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Dear Families,

This year's GCSE results marked another important moment for our pupils and our school, therefore I thought it was vital that we share these achievements with our community.

We set out in 2018 to rebuild the school based on strong values and academic success. Our vision for the school has always been simple: pupils should be happy, supported and cared for at school (I believe this is a strength of ours, but we are always looking to improve!) However, it is vital that these core values are wrapped around rigorous academic success. Success isn't just about getting grade 8's or 9's, but about ALL pupils achieving their potential; something which is measured via a system called Progress 8. Basically, how much 'academic value' schools add to their pupils.

In 2022, following an extensive transformation of the school and its curriculum, we demonstrated significant improvements; the 2022 cohort achieved grades that at the time were the best results Atherton High School had ever achieved; **however, in 2023 we have surpassed these achievements.** This achievement is even more amazing when you consider that, this was the year all examinations were brought back in line with 2019 criterion.

With our significant improvements year-on-year, we now have GCSE results, both in line with National averages, but as importantly something we can be proud to discuss and further build upon.

I always say to pupils that numbers in August don't define us, and often quote the poem by Peter Wimbrown, which in one verse says, "For it isn't a man's father, mother or wife, whose judgement upon him must pass, the fellow whose verdict counts most in life, is the man staring back from the glass."

It is important however, that we, and our pupils, realise strong, positive numbers do keep every door open in life and these can be achieved by everyone with the characteristics we promote through our school values of respect, responsibility and ambition.

These characteristics of success are achievable for every one of us; it is vital they become the norm and not occasional. Despite our incredible improvements from 2019, despite being the most improved school in Wigan, the message to staff has been very simple: celebrate this success, but this is now the minimum educational standard for our pupils; we must strive every year to go one step further! As I will say to Year 11 in September, champions keep moving forward, and I know our staff will push this message and work even harder. It is important that every pupil works even harder than we do to achieve optimal success! I look forward to seeing what greatness we can achieve together in the upcoming academic year.

