

# Aspire Programme 2024-5





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# Aspire Programme

- Students with a strong GCSE profile (currently c.7.5) are invited to join the Aspire programme with a view to applying to the most selective institutions and courses.
- They then form a specialist tutorial group early in the Spring Term with students in their potential subject area (either Humanities/Soc. Sci. or STEM).
- Students begin with super-curricular activities (summer school applications, competitions, independent reading and research) and keep a journal of all these activities.
- Next, they are guided through the process of selecting a subject and institution (and a particular college in the case of Oxbridge applications).
- Students are then given specialist guidance on preparing for the application process (practice entrance papers, mock interviews, personal statement advice, special arrangements for overseas universities). They are supported up to the outcome of the application - and beyond - by the Aspire programme.

# Other Preparatory Activities

- Students attend tutorials with current Varndean students who hold offers from Oxford, Cambridge and other Russell Group institutions.
- Students attend tutorials with Varndean alumni, who are current undergraduates, in the summer term.
- Students are invited to attend Open Days at Churchill College, Cambridge, and St. John's, Oxford. These generally occur in the summer term. Students are also assisted in going to open days independently at all Russell Group institutions.

# Applications and Typical Offers - Oxbridge

- GCSE scores
- Essays
- Personal statement
- Reference
- Admissions tests
- Interviews

It's worth bearing in mind that many other top institutions require very similar entry grades.

## Oxford

- A level AAA or A\*AA in Maths and Sciences
- A Level A\*AA Humanities
- IB 38 + 666 or 766 at HL

## Cambridge

- A level A\*AA or A\*A\*A in Maths and Sciences
- A Level A\*AA Humanities
- IB 41-42 + 776 at HL

# Applications to Colleges and Open Applications

32 colleges admit undergraduates at Oxford; 29 at Cambridge.



Students from Varndean get offers and places at a wide range via both application routes, and over the last five years, entry to each university has been about equal in numbers. Since 2015, Varndean has had an average success rate of 46%, in terms of applicants to offers, and most meet their offers each year.

Oxbridge : 2024 - 16 applications and 7 offers (44%).

# Oxford and Cambridge - Where to Apply

- Both universities state that there is no advantage to choosing a college over an open application.
- Both universities publish ratios of applicants to places by college and by subject.
- Some colleges actively promote direct application more than others :
- Cambridge : Homerton; Lucy Cavendish; Girton; Murray Edwards.
- Oxford : University College; Mansfield.

# Offers, places and destinations - 2023

The vast majority of applicants who do not receive Oxbridge offers gain places at other Russell Group institutions.

For 2023 entry, **76** Varndean students took places at **Russell Group** institutions (19% of all students placed); **88** took places at the group formerly known as the **1994 Group** (22% of all students placed).

41% of all students took places at these two groups combined.

Total number of students placed at all institutions = 395.



February - Programme begins: academic interests and aspirations

- March- July                      Open days; decide on universities
- March – September      Keep journal of extracurricular activities
- June- October                Practice admission tests
- July                                      Start to write personal statement
- September 28<sup>th</sup>      College deadline for completed Oxbridge applications
- October 15<sup>th</sup>                      Application submitted
- October 31<sup>st</sup>                      Admission tests for Cambridge, Oxford
- December                      Interviews
- January 9<sup>th</sup>                      Decisions; pool interviews at Cambridge

# Success...



Previous School  
Vardean School

A Level Results  
Politics A\*  
Law A\*  
French A  
Extended Project Qualification A\*

