

Success continues in GCSEs at St Patrick's College, Ballymena!

Students in St Patrick's College, Ballymena are once again celebrating excellent GCSE results this year.

An amazing **fourteen** students have achieved TEN GCSE grades at A*-C, with three students achieving nine GCSE passes, while a further thirteen pupils have gained between six and eight passes, with a significant proportion of all these grades being top grades.

The school's highest achieving student is celebrating receiving eight A* and two A grades in her GCSE results. Another four students have been awarded at least five A* or A grades, while 33% of the College's Year 12 students have achieved at least one A grade!

Four Occupational Studies courses – Business and Services, Construction, Design and Creativity and Engineering and Engineering Services – are celebrating 100% performance at A*-C grades, as also is the Level 2 NVQ in Personal Health. Other subject areas with a 100% pass rate are OCN Religious Studies and BTEC Sport. In other subjects, 93% of ICT grades, 91% of grades in Travel and Tourism, 84% in English Literature, along with 79% of Performing Arts grades, 78% of Polish, 77% of Learning for Life & Work, 71% of Art & Design, 71% of History grades and 70% of GCSE Religious Studies grades were all achieved at A* to C.

St Patrick's Principal, Paul Fitzpatrick, congratulated all of the school's Year 12 students on their hard work and success. 'This has been another very demanding year for all of us in education, and these results are the culmination of a great deal of hard work on the parts of both students and teachers. I congratulate all of the students, as well as their teachers, who have worked hard to accurately reflect the ability, effort and success of the students. I would also like to thank the parents of the young people, for the encouragement and support they have provided to their children during the two years of their examinations. At an earlier stage in their education, these students were particularly affected by the pandemic, so it is very pleasing to have seen them make such good progress and fulfil their potential.

'We are proud of the successes of all of our GCSE pupils, who between them in Year 12 have achieved an incredible 19 A* grades, 43 A's, 82 B's, 72 C* and 97 C grades. These are excellent results from students who, in many cases, had enrolled in St Patrick's College five years ago with their confidence severely dented by a disrupted Transfer procedure, as well as by the loss of several months of each of their last two years of primary education owing to the pandemic at the start of this decade.

'I am sure their achievements will give our GCSE students the confidence and encouragement to go on to further success at A level.

'I want to recognise the achievement of our students across all courses, including a number of applied courses delivered in school, and also the Occupational Studies courses delivered in the Northern Regional College. The outcomes from all of these courses have been excellent.

'Overall, these results give us great confidence as a school as we continue to ensure that the students leaving St Patrick's do so with the highest qualifications they can possibly achieve.

'We made a decision a number of years ago to create a Grammar Stream at GCSE level, to give as many as possible of our students the greatest chance of success. Each year, two Form Classes take a programme of ten GCSEs, including Double Award Science and English Literature. We are very pleased that a majority of the students taking ten subjects have achieved at least seven GCSE grades at A*-C, and also that 95% of students taking ten subjects have achieved at least five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths.'

Mr Fitzpatrick also praised other successes within the Year 12 group, particularly eleven students who have completed the Prince's Trust course, gaining a Level Two qualification equivalent to two GCSEs at Grade B. Twelve students have successfully completed the OCN Religious Studies course, equivalent to GCSE Grade C. In addition, 27 Level 2 qualifications have been achieved in Occupational Studies, equivalent to GCSEs at A*-C.

'As a non-selective school, we celebrate success at all levels across the full range of ability. These are vocational courses, many of which our students access through the Northern Regional College, and they aim to broaden the educational experience of the young people, with a view to preparing them for further training or apprenticeships. I am delighted that these students have successfully embraced this opportunity, and I would like to thank the staff of the Northern Regional College for the partnership we enjoy, which is obviously benefiting our students.'

Results for last year's Year 11 students in the GCSE modules they took this Summer are also excellent, and are a very encouraging indicator of continuing success for next year's GCSE results. Mr Fitzpatrick congratulated these students on how well they have coped with the transition to Key Stage Four and wished them well as they progress to Year 12.

Mr Fitzpatrick and the staff of St Patrick's also wish all of the school's Year 12 students every success in the next stage of their education and look forward to welcoming most of them back to begin Sixth Form studies in St Patrick's, where they will continue to achieve great success.