



Wednesday 3rd September 2026

Dear Parent/Carers

A very warm welcome to a new academic year. I hope you have all enjoyed the summer break and are rested and ready for the term ahead. We are really looking forward to welcoming the students back to school, especially our new Year 7s and those joining the Sixth Form.

Exam Results

A huge congratulations to all the students who took their exams in the summer. It was a bumper set of results and a real pleasure to see so many happy faces on results day.

The Sixth Form continued a strong set of results with over 80% of grades being A* - C. The vast majority who applied to university got their places, as with last year. The vast majority of our students were placed in their first-choice universities. Of those going on to Higher Education, 42% are heading to Russell Group and Times Top 20 universities, including Oxford. There are a growing number of students achieving highly competitive places for degree-level apprenticeships, including the RAF, BMW and Policing. Well done to everyone.

GCSE was a record-breaking year. We have equalled or exceeded the headline measures from last year. Almost 70% of all grades were grade 5 or above, with nearly 30% being grade 7 or above. Perhaps most pleasing is that our provisional progress grade is coming out at +0.6; this means that, on average, the students achieve over half a grade higher than peers with similar ability on entry. Whilst it is only provisional, it would exceed our previous high point of +0.49. Of course, the attainment statistics are great, but progress accounts for every single student, and it is just as important to celebrate those striving for grade 2s as it is for the grade 7+. Here is a summary of the provisional data. It is worth noting that our cohort relative to the national data is considered to be 'average'; it shows just how well the students performed. Again, a huge congratulations to all of them.

Headline Measures	Edgbarrow 2025-2026 Results	National Data 2024-2025
Attainment 8 (Total points score from best 8 qualifications)	54.37	45.9
Progress 8 (Provisional based on internal data)	0.67	n/a
% English & Maths 4+	84%	64.5%
% English & Maths 5+	63%	45.2%

It is also the first year we have completed early entry GCSE in Philosophy, Ethics and Religion (PER) for our Year 10s. They did amazingly well with 79% of grades at 4+ and 61% at 5+, and this included 18 students who achieved a grade 9! We made the decision to do this in Year 10 to help students prepare for Year 11 by giving them some practical experience of how to revise, exam conditions, and exam technique, alongside giving them a broader understanding of the wider world. These outcomes far exceeded expectations, and I hope it was a valuable and confidence-building experience for them.

School Development Plans

Each year I try to provide an overview of the development work the school is undertaking. There's too much for this letter, but I do want to share the bits that will be most visible to students.

Firstly, we are revitalising our approach to teaching and learning. Students will be introduced to our Edgbarrow Essentials, a guide to what they should expect in lessons. This will include more consistent approaches to questioning, modelling of material, feedback, improving oral responses, expectation of book work, along with our traditional positive learning routines. This is based on the latest research and how we can best support students to retain learning.

Secondly, we are refocusing on inclusion. This includes what should be considered as 'ordinarily available provision', i.e., how we adapt teaching and learning to support students' needs. More training will be provided for staff on how this can be done when you have a class of 30.

Finally, we are reviewing the changes to assessment from last year, tweaking and refining to make sure that the assessments are useful and prepare students for the future.

We have some non-teaching plans around attendance, enrichment, careers and sustainability (new solar panels are in place). Lots of these are as a result of student feedback. We hold lots of surveys throughout the year, and I meet with students from every year group for workshops. I enjoy their honest feedback, and I hope they see the adjustments as a result – from new shelters, toilet refurbishment, uniform adjustments, outdoor furniture – we are able to make positive changes by listening.

School Leadership

I wrote to you last year to advise of some changes. Because of my dual role at Edgbarrow and the Corvus Learning Trust, we have increased our leadership capacity at the school. I thought it would be helpful to give some headline responsibilities to you so you know who to contact. I will be retaining responsibility for the strategic direction of the school, school finance and managing the leadership team. Other responsibilities:

- Mr Burges – Co-Head of School – Key Stage 4 and all areas of Inclusion.
- Mrs Gascoigne – Co-Head of School – Key Stage 3, Curriculum and Staffing.
- Mrs Petri – Deputy Head – Teaching and Learning and Staff Development.
- Mrs Rea-Palmer – Assistant Headteacher - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pastoral Lead.
- Mrs Hume – Assistant Headteacher – Head of Sixth Form.
- Mr Andrews – Assistant Headteacher – Assessment and Feedback, Enrichment and Wellbeing.
- Mrs Hutchinson – Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion and Intervention.
- Mrs Patel – SENDCO.

Attendance

Attendance is hugely important from day 1. Of course, we understand that there are genuine absences, but maintaining good attendance has a significantly positive impact on outcomes. In last year's results, 72% of those with an attendance of over 95% achieved grade 5s or above, compared to 53% of those with an attendance below 95%. Missing lessons often lead to gaps in skills and knowledge that can be hard to recover. Please do support your child in taking advantage of school and keep attendance as high as possible. To support this, we are deploying a new programme called 'Study Bugs'. This system will send you automatic notifications about attendance, both when we want to celebrate and when there may be concerns.

OFSTED

It is nearly 4 years since our last inspection, and under new guidance we are likely to be visited either this term or next. As I have previously explained, there is no overall grade given; grades are given in several different areas with a completely new scale. The 'expected' standard has been significantly upgraded and is rightly more robust. We are working hard to ensure we meet the relevant criteria to meet the expected standard in all areas and hope that we will also be able to exceed this in several areas of strength. When the time comes, we are grateful for your support in providing inspectors with feedback; this significantly influences their judgements.

Polite Reminders and Updates

Uniform – over the past few years we have made changes to footwear, summer uniform, PE kit and jewellery. We do this based on feedback and to make the students as comfortable as possible whilst also keeping uniform smart, consistent and affordable. During the course of the year, we will again review the policy and invite community feedback. For the start of term, we expect full school uniform to be worn smartly and appropriately. In the event of a return to high temperatures, we will make the appropriate adjustments.

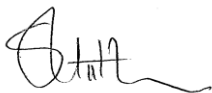
Mobile Phones – a reminder that there is a very clear policy on this. Mobile phones are not permitted to be seen, heard or used once the students are on site. Students caught with devices will have them confiscated with an appropriate sanction. Students were absolutely brilliant at abiding by these rules last term, and I am sure we will continue this trend this term.

Pick-up and Drop-off – Please remember you should not be entering the school site in a vehicle. With 1,500 students, it adds to the level of risk, and we simply do not have the capacity. Please encourage students to walk or cycle. If you absolutely have to use a vehicle, please drop off well away from the school entrance and be considerate of our neighbours. Alternatively, we do permit cars on site after 3.30pm once the majority of students have left – delaying pick-up by 10 minutes keeps the students safe and avoids congestion.

Non-Negotiables – these are being rebranded as **Edgbarrow Expectations**, a more positive tone, but the principles remain the same. Students should be on time, enter classrooms in silence for the lesson starter, be properly equipped and make sure their exercise books show pride in their work. No one wants sanctions, including teachers (!). It's a great skill to be organised and engaged, and it absolutely supports the students to get the most from their learning.

Finally, a very warm welcome back. Running a school is a community effort; I am hugely grateful for your help and support. Look forward to a great year ahead.

My very best wishes for the term ahead.



Mr S. Matthews
Headteacher