



# Excelsior Academy

A Business Enterprise Academy

Executive Principal: Mrs. Philomena Marshall, MA

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It was a real pleasure to welcome back pupils and staff from the summer break this week and a special pleasure to welcome all of our new pupils and staff. Welcome also to all of our new parents/carers and families.

Last year was once again a particularly successful year for Excelsior which ended with our best ever GCSE and A level results. Our GCSE and A level success has improved year on year since we opened in September 2008.

The examination success of our pupils this summer started with the very good levels of progress and attainment achieved by pupils in Rainbird Primary who exceeded all targets for development and for phonics screening.

A level success came next. The pass rate for Academic A Levels was 98% and for Vocational A Levels 100%. Targets set against national measures for prior attainment for 1 + A Level at A\* - B, 2+ A Levels at A\* - B, and 3+ A Levels at A\* - B in Academic A Levels, in Vocational A levels and overall were all exceeded.

A Levels or vocational equivalent at the highest A\* / A grades were achieved by students in a wide range of subjects - Mathematics, Pure Mathematics, Chemistry, Fine Art, Art, Graphics, Textiles, Italian, Business, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Information Technology, Performing Arts, PE and Travel and Tourism.

Almost all of our Y13 students were able to secure a place at their first choice university and the few who didn't were able to secure places on courses in other universities of their choosing.

I am delighted to welcome seven of our former students to their new positions as Level 2 Apprentices in one of Laidlaw Schools Trust Schools, five at Excelsior, one at Atkinson Road Primary and one at Thomas Walling Primary. They join the three apprentices who joined Excelsior Academy staff previously and have now progressed to Level 3 Apprenticeships.

I am also pleased with the success of Excelsior's pioneering apprenticeship scheme with Rolls Royce which we introduced in September 2014. The scheme offered 24 sixth form students the opportunity to follow an engineering apprenticeship scheme through a partnership with Rolls Royce. The majority of students have progressed to the second year of an apprenticeship in engineering as an outcome of this. Excelsior is the only secondary school/academy in the North East to offer this opportunity to its sixth form students.

Best wishes to all of our sixth form leavers. I look forward to hearing of their successes and positive experiences for many years to come.

I am pleased to formally welcome Ms Goodwill as our new Director of Excelsior College taking over from Mrs Aitchison who retired at the end of the summer term. Ms Goodwill has been spending time getting to know Excelsior since she was appointed earlier this year and comes with experience and a good record of success as Head of Sixth Form at her previous school.

GCSE results followed the success of A Levels, once again breaking all previous records. Y11 pupils exceeded all national targets based on their attainment when they joined Excelsior and exceeded last year's national averages for progress in both English and Mathematics as well as exceeding the new national floor standard for progress.



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This is a tremendous achievement, as a comparison of the attainment and progress of Excelsior pupils in 2014 with those in 148 secondary schools / academies in the twelve local authority areas in the north east region showed Excelsior as one of the highest performing secondary schools for pupils of high ability, for pupils of mid ability and for pupils of low ability.

The DfE accepts that an overall headline measure of 5+ GCSE examinations at A\* - C with English and Mathematics is not an effective measure of the attainment and progress of pupils, or of a school's performance and will be replacing this with different indicators from 2016.

More detailed analysis of published performance tables for 2014 showed that the attainment at GCSE 5+ A\* - C including English and Maths and the progress in Mathematics of low ability pupils, placed Excelsior Academy in the top 10% of the 148 schools in the region.

The attainment at GCSE 5+ A\* - C including English and Maths and the progress in Mathematics of mid ability pupils placed Excelsior in the top 20% of the 148 schools in the region. For high ability pupils Excelsior was only 7 percentage points behind the highest performing school for 5+ GCSE with Maths and English.

Despite having the highest proportion of pupils in the region whose first language is not English, Excelsior's attainment and progress in English was within the top 50%.

This year's results are even better with improved attainment at GCSE 5+ A\* with English and Maths as well as improved progress in both English and in Maths. Excelsior is above the national floor standards for all attainment and progress indicators.

It is not possible to report a regional comparison for 2015 until much later in the academic year when the DfE publishes its schools performance tables. However I anticipate that Excelsior pupils' performance within the region will be at least as good as last year, particularly as there was much improved progress in English overall this year.

DfE performance tables to date have concentrated on outcomes in English and Mathematics, however Excelsior pupils gained A\* or A grades in a wide range of subjects this year. **A\* Grades** were gained in Mathematics, Spanish, History, Geography, Core Science, Further Additional Science, Arabic, Persian, Dance. **A Grades** were gained in Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, Science Core, Additional Science, Further Additional Science, Spanish, History, Geography, Art, Religious Studies, Hospitality, Italian, IT, Media, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish. Well done to all those pupils.

While I am of course delighted with the academic success of our pupils, I am equally pleased with the wide range of other opportunities that Excelsior staff offer our pupils. They are too numerous to list in this letter but if you visit our website [www.excelsiornewcastle.org.uk](http://www.excelsiornewcastle.org.uk) you will get a flavour of the experiences that our pupils can and do benefit from.

Excelsior pupils are offered a good quality education and high levels of support in a well ordered and caring environment. We expect high standards of attendance and behaviour from all of our pupils who respond positively to our expectations. An unannounced Ofsted inspection in November 2014 endorsed the Good Ofsted judgement that Excelsior secured through a full inspection in January 2013. Thank you to all pupils, parents/ carers and families who work co-operatively with Excelsior to ensure that their children understand the importance of good attendance and good learning behaviour for ensuring good quality qualifications.

I am extremely grateful for the hard work, dedication and commitment of Excelsior staff whose determination that all pupils will succeed is at the root of our success. I am also grateful for the support and challenge that



our Governors, particularly Peter Fair, our Chair of Governors offer and for the extremely generous support of our sponsor Irvine Laidlaw.

Already the new term is packed with exciting teaching and learning as well as extra-curricular experiences.

Best wishes for a successful and happy academic year.



Phil Marshall  
Executive Principal

