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Welcome to 2020 and a Happy New Year!

RESULTS DAY

The first 3 months of the 19/20 academic year have been a whirlwind. When we returned to college in September we were excited by the excellent results received for BTEC and A'level students, and very proud of the GCSE English and Maths results which have continued to be recognised as outstanding. For the second year running our maths and English results have put us in the top 5 providers for resits in the country! Because of the changes we have made to the college our students have continued to go from strength to strength and the majority of results have continued to improve year on year.

OFSTED

This was further recognised in October when we were visited by Ofsted. After a tense, but exhilarating week of inspection, the College was awarded a 'Grade 2: Good' by inspectors, praising leaders and managers who "have created a more aspirational culture in the College since the previous inspection."

Teachers were commended for their hard work and "much improved planning and teaching"; it was highlighted that students pass their qualifications and gain better grades than might be expected, given their starting points. The vast majority of level 3 students now go to university.

A key area for note was the additional activities that students participate in whilst studying at Gateway. Inspectors identified that enrichment activities such as work experience, industry visits, or employability workshops "enriches their experiences and helps them to broaden their knowledge outside of their subjects." Our relationships with our stakeholders is crucial to the learner experience and is why we recognise the value of continuing to work together.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Finally, the College has earned a Schools' Mental Health Gold Award by Leeds Beckett University and the Carnegie Centre of Excellence, for the work undertaken to promote mental health and wellbeing for staff and students within the College.

The College is committed to ensuring the environment is positive and open and that staff and students feel well supported during any difficult periods that they may be experiencing. We are very proud of this award, and Su Peters, Head of School and the project lead, gives more detail on the following page.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our parents, partners and stakeholders a happy and fruitful 2020, on behalf of all staff, and we look forward to continuing our journey with you throughout the rest of the year.

Nicola Martin
Assistant Principal

Mental Health Award

Good mental health and wellbeing of staff and students is central to the work that is done throughout the College and we are always striving for ways to reflect on the impact of that work.

This is key to ensuring successful progression for students because if their social and emotional health and wellbeing is secure, they are well equipped to manage their physical and mental health and in turn, help their academic progress. Around 12 months ago, we decided to work with Leeds Beckett University and the Carnegie Centre of Excellence. The framework they provided has helped us to create a whole College approach to mental health development.



After carrying out an initial self-audit reflecting on the work we already did, we created an action plan and continued improving the support we provide across the College, whilst embedding new initiatives.

During the year, we collected evidence of the work that we are doing: from the Principal and Governors' vision; in the classroom; the pastoral and support teams; and student led initiatives. This evidence **shows** that we have a deep commitment to the excellent practice that takes place, making mental health and wellbeing a part of our core business.

We recently learnt that we are to be awarded the Gold Schools' Mental Health Award which is the highest level of achievement given to schools and colleges who have demonstrated that they have exemplary practice across the organisation which shows sustained impact in all eight competencies. This is a very exciting achievement and places us as one of the leading colleges nationally. We will continue to share the work we do within the national arena.



Oxford University Trip

Physics at Oxford University

In December, we took a group of talented students to Oxford University for a Physics and Material Sciences taster day, so that they could experience what it is like studying in this prestigious university.

They took part in lectures and workshops, gaining an insight into undergraduate life and the challenges that this presents. They also learnt about the collegiate structure of Oxford University and were given useful advice and tips about the application process. At the end of the day, they were given a tour of the campus and were inspired by the facilities that are available to students there.



Careers

It has been a busy term in the Careers Department with lots of events being held, including Master Classes from visiting academics, and support from universities for students writing their Personal Statements in application for their own places at university.

One of the biggest events of the term has been our Employer Speed Networking event which we ran over 2 days with 40 different people from the world of work attending.

Our first event was held for our level 2 students, who were able to talk to representatives from organisations including Alzheimer's Society Leicester, the Royal Air Force and recognised high-class Asian couture fashion owner Arinder Bhullar.

Students were able to ask questions to guests about their roles and the many different job roles that organisations can offer, to really broaden their knowledge about the world of work and what their opportunities could be after leaving College.



Our second day was aimed at our STEM students, with representatives from Pepsico, NHS Cyber Security and Leicester Royal Infirmary. These representatives were able to provide insight to different careers within the STEM sector and provided an excellent example of the diversity that is available.



