

Dear Families,

This year's GCSE results marked an 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 grades 8 or 9 but schools are measured by how much 'academic value' we add to our pupils. Pre-2019, the school added no value, in fact, on average, pupils were 9 grades lower than their targets.

However, in 2022, following an extensive transformation of the school and its curriculum, we have surpassed all expectations; Our cohort have achieved grades that are the best results Atherton High School has ever achieved! This is inclusive of any results achieved by the school when it was Hesketh Fletcher. This achievement is even more amazing when you consider that in June 2022, the Government made changes to exams and stated that *'schools that get higher results than in 2021 will be few and far between, if any.'*

With our improvements from 2019, we are the second most improved school in Wigan!

I always say to pupils that numbers in August don't define us, and often quote the poem by Peter Wimbow, 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 a strong work ethic and high attendance. Analysing our results, it is clear to see that pupils who made the most progress, had attendance over 97% and less than 5 negative behaviour points. This was 31% of the Year 11 pupils. 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 second 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.