

# Retaining and recruiting Sixth Form students

Centre name:  Milton Abbey

Number of students:  250

Region:  Blandford Forum, Dorset

School type:  Independent

Area type:  Rural

In 2017 the number of pupils in the Sixth Form at Milton Abbey grew by one third, with the vast majority of these new pupils having joined the school in order to take a BTEC Level 3 National qualification, either as part of their overall KS5 portfolio, or as a full-time course.

Milton Abbey School aims to provide ‘a bespoke education’ for each pupil, aiming to tailor learning to an individual’s skills and aspirations, helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes. They offer BTECs at both KS4 and KS5 to support this, delivering a broad curriculum which allows students to choose a subject and a learning style that suits them, develops their interests, and supports their future ambitions.

Students tend to progress to university from Milton Abbey, studying a wide variety of degrees, such as Music and Technology at the University of Liverpool and Environmental Conservation at the Royal Agricultural University. They find that students who have taken a BTEC are going onto technical or applied courses at university and are a step ahead in terms of practical skills and knowledge. In 2017 for instance, four leavers went on to study Computer Games Design degrees at Staffordshire University, a growth industry in the UK due to the need for new skills and innovation in this area. Having completed their BTEC National in Creative Digital Media Production they had the combination of knowledge and practical software skills required to follow this path.

*“ We’re finding that the pupils who take BTEC courses are arriving at university more prepared to deal with their degree. ”*

Josh Bradbury, Head of Sixth Form at Milton Abbey

## Student spotlight

Name: *Annie Hume-Kendall*

**BTEC(s) studied:** BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Hospitality

I studied GCSEs at a different school, but found the exam process incredibly stressful and didn’t achieve the grades I expected to. My parents and I decided I should move schools to Milton Abbey to study a BTEC National Extended Diploma in Hospitality, and it was definitely the right decision.

Now I can see my progress in the course as I’m going along, instead of waiting for one exam at the end. I’m hoping to go on to work in Events Management, and my BTEC National is giving me the skills and knowledge I need to do that.



## Student spotlight

Name: *Jessica Madge*

**BTEC(s) studied:** BTEC First Award in Countryside and Environment, BTEC National Extended Diploma in Countryside Management

I come from a family of farmers, and I knew I wanted to go into the countryside management industry too. To help with this, I studied a BTEC First in Countryside and Environment alongside my GCSEs. I really enjoyed the practical, hands-on nature of the course, and because of this I also achieved a much better grade than in my GCSEs, so I chose to take a BTEC National Extended Diploma in Countryside Management instead of A Levels.

The BTEC has massively improved my confidence and self-belief, as well as helping me develop leadership skills for my future.

“My BTEC grades were much better than my GCSEs, and I really enjoyed the practical hands-on nature of the course.”

*“ We’re seeing lots of pupils join us in Year 12 because they’ve done their GCSEs and at the school they’re at they don’t see an A Level path that suits them. ”*

Magnus Bashaarat, Headmaster of Milton Abbey



### Example destinations of BTEC students (2017 results)

- Computer Games Design at Staffordshire University
- Sports Science at the University of Birmingham
- Music and Technology at the University of Liverpool
- Environmental Conservation at the Royal Agricultural University