

## Success for Varndean College students in extraordinary times

In what has been an extraordinary and challenging year in educational history, Varndean College in Brighton is celebrating the achievements of its students who have yet again achieved an outstanding record of A Level and Vocational course results overall. Despite having to face the sudden and unexpected closure of the College in March due to Covid-19, as well as the Government's cancellation of all A Level exams, students rose to the exceptional challenge and continued to engage with their new 'virtual classroom' studies. Final results were based on attainment over the past two years; this proved a very unsettling and worrying time for them all and we are immensely proud of how they responded. While we are very pleased with the results for many of our students, there are some students whose final results do not reflect their hard work, their prior attainment or their Centre Assessed Grades. Whilst this is emerging as a national picture, we are devastated that there are such injustices in the system and we will be ensuring that we work to address this.

- The overall pass rate at A level was 98% with 48% achieving A\*-B and 73% A\*-C grades (This in line with previous years but does not reflect our current cohort).
- All vocational courses, BTEC and CTEC had a 100% pass rate, as well as our Level 3 CACHE course having exceptional results of 100%.
- Visual Arts courses (Art, Graphic Design, 3D Design, Textiles and Photography) once again continued to be outstanding, with 93% of students achieving A\*-C grades and 25% achieving the prestigious A\* grade.
- Our English, Humanities, Law Further Maths and the Extended Project Qualification also again delivered impressive results. In the Extended Project Qualification 100% of students passed, with 83% of them getting the very highest grades of A\*-B; similarly Law students gained 100% pass rate with 52% getting the very highest grades of A\*-B; in English Literature 57% of students got an A\*-B; Government and Politics students achieved a 56% A-B rate.

As well as offering traditional A Levels, Varndean College also offers a comprehensive programme of Level 3 vocational qualifications, which many students take either as standalone courses or in combination with A Levels. These results are impressive with many students moving on to higher education courses or direct into apprenticeships/employment.

New Varndean College Principal, Donna-Marie, said; "We are incredibly proud of our students this year, particularly under the extreme and unusual circumstances they have found themselves to be in due to the global pandemic. They have worked tirelessly over the past 18 months, only to have their time at Varndean abruptly cut short and having to face very extraordinary and worrying times. Our students are quite frankly amazing and they have been an inspiration. I would like to thank my entire staff for their hard work and dedication over these past few months and for continuing to give our students the drive and determination

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they needed. Where there are discrepancies and what we believe to be unfair downgrading of individual results, we will be ensuring that we appeal on behalf of our students."

This A Level success follows on from Varndean's successful International Baccalaureate results in July, when 42 IB Diploma students averaged 36 points, the equivalent to three A grades at A Level, with 12 students gaining an impressive 38 points or above (equivalent to 3 A\* grades), placing them in the top 3% of students worldwide.

Amongst those IB students celebrating was **Fiyinfoluwa Oladipo** who achieved a stunning 43 points placing him in the top 2% of students worldwide, and who will now read Medicine at Imperial College, London; **Eben Roddis** (42 points), who after a gap year has a place secured at Leeds to read Maths and Philosophy; **Ines Aranguena Aniceto** (42 points) who will read Politics and International Relations at Warwick and **Nancy Farris**, (42 points) who is off to Leeds to study Classics and History.

Congratulations and well done to all our departing students and the very best of luck in your future progression routes.

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