



Marden High School

Friday 8th September 2023

Dear All

I am pleased to report to you all that there is much cause for celebration of the exam results that our students achieved over the summer. There has been much in the news about GCSE exam results falling nationally as exam grade boundaries have been shifted to return results to be more in line with those in 2019 before the pandemic. Far from falling however, our results have actually improved, even on last year which was also a great set of results. The proportion of students achieving between grades 4 and 9 in maths and English (this is one of the key metrics that school performance nationally is measured on) stands at 87%. The same pattern of rising achievement can be seen whichever measurements are looked at, and this means our value added score is well above average nationally and our results are the best of all the schools in North Tyneside. You may also have heard in the news that the largest gap on record between top GCSE grades awarded to pupils in London and those in north-east England has prompted warnings of a “continuing widening” of the north-south education divide. 28% of entries by students in London were awarded grades 7 or higher, compared with just under 18% of entries by students in the north-east. However, at Marden, 35% of all the grades achieved by the students are of the highest grades, 7 or higher. This does not take away from the fact that there are clearly unacceptable inequalities that must be addressed between the capital and our regions, but it is reassuring to know that at Marden students are achieving excellent outcomes. I have included [here a link to the assembly](#) I gave to the whole school this week which includes more figures and analysis of the exam results.

We have now come to the end of our first week back in school with all our students settling into their new timetables and, for most, familiar routines. It is clear to me that our Key Stage 4 students have returned to school with some serious intent to do as well as they possibly can in their learning this term, and of course, to enjoy it as well. It has been great to see our older students helping the younger children out around the school at the start of what promises to be an exciting term full of opportunities. Our new Year 7 students have also had a great week, and there has been lots of positive feedback from staff about how pleasant, polite and enthusiastic the children are, something that I have also seen this week and during the successful Summer Schools which we held here.

This year we are enhancing our CEIAG programme further with the introduction of Career Conversations. Over the year we will be working with a group of parents and carers who have kindly given their time to support our students with their career development. Each month there will be a series of after school talks, delivered by parents and carers, each focusing on different careers. The students will have the opportunity to hear about a wide range of industry sectors and find out about key information such as roles and responsibilities, qualification and pathways into various careers. Career Conversations will be open to all students and will run from 3.30pm-4.15pm on selected evenings throughout the year. Next week Mrs Brennan will be sending an email to students with the details of the upcoming talks and inviting them to sign up. There will also be a calendar of events added to our website under the Life at Marden, CEIAG tab. If you would like to find out more about Career Conversations or think it is something you would like to get involved with please contact f.brennan@mardenhigh.net

On the theme of taking opportunities, I am looking forward to lots of our students taking up extra-curricular activities and developing their talents through the year. Every day in school I see a great range of talents and skills in our students which they have developed by engaging deeply in their learning or by getting involved in the many extra-curricular activities we have at Marden, and I am reminded of the inimitable words of Wayne Gretzky "100% of the shots you don't take, don't go in". A host of extra curricular clubs begin from Monday next week, which parents can book children on through the School Gateway. A range of activities are on offer and all students are welcome to come to our staffed homework club in the LRC which is on every afternoon until 4.15pm.

The sporting extracurricular program also starts next week with clubs being held before school, lunchtime and after school in a wide variety of sports. These clubs are for specific year groups to attend, but open to all students who are interested in playing the sport, and are a way for teachers to select individuals for the Marden School teams. Marden's teams had a very successful sporting calendar last academic year, with many teams and individuals finding success at district, county and regional level. These school teams are very much a fluid entity, and any students that are not successful with selection in the first instance are encouraged to keep attending the clubs, so that staff can monitor progress and the students are ready to be selected should the opportunity arise in the future. If any student or parent has any enquiries about any of the trials or school teams, they can contact Mr Smith, Head of PE, for more information.

As we start the new academic year, the new House Competition begins. Hopefully it will be as close and as exciting a competition as last year. One way that students can earn points is through the weekly house competition where departments set subject related challenges for students to partake in, either at school or at home. These will begin this coming week with the English Department setting the challenge of taking a selfie reading in the most unusual or original place possible. The weekly House Challenges will vary

throughout the year and these are a fantastic way for students to earn house points and positively contribute to their overall House score.

This week we have welcomed several new staff to the school:

Mrs Thompson - Head of History

Miss Gray-Renfrew - PE teacher

Mr Yeoman - Science teacher

Mr Aughton - Maths teacher

Mrs Nahal - Cover Supervisor

Mr Ranson - Student Support Manager

On Wednesday, during Personal Development, Year 7 students will complete a MidYIS test. This is an adaptive, baseline test that requires no prior preparation by students. It tests four key areas: vocabulary, maths, non-verbal and skills. After the test has been completed, Year 7 parents and carers will receive a report containing their child's results. This data will be used by staff to support and extend students' learning. More information can be found on the CEM website linked [here](#). Year 7 parents and carers will also have the opportunity to come into school on Wednesday 27th September (drop in between 4.00-6.00pm) to look at their child's learning so far. Senior staff will be available to talk to and ask any questions. In addition there will be an opportunity to talk to Form Tutors on Thursday 28th September via a remote appointment. More details will be shared closer to the time.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher