



**ABOVE:** Head Teacher Simon Wilson with some of his students from Smithdon High School in Hunstanton – which recently underwent a major refurbishment and continues to break records for academic achievement with stunning results in 2018

# A world-class education on your doorstep...

It's been another amazing year for West Norfolk Academies Trust with its schools recording hugely-impressive results – and its local students embarking on the next stage on their journey

**T**he notion that you can receive a world-class education without leaving King's Lynn is a rather bold claim, but it's one that the West Norfolk Academies Trust can confidently make with a considerable degree of accuracy.

A local academies trust founded just over five years ago, the West Norfolk Academies Trust works with primary and secondary schools in West Norfolk and has enjoyed sustained success from virtually day one.

"Our aim from the very beginning was always to challenge and support a group

of local schools to provide a truly excellent education for the young people of West Norfolk," says the trust's Executive Head Teacher Andy Johnson. "Every school maintains its unique identity and ethos, but through shared resources we've been able to maximise the benefits to every individual student."

Today, the West Norfolk Academies Trust represents 11 local schools comprising over 5,000 students in total; around 1,150 in primary education, some 3,251 secondary pupils and more than 400 6th Form students – and its achievements have been recognised at both a local and national level.

It's hardly surprising. Take Smithdon High School in Hunstanton, for example, which joined the trust in February 2016. It recently underwent a major refurbishment project which included everything from new carpets to the graphic display of key points and quotations from students' GCSE texts, and its new look has been echoed by a new sense of optimism.

"This is very much the start of something, not the end," says Smithdon's Head Teacher Simon Wilson. "The students are so on point and the whole place feels completely different."

The school is in a rather celebratory

We're determined that each school within the Trust retains its own identity and unique local character...

**ANDY JOHNSON**

Executive Head Teacher  
West Norfolk Academies Trust

mood as well. This year, students achieved a record number of Level 4 passes and above in English and Maths – no less than 67% of students achieved this standard, beating the school's previous record of 65% which had been set the previous year. There was even more good news at Smithdon with significant increases in the number of students achieving passes at Level 5, Level 7, and Level 9.

"Obviously, we're absolutely thrilled with the continual improvements at the school," says the trust's Chair of Governors Rob Lodge. "These things don't happen by accident, and impressive results such as these are only possible through the inspirational dedication of the staff and the hard work of the students themselves."

The school's top students included Lauren Taylor and Matthew Garrard, who've known each other since they were four and joined Smithdon from primary school. Between them, they achieved four grade 9s, six grade 8s, and six grade 7s – but the top attaining student was Shannon Tucker, who achieved grade 9s in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, grade 8s in English Literature, Maths, PE and RE, and a grade 7 in English Language.

"Shannon may have achieved exceptional results, but she's not atypical of the students we have at Smithdon," says Claire Pike, Shannon's form tutor since she started in Year 7. "She's a very good example of our core values of strength, integrity and excellence."

Progression is another of the trust's strengths, as these students are now going onto Springwood High School 6th Form, where they're looking forward to more success – as can be clearly seen in this year's results.

At Springwood, 6th Form, outstanding results saw 73% of students achieving grades A\* to C, 48% achieving grades A\* to B, and 21% achieving A\* or A.

The future for these outstanding



students looks exceptionally bright. Florence Chung (who gained four A\* grades in her chosen subjects) will now be studying economics at the world renowned University of Hong Kong.

Other students are studying medicine at Oxford, UEA, King's College and Hull; modern foreign languages at Durham; genetics at York; and a host of others, including a student who chose

Nottingham over Cambridge to start her studies to become a vet. Abigail Peters, on the other hand, has started her university studies at Ivy League Columbia University in New York, where she plans to study philosophy and human rights in the third most selective college in the whole of the United States.

"This has been a phenomenal year for Springwood 6th Form," says Head of Year 13 Jess Cuss. "They've worked incredibly hard and have seen the fruits of their labours – which are fully deserved."

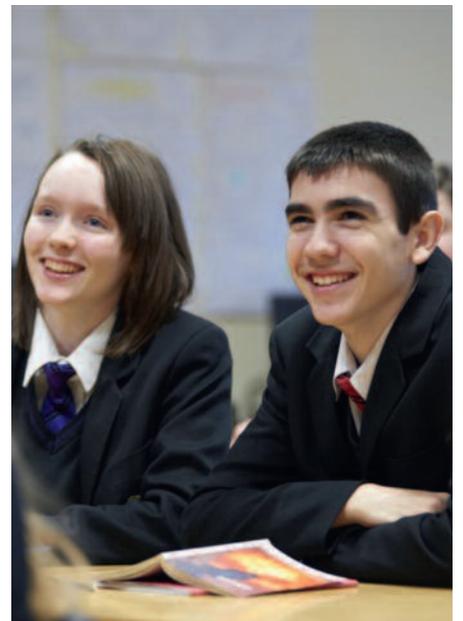
These exceptional standards have also been recognised officially. In May this year, Marshland High School joined with St Clements, Springwood and Smithdon by achieving a 'Good' Ofsted report, which highlighted the "strong subject knowledge of the teachers and the high levels of challenge they provide, which are represented in student outcomes."

It's not just academic excellence which is world-class, but the West Norfolk Academies Trust is also looking to develop the whole student – with a variety of cultural and enrichment activities to promote high challenge and



**World class destinations for Springwood 6th Form students:**

- The University of Hong Kong
- University of Columbia, New York
- Oxford University
- University of Nottingham
- King's College, London
- York University
- Durham University
- University of Warwick



encourage the students' success. For example, the trust's students are involved in a national Magistrates Competition – which has developed into the international Barrister's Competition and produced another set of world-class results. For the last two years, a team from Springwood 6th Form has gone to New York for the finals, where they came 4th and 3rd the next – never before has a British school got inside the top 10. It's an incredible achievement.

That extracurricular enrichment extends to the fields of music, the arts (such as the Visually Connected showcase of student art in St Nicholas Chapel) to drama – with all Year 11 students experiencing a professional performance of *Macbeth* to support them with their GCSEs.

It also has an international dimension, with the trust participating in the EU's Erasmus exchange programme – with local students travelling to Berlin and WWI battlefields, France and Spain.

This year, the trust will be celebrating the centenary of WWI with a Poetry Festival and will be strengthening links with primary schools in their transition to Key Stage 3 – all primary school students will be able to enjoy a production of *A Midsummer's Night Dream* in the secondary schools.

There's no great secret here, and there's no magic ingredient – the success of the West Norfolk Academies Trust can be put down to a group of talented educationalists working together in a true partnership towards clearly-defined goals.

It means ensuring every school within the Trust continually improves, and that teachers and all staff – from teachers and Pastoral Support Officers to administrative staff and cleaners – are all developed, challenged and supported to succeed in their respective roles. There's little doubt that the future of the West Norfolk Academies Trust is going to be a successful one – not just for the growing

numbers of schools within it but for the students passing through them.

**"Our students have a world of opportunities to open up greater life chances and options for their future,"** says Chairman of the Trust Roger Livesey.

And having just embarked on a new school year, the trust's Executive Head Teacher is already looking forward to that future.

**"The outlook for the trust couldn't look more promising,"** says Andy Johnson, **"or for all the students who journey through these schools and realise their full potential."**

The students of the West Norfolk Academies Trust are certainly putting King's Lynn on the global stage – thanks to their determined efforts, hard work, and a genuinely world-class education.

For more information and details on the work of the West Norfolk Academies Trust, please visit the website at [www.westnorfolkacademiestrust.co.uk](http://www.westnorfolkacademiestrust.co.uk)

