

Autumn Term 2026

Values in Action Winner Be Inclusive



Aya Youcat-Guendi
receiving her award from
Jon Peck

Aya Youcat-Guendi
Head of Modern Foreign Languages
Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge

**“I come to work
wanting to be
that champion.”**

How does it feel to be a Values in Action winner?

“This recognition made me proud. I always try my best to treat people the way I would like to be treated. Should I say that this comes from a strong belief that wanting the best for yourself can only come when you demonstrate it to others. Professionally, this recognition encourages me in my daily work and interactions with my colleagues.”

What motivates and inspires you in your day-to-day work?

“I start each day by making sure I am in a positive frame of mind. I pray and spend 10–30 minutes exercising, which helps prepare me for whatever the day brings. What motivates me is the sense of achievement I gain each day, no matter how small. I come to work with a smile, greeting my colleagues and my students. I am inspired by Rita Pierson’s words, ‘Every child needs a champion.’ I come to work wanting to be that champion and encourage my colleagues to be champions for our students too. It is not always easy. There are challenges, and student behaviour can sometimes be discouraging, but I keep going. The small wins grow over time, and that is what keeps me motivated.”

What does being part of a values-led organisation mean to you?

“Being seen. I believe that it is important to be valued for the work we do. Teaching is a challenging work but also rewarding, specially we your achievements are recognised.”

What advice would you give to others about living our values?

“Be yourself, learn to know your colleagues and more closely those whom you work with on a daily basis. Give them space to shine by listening them, delegating and trusting them. Value them and praise them.”

Any final thoughts or messages?

“It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.” – Napoleon Hill