

CASE STUDY

Giving students the confidence to succeed

Plympton Academy finds that many students, especially at GCSE age, struggle with the pressure of courses, where the grade rests on a final examination. They were seeing students who had the ability and knowledge to succeed, but were suffering with stress and anxiety, meaning that they couldn't succeed on the day.



Centre name:
Plympton Academy



Number of students:
850



Region:
Plymouth



School type:
Academy



Area type:
City, suburb



Ofsted rating:
Good

With BTEC qualifications, students are assessed through regular assignments. As a result, they know what level they're achieving throughout the qualification, and have the chance to demonstrate what they know - and put it into practice. This gives them confidence in their ability, and the motivation and ambition to push themselves to do better.

One Sixth Form student had struggled with his GCSE exams and was uncertain about his future. During his BTEC, he undertook work experience at a local Primary School, and was offered a position there as a Teaching Assistant following his studies.

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With BTEC you're doing the work that counts from the beginning. It leads to an instant maturity.

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Martin Tinkler,

Head of Hospitality at Plympton Academy



With BTEC, students who struggle with purely exam-based qualifications **have a different way to prove their ability.**

As well as supporting motivation and achievement BTEC qualifications also help students develop transferable skills, such as:

- **independent learning** and the chance to develop individual interests during research tasks
- **confidence and leadership skills**, for example, with the BTEC Sport at KS4, students are asked to create and run lessons for younger students in the school
- **employability skills** and knowledge of the workplace.

Plympton Academy allows students to take control of their education and their future by giving them the chance to **prove their academic ability and to develop valuable skills** for further education and a future career.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

NAME: EDWARD*

BTEC(s) studied: BTEC First Award in Sport

Edward is a KS4 student who really struggled with his GCSEs and the pressure of a final exam. When his mum came to parents evening at the school, she kept hearing the same story- that Edward was unlikely to achieve in his GCSEs. However, when she went to talk to his Sport teacher, she heard a different story. In his BTEC First Award in Sport, he's achieving a Distinction, and is likely to finish the qualification on a Distinction* because he's able to learn in a practical way that supports his

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I learnt how to structure my writing, helping my GCSE English go from a grade D to an A.*

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individual learning style. She was delighted and reassured to hear that Edward was succeeding in Sport and would have a positive experience to take into his next step after leaving school.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

NAME: MILLIE*

BTEC(s) studied: BTEC First Award in Sport

“I'm currently taking the BTEC First Award in Sport alongside my GCSEs. It's helped me to improve my communication skills and confidence, due to the practical nature of the lessons which means working closely with my peers. I've also been able to lead classes for younger students. I'm now involved with the Leadership Academy at the school, something I would never have known about or applied for if it wasn't for the skills my BTEC has given me.

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The biggest thing I gained from my BTEC is confidence.

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The BTEC also supports my achievement in my GCSEs. It's really helped me understand how to structure my writing, which has improved my GCSE English a lot, and **I've gone from achieving a D grade to an A***, which is really surprising - I wouldn't have thought other subjects actually help this much.

After school, I want to become a physiotherapist. My BTEC has given me the understanding of sport in real-life, and the roles and pathways open to me, that I need to progress in the industry.”

**Name changed for confidentiality*