 11, also completed a summer programme, this time at the University of Toronto, completing modules in Bio-Inspired Robotics, Natural Philosophy, Artificial Intelligence and Engineering Design in Hollywood.

Furthermore, those students who were awarded Goethe-Institut scholarships – Gauri Nair, Patricia Dreyer, Yousef Rezk and Joshua Kirkhope-Arkley – benefitted from the opportunity to spend three weeks in Germany, all expenses paid, developing their language skills and learning about the culture.

### **Sporting Successes**

2014-15 was yet another excellent year for sport at BSK.

At the Secondary Sports Day, a total of 11 school athletics records were broken, with the now familiar names of Rodina Gad, Nathan Gevao, Fatima Eid, Gabriela Pickard, Mai Aguib, Leena Albader and Donaven Lobo topping the list of star athletes.

In BSME competitions (where British Curriculum schools from across the Gulf participate) we won silverware in basketball and athletics, and were successful once again in the Kuwait triathlon in November. The BSK PE team hosted the U13 BSME competition in Kuwait, and received plaudits for the way the tournament showcased the quality of sporting provisions we have in place.

Out of 24 ISACK team championships, we made the semi-finals on 22 occasions, competing in 12 finals and winning 7 of these over the course of the year. As a result, BSK are the reigning champions in Under 15 Boys' Football, Under 15 Boys' 5-a-side Football, Under 15 Boys' Basketball, Under 15 Girls' Football, Under 15 Girls' Basketball, Open Age Girls' Netball and Open Age Girls' Basketball. We also won the ISACK swimming for boys.

Very impressive indeed, I am sure you will agree, and in May we saw some 33 students awarded, in recognition of their achievements, with BSK Sports Colours – the recipients of which can be identified by their special maroon-striped ties.

### **Secondary Developments**

Whilst 2014-15 was undoubtedly a fantastic year, I would now like to take a moment to look ahead. For the academic year 2015-16, specific development foci within the Secondary phase of the school include: the continued expansion of student data-tracking and performance management systems; the development of mentoring provision and personalised learning; making further refinements to and raising the profile of, the Secondary House System; and a renewed focus on both the environment and issues relating to health.

As well as welcoming a fantastic set of new teachers to the Secondary phase of the school, we also have a number of colleagues who have taken on new roles of responsibility. Within the Secondary

Leadership Team, Dr Clifford Cheung has taken over where I left off as our new Sixth Form Coordinator, whilst Ms Helen Graham has assumed the role of Assistant Department Coordinator. Furthermore, Mr Stephen Peacock has taken on the responsibilities of Student Performance Coordinator, Mr Toby Wharne is our new Physics Coordinator and Mr Stuart Howard has a new role as Assistant Languages Coordinator with specific responsibility for German. Mr Paul Kemp is now Assistant Examinations Officer and Mr Bryn Harker the Assistant International Award Coordinator. We wish them all well as they settle into their new roles and we look forward to seeing even more great things from them.

The remarkable work done by both our dedicated Subject Coordinators, and the fantastic teams they lead, really cannot be underestimated, and nowhere are their efforts more evident than in the tremendous achievements of their students. Whilst I could go on, and tell you something about every subject, time is against me. Suffice it to say that the ambition and scope of the subject teams' development plans for this year are admirable and you can be confident in their commitment to continuous development. I know that I speak on my colleagues' behalf when I say that we are all enormously proud of what our students are able to achieve. When it comes to our current students, so many of whom are here this evening, we look forward to continuing to work with them as they develop and grow. As far as our recent graduates are concerned, we look forward to hearing all about their exciting new experiences when, as so many of them do, they return to BSK for a visit.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Award winners - I would like offer my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you here this evening. You have all done fantastically well and I have no doubt that, with hard work and determination, you will continue to do so in the future. Thank you for working with us to ensure that BSK continues to stand apart as Kuwait's Premier School. I know you will keep up the good work!

Colleagues - thank you, on behalf of our students, for your dedication and professionalism. Your unwavering enthusiasm and untiring efforts are not only crucial to their academic progression, but are also integral to so many facets of their personal development.

Parents - thank you for continuing to work in partnership with us as we strive to provide your children with the very best education. The value of the encouragement and support you give cannot be understated.

Please do enjoy the rest of the evening, and thank you very much.

**Emma Bowie**  
Head Teacher