



# Ark Burlington Danes Academy

Monday, September 9, 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your families have had a refreshing and relaxing summer holiday.

I would like to begin by first bringing you news of our school's GCSE and A level results from last year. I am happy to inform you that our students performed exceptionally well, with our GCSE results improving by over 10%. This places BDA as the second most-improved school in the entire Ark network and makes us one of the most-improved schools across London. We are delighted with the results our pupils have achieved and the fantastic destinations they have gone on to secure. It is a pleasure to welcome back so many of our Year 11s into our Sixth Form, and congratulations to our Year 13s who have secured highly competitive destinations including Oxford University, courses such as Dentistry and degree apprenticeships at Capgemini and GCHQ. Our mission as a school is to make sure no door is closed to our students, so it is wonderful to see our students step into the world ready to realise their ambitions.

## BDA 2018-19 KS4 and KS5 Outcomes

- Year 11 students achieving English and Maths Grade 4+ increased by 11% to 60%, the school's best results since 2015-16.
- Second largest improvement in the Ark network of schools
- One of the largest improvements in London
- English Baccalaureate (Ebac) increased to 34% (10% higher than national average)
- Students have achieved a third of a grade higher in each subject they took compared to last year
- 1 in 3 KS5 students achieved Russell Group university places
- Over half our KS5 students achieved places at the top third of universities

While I am very proud of our KS4 and KS5 pupils and their achievements, I am also excited for the year ahead. The new academic year is a time for renewal, and I would like to take this opportunity to share our new, Ark Burlington Danes Vision and Values.

## Our Vision and Values

*"I have come that you may have life, and have it in all its fullness."  
John 10:10*

At Ark Burlington Danes Academy, we believe that everyone deserves to be accepted, included and empowered to live a life that is purposeful and fulfilling. Through learning to our fullest potential and living a life filled with kindness and thankfulness, we can be the ones to make the world a better place.

Our School Vision is underpinned by our Christian Values of:

Faith; Leadership; Courage; Resilience; Love; Compassion; Commitment

At Ark Burlington Danes, we know that academic outcomes are crucial to our children – they open the doors of opportunity for them. We will always be committed to ensuring our children get grades that are above and beyond expectations.

We also know that grades on their own are not enough. For our children to succeed, they also need the right character in order to thrive in the outside world. That is why we, as an Church of England school, believe in teaching our children the right moral values so they can make the right choices for themselves, their families and our community throughout their lives. We do this explicitly through a programme of assemblies and tutor times activities in which our students learn about our values and the challenges facing the world today. Our programme looks at the life of Christ, how he reached out to those who suffered in society, and used his strength to lift them up. We use his example to guide us to show faith, leadership, courage, resilience, love, compassion and commitment by our actions, and in doing so, change the world. This year, our assembly programme will explore the challenges of homelessness, inequality and the environment. We train our children to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change – we want them to be the ones to make the world a better place.

We also recognise the need for our children to have high aspirations. We directly teach our pupils about the different stages of the education system, universities, apprenticeships, jobs and careers. This is part of our Raising Aspirations programme and it is part of what secures such exceptional destinations for our students.

Both our Character and Raising Aspirations programmes are taught through our assemblies and tutor times. We regard the education our children receive from these sessions as important as our examined curriculum, and I ask you to engage your children in discussion about what they have learnt. In these challenging times, we need our children to be socially aware and empowered agents of change, if we are to give them the world they deserve.

We also know that our children need to have exceptional self-discipline if they are to reach their potential. Self-discipline is not something we are born with; it is something we learn. That is why we explicitly teach our children what strong self-discipline looks like, and we support our students to improve when they get it wrong. Strong discipline is one of our fundamental pillars that underpins our teaching and learning approach at Ark Burlington Danes, and we are delighted to welcome Mr Bryant as our new Vice Principal responsible for leading in this area. Mr Bryant has enjoyed five successful years at Ark John Keats, one of the highest-achieving schools in the country, leading on behaviour and character. We, as a school, recognise that instilling strong discipline in our children is an act of empowerment and that it will open the doors to success for them in every aspect of their lives.

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## **Strong Discipline**

We expect our pupils at Burlington Danes Academy to show exceptionally high levels of self-discipline. You should feel confident that your child will be in an environment where teachers and pupils are respectful to each other; corridors and playgrounds are safe places and where your child's progress is rapid because the lessons are focussed, calm and teachers can teach to a very high standard. This is the result of the school's rigorous discipline system where everything is addressed, down to those small mistakes that if not checked will escalate and lead to loss of learning.

