Catholic schools celebrate new A level success
New Hall students celebrate record average results per student of AAB

Photo: New Hall

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Catholic schools in both the state and private sectors recorded another exceptional set of A level results yesterday, ... students achieving top grades and securing places at universities such as Oxford and Cambridge to continue their studies.

In a separate development, there was a significant drop of 22.8 per cent in the number of young people taking Religious Studies at A level in England and Wales.

The Oxbridge tradition continued at New Hall with the Head Girl & Deputy Head Girl among those getting the results they needed to take up their offers and a record ... The highest number ever of pupils also secured competitive apprenticeship places, including with top London firms.

Principal, Katherine Jeffrey, said: “We are extremely proud of all our students today. Their hard work and persistence ... to read Biochemistry, History and Mathematics. This brings the number of New Hallians currently at Oxbridge to 18.”

Constance Day, Head Girl, scholar and boarder, achieved A*A*A, plus an A* in the Extended Project (EPQ) and will read Chemistry, Music and French. The Head Master, Joseph Smith, said: “We are delighted with these results, which show another significant increase in the number of young people achieving top grades at A level.”

Constance Day, pictured above with Deputy Head Girl, Elizabeth Skells, told The Tablet that her success was due to a schedule of hard work throughout the sixth form in her three A levels of history, English literature and theology. Her Catholic faith also helped. “The nature of New Hall inevitably means that faith played a significant role,” she said. “Anyone who goes through A levels understands there are low points. In that way, faith was always there as a comfort.’

Four in ten of the Oratory School pupils achieved A*-A, showing gains on last year’s results. High achievers included Harry Davies and Sai Muvvala who met and exceeded their offers for Medicine at Sheffield and Cambridge, respectively. The Head Master, Joseph Smith, said: “We are delighted with these results, which show another significant increase in the number of young people achieving top grades at A level.”

Particularly outstanding once again were the results for Art & Design with 8 A*s and 1 A and Photography with 3 A*s and 2 A*s. History and Economics where over 80% of pupils achieved A*-B grades and Maths in which over 70% of grades were at A*-B.

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St Thomas More Catholic School pupils in north London achieved their best ever A level results. Martin Tissot, Executive Headteacher said: “These results will propel the school into the top 5 per cent of college performers”. Initial estimates show a rise in the pass rate with half of the students achieving A*-B Grades (39 per cent last year).

Mark Rowland, Head of School, said that he was particularly pleased with the 99 per cent pass rate at A Level: “This is particularly impressive as A Levels this time around were the new, tougher, revamped linear qualifications.”

Dean Saunders, Head of Sixth Form, paid testimony to the hard work of both teachers and students and said that the... rate at 93 per cent of Year 13 was at an all-time high with 16 per cent of these going to Russell Group Universities.

Top performers this year were: Mary Habtes A - Biology, A - Mathematics, A - Geography Dimitrios Mylonas A - Mathematics, A - Economics, A - Business Studies, B - Maths Adrian Raymond** A* - Maths, B - Further Maths, B - Physics **

Mr Rowland said that Adrian’s achievement was particularly laudable as he came from a school in the borough that was... one of his core Mathematics papers, Adrian was in the top few percent of the country securing full (100 per cent) marks.

A Level students at Ratcliffe College gained an overall pass rate of 99 per cent, with 87 per cent of all grades C or better and 40 per cent of grades A or A*. These subjects, which are coveted courses at Russell Group and Oxbridge universities, with 10 per cent attending Durham University this year.

Headmaster Jonathan Reddin said: “Our Year 13 students have been exemplary in every way. Throughout their Ratcliffe... at the time of writing, the overwhelming majority of applicants have secured places at their first choice university.”

Matthew Ward, who joined Ratcliffe College Nursery, was both relieved and delighted with 3 A*s which takes him to Durham University to read Geography. He said: “I will be joining my brother, who started there last year to read Law”.
At St George's Weybridge more than 50 per cent of all papers were awarded an A* or A grade – a figure that increases to 83 per cent awarded A* to B grades. “This Upper Sixth year were among the best students I've ever had the privilege to look after,” said Mandy Smith, who is retiring from her role of Head of Sixth Form. “They truly deserve their excellent results.”

