

Headteachers/Principals of Aylesbury's secondary schools and Buckinghamshire UTC are, for the first time, commenting jointly on the qualification results published this week.

The usual statistical analysis of each cohort is not appropriate and the different model of assessment this year means that year-on-year comparisons are unhelpful. We have therefore adopted a different approach. All Aylesbury Headteachers/Principals want to pay tribute to the students, parents and staff at our schools and colleges for their terrific attitude to the numerous challenges faced in the last 18 months.

As a counter to the media concerns of 'grade inflation', we want to take this opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved by our secondary educational community. The qualifications awarded to our students, mainly but not exclusively in Years 11 and 13, are recognition of their commitment and hard work. This year, their resilience and flexibility has also been tested, as they have had to adapt to the many challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.

These outcomes are set against the national (and global) context that has affected so many of our lives but also an assessment system that repeatedly changed, often at very short notice. We are delighted that our students have risen to these challenges and secured an excellent set of results that most importantly allows them to access the next stages of their education or training. The absence of a formal examination period has meant they have had to focus and apply themselves for an extended period of time to gain these outcomes.

The character that our students have shown, through resilience and adaptability, not only deserve recognition but also will ensure that they thrive at these next stages of their lives. Education has always been about both knowledge and skills and perhaps even more so during this pandemic.

This process has been largely delivered by the staff of our secondary education community. This has been done with integrity, care and compassion. Staff care deeply about students and their progression and have balanced this with the need to be fair to students at other establishments. The confines of the system we were given to operate in may have proved challenging at times, but we have done our best to be both advocates for our present students, whilst supporting past and future students' aspirations.

The final part of this jigsaw is the parents and carers whose role in supporting their children through these past 18 months cannot be underestimated. This pandemic has placed challenges on all households and the changing nature has added uncertainty into the mix. For those households with students of examination age this has been magnified and as leaders of our communities we want to thank you for your support. You should be proud of what your children have achieved and your role in helping them get to this position.

Together we have navigated our way through the changing landscape of the pandemic. This has happened not by chance but by holding true to our values, the support of our whole community and the sheer hard work of our students.

Thank you, well done, and we wish you all the best for the next chapter of your life, wherever it may take you.

Giles Scoble, Headteacher	Aylesbury High School
Mark Sturgeon, Headmaster	Aylesbury Grammar School
Gavi Gibson, Principal	Aylesbury Vale Academy
Sarah Valentine, Principal	Buckinghamshire UTC
Jeanette Cochrane, Headteacher	Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School
Adam Palmer, Exec Headteacher	St Michael's Catholic School
Vince Murray, Headteacher	The Grange School
Matthew Larminie, Headteacher	The Mandeville School