### **Catch-ups**

Fundamental to this are catch-ups where pupils have an opportunity to reflect and think about how they can avoid repeating the same mistakes. Catch-ups take place after school, but should not be considered the same as detentions. Detention is another word for 'keeping you behind'. Catch-ups help you get back ahead.

Catch-up sessions are so central to securing exceptional discipline at the school and it is important that you are fully aware of how it works and why we have chosen to run it this way. Catch-ups are held on the same day that they are issued as this is the best way for pupils to learn; it means that they can come into school the following day having reflected on what went wrong the day before and are therefore more likely to succeed. As a result it is not always possible to notify parents before 3.30pm as we must take accurate registers during the catch-up and then send text messages to all parents. If your child has a catch-up, we will endeavour to always let you know before they leave the building and not later than 4pm. We have thought carefully about how we can speed up this process in order to support parents as best we can. However, we cannot compromise the same day system because we know it works so well and provides all children with the best chance of success. We have a receptionist on site until 5.00pm for any queries but it should be noted that they only have information about which pupils are in catch-up and the length of the catch-up; they do not have information about the reasons for the catch-up. If you ever require further clarification, please request a meeting or phone call with your child's Head of Year.

We very much appreciate the support of parents on this matter and are always willing to discuss questions or issues when they arise.

You can help by:

- Signing their planner each week and looking at the 'checks' they are receiving through their behaviour management grid so you are aware of any issues
- Discussing their self-discipline in relation to their future aspirations and how self-discipline can help them to achieve their goals
- Ensuring your child is in school by 8.25am each day. Pupils will be issued catch-up for failing to be in school on time.
- Focussing on broader areas that they need to develop rather than discussing individual checks

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- Reminding your child that they can ask their teacher politely about any check they are unsure of before school, at break, lunch or after school or they can ask their Head of Year (we do not discuss checks or behaviour during lessons because it takes away from learning time)
- Speaking to your child's Head of Year for clarification if you have any questions about checks or catch-ups
- If your child is getting equipment or homework checks, supporting them to get into a routine of checking their homework and packing their bag before they go to bed each night
- Look through your child's exercise book. Ask them what they are learning in the subject, what their feedback was, and check their presentation of work meets your expectations.

### **Changes to the structure of the school day**

Please note that we have changed the order of lessons during the school day. The school day will now begin with period 1, with tutor time/assembly taking place after break. It is therefore essential that students are in school punctually and that their attendance is high, if they are not to miss their academic education. Students are expected on the school site by 8.20am. The whistle for line up will take place at 8.25am. Students will be led from their lines to their period 1 lesson by 8.30am. Please ensure that your child is at school on time to support with this.

<b>Start time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Description (2019-20)</b>
	07:45	Academy library opens for students; breakfast served in school restaurant (until 0815)
	<b>08:20</b>	<b>All students expected to be in school. Whistle for morning line up with teachers of P1 8.25am</b>
08:30	09:20 (50 mins)	Period 1
09:20	10:05 (45 mins)	Period 2
10:05	10:50 (45 mins)	Period 3
<b>10:50</b>	<b>11:10 (20 mins)</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:10</b>	<b>11:35 (25 mins)</b>	<b>Period 4 Line up with tutors after break &amp; Character Programme</b>
11:35	12:25 (50 mins)	Period 5
12:25	13:10 (45 mins)	Period 6
<b>13:10</b>	<b>13:55 (45 mins)</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
13:55	14:45 (50 mins)	Period 7
14:45	15:30 (45 mins)	Period 8
	<b>15:30</b>	<b>Afternoon Line up with tutors</b>

### **Coffee Mornings with the Principal**

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While we have a number of parents' evenings that take place across the year, I am keen to have a forum where I can meet parents directly to discuss the work we are doing as a school and to find ways to work more closely together.

To this end, I have scheduled 'Coffee Mornings' on:

- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019
- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019

The mornings will take place between 9.30am and 11am – I look forward to seeing you there.

Our school website, [burlingtondanes.org](http://burlingtondanes.org), is also an excellent source of information. Term dates, news, upcoming events and copies of all letters sent home can be found here. This year we will be publishing a regular school newsletter on the website to keep you informed of your child's experience at school; we look forward to sharing the first edition soon. Be sure also to follow us @ArkBDA on Twitter for regular weekly updates.

I wish you and your families the very best for the new academic year, and look forward to working closely with you as we take our children on to the next stage of their educational journey.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Paul Bhatia

Principal  
Ark Burlington Danes Academy

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