Destination  
Politics  
University of Edinburgh

**Helena Zdziech**



Previous School  
Vardean School

International Baccalaureate  
Diploma  
Achieved 42 points

Destination  
Philosophy, Politics & Economics,  
University of Oxford

**Laura Boyd**



A Level Results  
Art A\*  
Politics A\*  
Modern History A

Destination  
International Relations & Arabic,  
SOAS, University of London

**Poppy Wallis**



Previous School  
Lewes Priory

International Baccalaureate  
Diploma  
Achieved 42 points

Destination  
History & English,  
University of Oxford

**Alice Brooker**

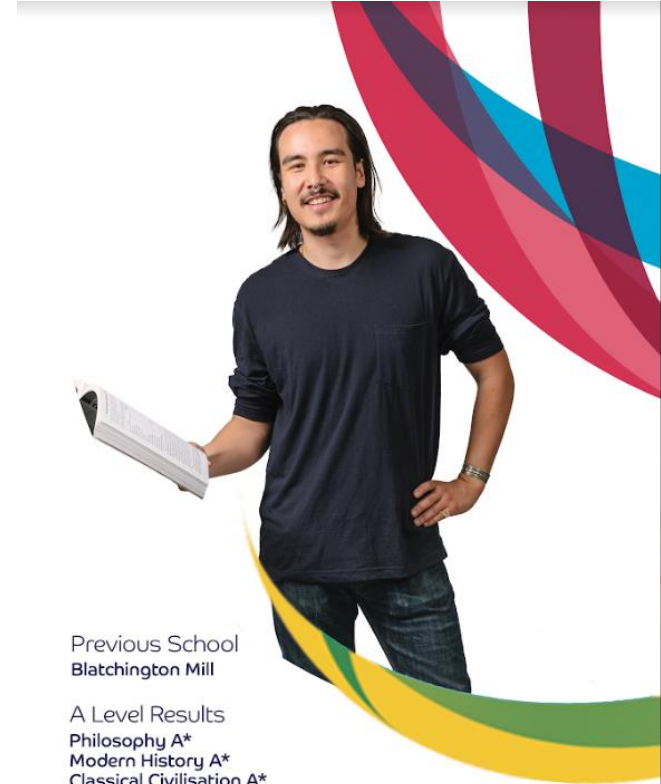


Previous School  
Davison CE School

International Baccalaureate  
Diploma  
Achieved 40 points

Destination  
Law  
University of Oxford

**Amelia MacLeod**



Previous School  
Blatchington Mill

A Level Results  
Philosophy A\*  
Modern History A\*  
Classical Civilisation A\*

Destination  
Classical Archaeology & Ancient  
History, University of Oxford

**Bo-Min Ryu**



Previous School  
Patcham

A Level Results  
Biology A\*  
Chemistry A  
Maths A  
Extended Project Qualification B

Destination  
Medicine  
University of Leicester

**Omar Hamayoon**

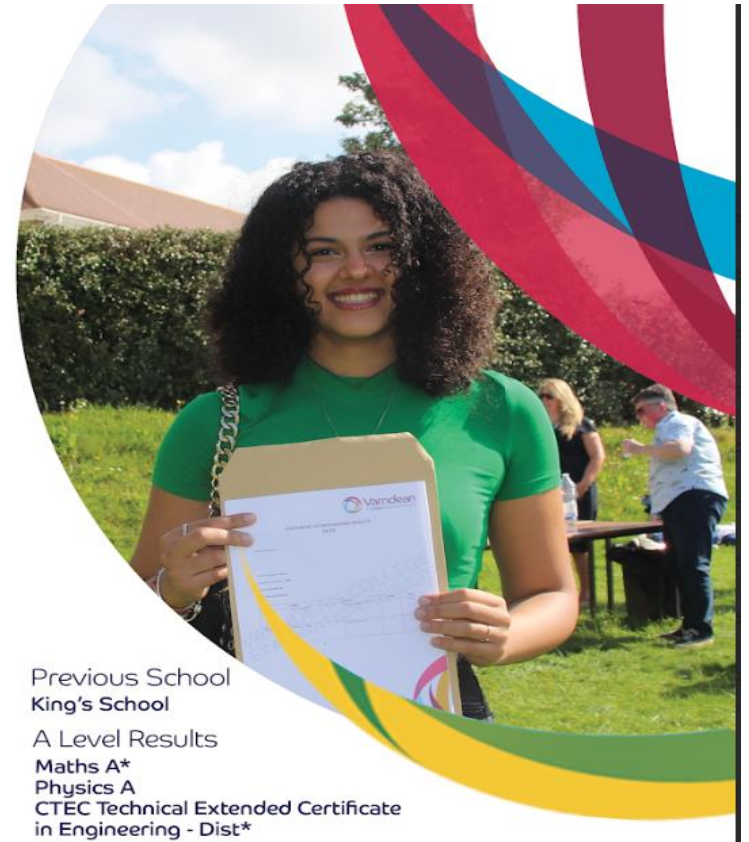


Previous School  
Vardean School

A Level Results  
English Literature A\*  
Modern History A\*  
Maths A  
+EPQ A\*

Destination  
History & Politics,  
University of Cambridge

**Nell Breckenridge**



Previous School  
King's School

A Level Results  
Maths A\*  
Physics A  
CTEC Technical Extended Certificate  
in Engineering - Dist\*

Destination  
Civil Engineering,  
University of Bristol

**Verina Naguib**

