Birmingham special school students achieve impressive exam results

Thursday 22 August, 2013

Students with special educational needs from Values Academy in Birmingham have overcome serious odds to make significant achievements in this year's exams. Today's results show that, despite extremely disrupted educations and a range of behavioural, emotional and learning difficulties, many of these young people are preparing for a bright future.

A number of Values Academy students have done exceptionally well, achieving a range of good GCSEs as well as good Entry Level and Functional Skills qualifications. Many of the school's young people have been offered places on further education courses, or are going on to do apprenticeships or vocational training.

One of the school's biggest successes this year is a young man who only started at Values Academy in February. He had experienced a much disrupted education until then and had an uncertain future. He achieved Grade C in GCSE Maths, Level 2 Functional Skills English (equivalent to GCSE A* to C) and a BTECH in Science. He is very proud to have been offered a place at Solihull College to study Animal Care.

Two other students did very well: one achieved eight GCSE-level qualifications including a B in English Literature and Cs in Maths and English Language. The other attained seven GCSEs or equivalent plus two Entry Level qualifications. The first student will begin an apprenticeship in September, and the second has been offered a place at Staffordshire College to study Countryside Management.

Another student, who experiences severe Asperger's Syndrome, achieved the equivalent of six GCSEs and one Entry Level qualification. This student has been offered a place on a supported learning course at Solihull College.

Val Russell, Director of School at Values Academy, said: "We are proud of all our students, particularly those who have achieved such impressive grades this year. Given the much disrupted education that all these students have experienced, together with their identified special educational needs, these are achievements that we and they ought to celebrate.

"Our starting block is much further back than most, which makes our students' achievements all the more impressive. However, our work is about much more than simply achieving good academic results. We and our young people work hard to build their self-esteem, confidence, honesty and integrity, helping them to engage with their education and build positive relationships inside and outside school.

"Perhaps one of our most successful students is one who had a very violent and criminal history before he joined us. He was unpredictable, angry and often in trouble. He is now able to control his temper, has not been in trouble with the police for a considerable time, and has gained a place on a mechanics course. If he is successful, it could lead to an apprenticeship and a positive future. I'm very proud."

Values Academy provides an alternative to mainstream education for young people at risk of social exclusion. They have had a disrupted education and often have a range of special educational needs. The school offers values-based education and provides individual learning programmes tailored to students' specific needs. The school's success rate is superb – both in academic and personal terms – and Ofsted has written glowing reports over the past few years.

ENDS

Notes for editors: Values Academy (previously known as the Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life) is a two-site school in Birmingham and Nuneaton. It provides a values-based education for young people at risk of social exclusion and is an alternative to mainstream education. It has a superb success rate and received an excellent Ofsted report for the last academic year. The school is also a registered charity. All donations are very much needed and appreciated.

For more information, please contact Val Russell, Director of School, on 0121 523 0222, Vicky Fraser, press officer, on 07814 577217, or visit www.valuesacademy.org.uk.

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