



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

AWARDS EVENING 2017 Higher Phase Head Teacher's Annual Report

Al Baraka Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 11 October 2017

Opening Remarks

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for joining us for our Annual Awards Evening. I am sure you will agree that the achievements of the Middle Phase students we have already celebrated here this evening are truly impressive.

When I look at these wonderful students I am struck by two things in particular. The first is that these young people genuinely relish their studies and thrive upon their involvement in the wider school community through extra-curricular activities, service and leadership opportunities. They enjoy learning for its own sake, rather than seeing it purely as a means to an end. Secondly, and in my capacity as Head Teacher of the Higher Phase, I am also impressed by their clear readiness to continue on their educational journey, their attitudes to learning demonstrating impressive levels of maturity that ensure they are well equipped to pursue their studies in the Upper Department and, eventually, the Sixth Form.

Academics, Examination Successes and University Destinations

The Middle Phase students whose successes we have already celebrated here this evening continue to develop academically and to grow in terms of personal attributes. The achievements they enjoy now and in the coming years will serve them well as they proceed with their education. And, for the Higher Phase students whose accomplishments we will get to see in a little while, the prospect of external examinations in Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 is even closer at hand.

Of course, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the students here with us this evening are firmly on track for success and it is at this point, and as is customary, that I would now like to take a moment to review the performance of our senior students in their external June 2017 examinations.

When I last spoke on this same topic twelve months ago I was pleased to be able to report that our GCSE and IGCSE results had, for the second year running reached an incredible A*-C pass rate of 95%. The fact that this benchmark was achieved once again in our most recent examination session is a testament to the sustained levels of academic excellence achieved by our students at Key Stage 4. When it came to the "high pass" range of A*-B an outstanding 83% of all results fell into this category. At A*-A the figure was an impressive 60%.

To note but a few of the many individual successes: Donaven Lobo and Zoha Baig each achieved an impressive 9 A* grades and 1 A grade, and Alexandru Moraru obtained 8 A* grades and 3 A grades. Karim Elmasry, Mohamed Bersy and Mohammed Raza Syed each achieved 8 A*s grades and 2 A grades. Of course, these represent just a few of the numerous students who enjoyed tremendous success in their public examinations, many of whom are now continuing their studies at AS Level in the Sixth Form.

In Year 12, at AS Level, the overall A-E pass rate was 97%. Not only that the pass rate at A-C (at an impressive 81%) represents our best performance to date in this category. The same applies at the “high pass” range of A-B standing at an all-time high of 65%.

Aikaterini Konstantinidou obtained an incredible five A grades, whilst Maria Sedhom, Akanksha Sharma, Alya Aly, Alya Osman, Maryam Safar, Maysaloun Mokkadam, Monica Elias, Rodina Gad and Yousef Mahmoud each achieved four A grades. Both those who opted to return for Year 13 (many of whom are here with us this evening in their capacity as Senior Prefects) and those who proceeded to university this year, are undoubtedly well equipped to meet the challenges of their undergraduate courses and future careers.

At A Level, BSK students had a 100% A*-E pass rate, with 92% in the A*-C category. There was a further increase this year in the percentage of grades at the “high pass” range of A*-B, which now stands at an impressive 75%. As ever, there were some exceptional performances this year and, as you will have seen from the event programme, our Year 13 graduates have been able to pursue the next stage of their education at prestigious universities worldwide.

Once again, Russell Group universities in the UK have proved to be popular choices for our graduates. Former Head Boy Alexander White has now commenced his studies in Computer Science and Mathematics at Durham University, whilst former Deputy Head Boy Thomas Holgate has opted for a degree in Mathematics, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics at the University of Warwick. Roseanne Ismail is also studying in the UK, reading Medicine at the University of Bristol, whilst Dheviany Fatimah is studying Neuroscience at the University of Edinburgh. Ahmed Elsharkawi has also headed to the UK to read Mathematical Computation at University College London, and Mohamed Ahmed is studying Mechatronic Engineering at the University of Manchester.