Francesca May, Deputy Head Academic, said: “Ellie and Demi, Head Girl and Head Boy, easily matched their potential. Ellie ... He will be joined by Ethan, reading Computer Science, and Alex and Harry, both of whom will be reading Natural Sciences.”

Headmistress Rachel Owens, said: “In line with the 'perfectly balanced' heart of the school, the range of subjects ... excellent results are a tribute to both our exceptional students and our dedicated – and equally exceptional – teachers.”

All three students who applied to read medicine have had their places confirmed, while six more are off to top art ... reading Japanese studies. At the same time, all nine Lower Sixth students taking the A Level a year early achieved an A*.

At Our Lady’s High School Hackney, Jenna Colaco, who achieved the results she needed to secure her place at Oxford, said: “My seven years at Our Lady’s has ... and English.” Here grades were AAA in Classical Civilisation, English Literature and History, and A* in extended project.

Other successes were Diana Sufaj, A*BC in English Literature, Fine Art and History; Mandy Tan, A*A*A in Biology, ... English Literature, Geography and Politics, and A* for her extended project in “How Disney changed the Grimm fairy tale.” She will be studying English at York University and wants to go into either publishing or journalism; Angela Takyi, ... be studying Law at Brunel; Marie Tighe, A*A for English Literature and Fine Art and a merit in Health and Social Care.

It was also another successful year for Ampleforth with almost three quarters of our students achieving A*-B grades across the board.

Alice Shen (A) was amongst one of our highest achieving students with three A*s, one A and a B in Maths, Further Maths, ... at Edinburgh University, also excelled with three A*s and an A each and Serene Yik (B) was awarded four straight As.

Joshua said: “I am planning on becoming a lawyer, and it is very hard to describe the feeling I had when I got the offer, but the least I can say is that I was delighted. All my teachers dedicated much of their time to ensure that we all had the best preparation and chances to get an offer. I would have not made it without their precious help.”

Other Oxbridge successes include Bridget Stuart (B), who achieved three A*s plus an A and who has secured a place at St John’s College, Oxford, for Experimental Psychology and Chiara Wittmann who has secured her place to read to read Theology at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Julian Boecker (H), who was awarded two A*s and two As, will be heading to Imperial College to study Medicine.

Julian said: “Ampleforth has been a very valuable experience that I will always look back on with joy. I was immediately welcomed when I joined in Year 10, in spite of struggling to speak a sentence of English. It taught me values that I adopted in my daily life and especially a great sense of integrity. I think that it also broadened my horizons, encouraging me to try out new things such as rugby or debating and sparked in me an interested in politics and philosophy through various societies.”

Organ Scholars, Christopher Too (J) and Benedict Turner-Berry (H), also did well – Christopher received straight As across the board and Benedict received two A*s, an A and a B. Both will head on to study music at University.

Twins Charlotte (M) and Patrick Morrison (C) were awarded identical grades with both achieving two A*s and an A.

Charlotte said: “My time at Ampleforth has definitely been the happiest five years of my life. Coming
from a state school in the middle of York, it was a massive change for me, but I’ve enjoyed the opportunities that Ampleforth has offered. The school has also helped me to excel academically, and as I was awarded an academic scholarship, I have always been pushed to my full potential. The academic staff are always happy to offer support whether I am struggling or want a challenge.”

Charlotte’s twin brother, Patrick, who will be studying Mathematics at St Andrews University, says: “My time at Ampleforth has been immensely valuable to me because the environment of the school has allowed me to develop in more than just my academics. I think that the kind of situations I have found myself in, have given me the capabilities to know how to behave and act in a variety of circumstances.”

Hannah Pomroy, Director of Studies at Ampleforth, said: “We are so proud of all our students and the results today are testament to their hard work and that of their teachers and tutors. We encourage all our students to develop a life-long love of learning and we wish them all every success as they embark on the next chapter of their academic lives.”

Pupils at Downside celebrated their A level results today with another good year and some outstanding performances.

Nine pupils achieved straight A*/As which represents 12 per cent of the cohort with great strength in the STEM subjects. Three pupils will go on to study medicine and one to read Earth Sciences at Oxford. One pupil was awarded a place to read Classics at Cambridge.

Ruth Gledhill - The Tablet