Feedback from students has been fantastic with many saying that there is lots that they have learnt about different jobs and companies and wishing that they could have had longer with the employers. We have also had some amazing feedback from our guests, saying that students were really keen to find out about what they did and the different opportunities that are out there for them. One attendee even commented that it was the “best speed networking event that I have attended.” We are very proud of our students and of the success of the event. If this is something that you would like to be involved in next year then please do get in touch with Amy Spencer, our Careers’ Lead, for details of how you can do so.

The Speed Networking Event from a student’s perspective (article written by Maryam Hamid)

On Thursday 31st October 2019, students took part in a Speed Networking event run by LEBC, the Leicestershire Education Business Company. LEBC helps students organise work placements as well as careers-related activities such as this event.

The aim of the event was to introduce students to the world of professional networking. It would allow us to learn about all the opportunities available to us after college and help us develop vital communication skills.

First, we were given a booklet outlining the aims of the event and some guidance on how to communicate with the professionals we were about to meet. We then entered the theatre and sat at a table with a volunteer speaker, who talked to us about their job. It was then up to the students to ask them questions about their work. This would continue for just a few minutes, when the volunteer would move on to the next table as we remained comfortably in our seats.

Over the course of the event, it became easier to talk and ask relevant questions to the professionals as our communication skills improved and confidence built. During these conversations, we learnt about many new career paths, from Chemical Engineering at a major food retailer to Medical Writers who created presentations for new medicines.

The Speed Networking event was useful because it allowed us to find out about many different career paths, some of which I had not even heard of, and the various ways in which we could get there. It also improved our communication skills, which will be useful in the future during job interviews and other professional environments.

Young Enterprise – ‘To boldly go, where Gateway has not been before’.



Those of you who are Star Trek fans will know that the main mission of the USS Enterprise was to explore new planets and areas of space which were yet undiscovered (apparently). Now, I’m not personally a Star Trek fan (no really I’m not), but I do recognise the strong link between the mission of the Enterprise and the meaning that it has for the group of seven students who have just begun their journey as Gateway College’s first Young Enterprise company. Just to confirm they aren’t training to be astronauts – well not yet anyway!

As you may already be aware, the Young Enterprise programme is a nationwide scheme, run with the core aim of giving business minded young people, practical exposure to the enterprise process through working with others, and starting a business or social enterprise from scratch. This is a new and exciting extra-curricular activity for Gateway, as the business department continues to provide additional opportunities to develop young people who have a passion and interest in business. These opportunities extend across the College and are not exclusively just for business students.

The group’s journey started on 11th September 2019 with a presentation from Annabelle Ames, who coordinates Young Enterprise across the Leicestershire region. Following on from this insightful and motivating presentation, seven pupils from across both the vocational and A Level schools signed up for the programme.



On 25th September the group attended the Young Enterprise Launch Event at De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester, where those in attendance were wowed by the inspirational and very impressive presentation, not only from one of DMU’s lecturers about the entrepreneurial process, but also by a year eleven pupil whose group had won the countywide finals the year previous. Truly inspiring!

With significant motivation and some fresh entrepreneurial vision, the Young Enterprise group (soon to become a company), had their initial meeting in early October, with their mentor David Hawksworth. David is a seasoned pro at mentoring Young Enterprise companies, having supported the programme for many years and using his considerable private sector experience from his senior position within Saint Gobain to guide and support fledgling enterprise groups.

So far this academic year, the company have met three times and have voted in a Managing Director who is a level 3, second year Business student on the BTEC Extended Diploma programme. Already the company have agreed on a strategic direction in terms of the products and services which they wish to offer, focusing on mental health and wellbeing. Over the coming weeks, the company, (as yet not named), will be honing the fine details of their plans, as well as working together to focus on financial viability, marketing and advertising, as well as doing some market research so that they can begin to launch their products and services. Exciting times ahead then, and I look forward to reporting back with an update, in the coming months, as the company heads towards anticipated success.

Gateway College has been awarded the ‘Outstanding Level 3 Vocational Performance in BTEC National Foundation Diploma in Business Studies and placed as the ‘highest student progression in England for Level 3 Business’ by the Department for Education, 2019.

By Simon Brown – Teacher of Business & Young Enterprise Centre Lead.