Other graduates chose to pursue their studies at top Canadian universities, with former Deputy Head Boy Saad Zahoor studying Mathematics at the University of Waterloo and Manan Madhok reading for a degree in Pharmacology at McGill University. Former Head Girl Meral Al Shair has now commenced her studies in Microbiology and Immunology at Dalhousie University, and Firas Diab is at McMaster University reading for a degree in Engineering. Reflecting their diverse nature and interests, our graduates have also joined quality universities elsewhere in the UK and Canada, as well as the USA, Australia, Italy, India and Pakistan - undertaking a wide range of courses including Business Management, Communications, Computer Science, Economics, Dentistry, Law, Medicine and Supply Chain Management.

Higher Phase Developments

In May 2017 BSK was re-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 again awarded the premier ranking of ‘outstanding’, retaining its place among an elite group of renowned international schools. That the lead inspector recognised BSK as being “an outstanding school which continues to improve” comes as a very welcome validation of our continued efforts to improve and innovate.

Whilst 2016-17 was undoubtedly another fantastic year, I would like to take a moment or two to look ahead to our Ruby Year.

A major development for the academic year 2017-18 has been the division of the Secondary section of the school into the Middle Phase and Higher Phase. Whilst the majority of Secondary teachers continue to teach in both phases this restructuring has enabled a number of very useful refinements

and developments to be made. The Higher Phase Leadership Team, consisting of myself, Mr Simon Amura (Assistant Head Teacher), Miss Hannah Glendinning (Upper Department Coordinator) and Dr Clifford Cheung (Sixth Form Department Coordinator) are now able to focus exclusively upon the needs of our more senior students and support their development at what is a crucial time.

The continued development of student data-tracking and performance management systems, the importance supporting individual students in maximising their potential and encouraging all students to enhance their educational experience through extracurricular activities, leadership and service remain key priorities for the Higher Phase Leadership Team.

Another important initiative within the Higher Phase this year aims to provide enhanced roles of responsibility for Year 9-13 students through the formation of the Higher Phase Prefect Team. With a new process for applications and the formation of far more focused sub-teams the students who take up these roles will have the opportunity to serve the school community and develop their own skills. Under the leadership of Head Girl Rodina Gad and Head Boy Yousef Mahmoud, the Senior Prefects will guide their team of Upper Department and Sixth Form prefects in supporting the work of the school community within areas such as academic subject teams, extra-curricular activities, school events, student-led events and student mentoring.

The Higher Phase at BSK is envisaged as a community in which students and teachers work together towards common goals. Ensuring that students are pursuing their education in an environment which fosters independence, encourages critical thinking and facilitates a broad experience is key. It is important that students are guided towards taking responsibility for their own learning within an atmosphere of support, encouragement and personal accountability. Through the pastoral and academic support they provide the Higher Phase tutors, teachers and leaders aim to do just that. Whether you are in Year 9 or Year 13 the fundamental message remains the same – do your best at all times, take advantage of the opportunities afforded you, and above all else work together.

Concluding Remarks

In a moment we will commence with the Higher Phase awards, but before I draw this address to a close I would like to say just a few words more.

To each and every one of our award winners – very well done. You are fantastic role models whom our younger students, quite rightly, look up to. You always work hard to achieve your very best and this evening is an opportunity for us to acknowledge just that. BSK's reputation as Kuwait's Premier School is due in a large part to the fact that we teach you – Kuwait's Premier Students.

To my hard working and committed colleagues - thank you for always taking such excellent care of our students. The work you do every day with such enthusiasm and professionalism is truly inspiring and sincerely appreciated by us all.

To our parents - thank you for continuing to place your trust BSK. The love and support you provide for your children at home is of value beyond measure as they continue to discover who they are and the many things they are capable of achieving.

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

Emma Bowie

Secondary Head Teacher