

# How did they do it?

## (Exam achievement analysis)

In our previous report we highlighted our GCSE achievement for 2014. We are continually asked how we managed to secure such phenomenal results bearing in mind the circumstances the students are in at the time of referral. Many of our students started with little or no preparation for GCSE's and no clear direction for life after secondary education. Many of our students have additional barriers to learning due to their personal circumstances.

As our results show 81% of students increased at least 1 whole GCSE grade level in GCSE Maths, English and Science between the initial assessment and the exam (9 month period). All of our students received confirmation of their post 16 destination (College/apprenticeship) Blue River is committed to finding solutions to our students personal obstacles to ensure they do not dictate their future life chances. Below we would like to share with you how we did it.

### What they say...

#### Distanced Travelled

**Our students come from various backgrounds and circumstances. Blue River develops an environment which increases their confidence and motivation to succeed against all the odds. This is why many of our students progress rapidly in such a short time.**

A.T improved massively since joining Blue River Academy. She has lived in the UK for 1 year and 2 months. When she started she knew very little English - her initial grade was a U however with the help and support from her teachers A.T achieved 5 A\*- C grades including a pass English! On results day A.T said "I am very happy with my grades".  
- Student A.T

With three months to go before exams, Blue River courageously made a decision to provide S.K with the challenge of GCSE's. Blue River backed up his belief in himself and work began (additional evening lessons as well as day time) with S.K to catch up the 75% of the year he had been away for.  
- Teacher

Towards the end of the academic year S.K was selected as a student council leader following his big character change and his truthfulness. Rather than a trouble maker, he had become a role model for other students. S.K was achieving the impossible and staff were overjoyed to see the

dedication and commitment he was showing for his education.  
- Teacher

S.K has improved in becoming educationally motivated, [particularly with regards] to good attendance and achieving results far beyond expectation.  
- Fred Cooper (Hunter's Hill School)

I managed to complete the two year GCSE syllabus in less than six months. At the end of all of it, I was rewarded for my efforts which was great and made me feel proud of myself but none of this could have been achieved without Blue River and my teachers supporting me all the way.  
- Student M.P

"My son has improved massively since he first came to Blue River. He now listens to all the advice given to him and takes it on board..."  
- Parent

"I think Blue River is a source of great motivation and support for those who might need it at a crucial stage in their lives".  
- Teacher

"The best thing about Blue River Academy is its willingness to make ideas a reality, support their staff's development and push each student to realise their potential".  
- Teacher

**In March 2014 a professional consultant was tasked with assessing our students to identify which students were capable of sitting the higher English paper. The consultant provided a targeted action plan for each individual to reach their expected grade.**

"Being given the opportunity to do higher English is a blessing from Blue River, because if I work hard I can achieve a better grade."  
- Student W.A

Blue River has changed my life for the better – when I came to the UK from Holland no school wanted me because they couldn't teach me English in one year. I applied for Blue River and they managed to change me – in one year I was able to do all my favourite GCSE's and higher, also I am planning to do six A-levels next year which is amazing.  
- Student

The subject I enjoyed studying the most is Maths because before I didn't understand much but now with my teachers explaining [things] to me by their excellent teaching methods, Maths has become my favourite subject to learn here.

- Student A.T

My time here has changed me, my English and Science has improved massively whilst being here.

- Student I.Z

### **Positive Destinations**

**Many of our students were supported to identify and work towards their chosen career aspirations this includes: acceptance onto A Levels courses/ apprenticeships.**

Have your future plans changed since joining Blue River?

Yes, next year I am doing A-levels because my predicted grades are much higher than before.

-Student I.D

When I started Blue River I didn't know what I wanted to do in the future – but now, following the advice of teachers I have managed to find out what I really enjoy and what I really want to do with my life.

- Student

H.I ended up sitting Higher Tier GCSE examinations for Maths and Science and has been accepted by Solihull College on an Aeronautical Engineering Diploma course.

- Teacher

“With the help of my teachers I got an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering”.

- Student A.A

*See attached Blue River positive destinations table.*

### **Smaller Classes**

**Blue River prides itself on being able to offer a much higher student to teacher ratio than in mainstream schools. This enables students to receive more of a tailored service.**

The biggest difference between Blue River and previous schools is that Blue River is smaller than mainstream schools and because of that they give you more attention here which I didn't get in my previous schools. Blue River Academy is a good and exciting place to be in.

- Student H.H

### **Positive Encouragement**

**Blue River understands the importance of a child-centred approach and strives to provide encouragement and support to meet each pupils' individual needs.**

Before joining Blue River Academy he had no direction no vision of what he wanted to do. His self-esteem was low and he was frustrated too as he had no school place by October 2013. He had lost hope in education all together. The teachers and staff at Blue River I found to be professional at what they do. “I was impressed by the comments teacher made at Parents Day when they told my son “You are intelligent, you can do it”. Those words straight away boosted my sons's confidence and self-esteem. The Academy gives hope and encouragement to my son.

- Parent

### **Supplementary Support**

**We are committed to ensuring all of our students are able to over come their barriers to learning and achieve to their full potential. Due to the varying circumstances that our students encounter Blue River works to find solutions to rise above the obstacles. This is why we provide one-to-one classes before and after school, in half term and holiday periods. We also offer additional GCSE subjects such as Statistics, Additional Science, Functional Skills and languages such as Arabic, Urdu etc. This enables individual students to achieve their targets and prevent their personal circumstances from dictating their life choices.**

H.I also showed good ability in Science and he was naturally interested in engineering. He asked for staff to spend time with him after school searching and applying for apprenticeships.

What I like most is the good understanding between the teachers and parents. They constantly inform you of any changes and update you frequently which is essential to establishing a good relationship between parent and teacher.

- Student H.I

I had one-to-one teaching (after school and in the holidays) which is impossible to find elsewhere, also the timetable here is adjusted to suit the students here which is tremendous and benefits student's long term. Monthly progress interviews also help you to stay focussed and achieve your targets directing you towards your future.

- Student