

Exam results are best yet

Borough shows its biggest improvement

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CROYDON'S schools have shown the biggest improvement in their GCSE results since new benchmarks were introduced in 2006.

The number of students who achieved the Government's expected standard of five or more A*-Cs, including English and maths, has risen by more than six per cent and is now higher than the national average.

Although more than a third of pupils still leave school without five good GCSEs, the overall picture is one of marked improvement, with 61 per cent of students achieving the benchmark, compared to 54.4 per cent last year and 40.6 per cent in 2006.

Councillor Tim Pollard, cabinet member for children, young people and learners said: "I'm absolutely delighted.

"Virtually all our schools are clearly improving the standard of education on offer for Croydon's young people."

No schools in the borough fell below the Government's target of 35 per cent of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades, including English and maths and Croydon surpassed both the national average (58.9 per cent) and rate of improvement (5.4 per cent).

Addington High, in New Addington, came bottom of the league table, posting the exact minimum requirement.

Head teacher Tim Davies point-



"FRUITCAKE CONSISTENCY": Archbishop Tenison's head teacher Richard Parrish

ted to unexpectedly poor marks in an English creative writing paper as the cause of a three per cent drop in its passes overall.

The school, which is considering adopting some form of academy status, is now subject to a council improvement plan.

Following several years of impressive results, Archbishop Tenison's High School, in Selborne Road, was the only other school which failed to improve, with 69 per cent of pupils achieving five good GCSEs, eight per cent less than in 2010.

Head teacher Richard Parrish was philosophical about the results. He said: "We only have 100 pupils in each year group. If even a small number have particular difficulties then it can have a big effect. Also, our starting point was high and sometimes main-

taining those standards is harder than getting there in the first place.

"But in no way am I happy about it."

Mr Parrish then aimed a wry swipe at the performance tables.

"I think they are OK if taken in context," he said.

"Nearly half our pupils got at least 5 B grades, including English, and 66 per cent got a B or above in English.

"So the icing isn't there but the cake is incredibly solid. Yes, it's quite a difficult cake - it's more of a tough fruitcake than a light, airy sponge - but we're confident we'll improve next year."

Many other schools posted their best ever results, with Quest Academy up from 23 per cent at 41 per cent, though still only just over next year's minimum target of 40 per cent.

Virgo Fidelis was Croydon's most improved school, with the number of pupils reaching the required standard increasing from 54 per cent to 74 per cent. The school was in the top 2 per cent in the country for its maths results.

Head teacher Sister Bernadette said: "We're very proud of our performance in maths, but I think I'm most pleased with our overall results because to have improved so much is phenomenal.

Croydon also had success at A-level with the average point score per candidate at 712.7 from 693.3, in line with the rest of London but below the national average.

League table results:

Croydon's GCSE league table (percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades including English and maths)	
1. Whitgift School, South Croydon	100%
2. Trinity School, Shirley	98%
3. Croydon High School, South Croydon	97%
4. Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Croydon	97%
5. Royal Russell, Croydon	95%
6. Coloma Convent Girls' School	90%
7. Al-Kair School, East Croydon	88%
8. Shirley High School, Shirley	71%
9. Archbishop Tenison's High School	69%
10. Brit School, South Norwood	68%
11. St Andrew's High, Waddon	65%
12. Harris Academy Purley, South Croydon	61%
13. Oasis Academy Shirley Park	51%
14. St Mary's Catholic High School, West Croydon	51%
15. Edenham High, Shirley	49%
16. Oasis Academy Coulsdon, Coulsdon	49%
17. Archbishop Lanfranc, Croydon	43%
18. The Quest Academy, Croydon	41%
19. Cambridge Tutors College, Croydon	40%
20. Addington High School, New Addington	35%

Better off pupils more successful

NEWLY published league tables also reveal, for the first time, the significant gap between the borough's most disadvantaged pupils and their better-off classmates.

Figures show in some schools pupils in care or on free school meals are considerably less likely to gain five good passes at GCSE.

At Quest Academy, in South Croydon, only 33 per cent of pupils on free school meals or in care left school with five A*-C grades, including English and maths. This is compared to 45 per cent of pupils from more affluent backgrounds.

The dichotomy was most notable at Edenham High, in Shirley, with a 24 per cent gap between pupils of different backgrounds.

Small victory for cinema campaign

A DEMONSTRATION outside Croydon Town Hall on Monday urging the council to look again at the closure of the David Lean Cinema turned into a quiet celebration.

Adrian Winchester, chairman of the Save the David Lean campaign handed a 1,400-name petition to shadow cabinet member for culture and sport, Councillor Maggie Mansell.

The petition asked the council to investigate any constructive proposals for reviving the 68-seater cinema at the Clocktower in Katharine Street.

The petition was later formally presented to the full council meeting by Mrs Mansell.

The cinema was closed last year as part of the council's overall budget cutting exercise.

In the last few weeks, Coun-



CINEMA CAMPAIGN: Councillor Maggie Mansell received the petition from Adrian Winchester

cillor Sara Bashford, the cabinet member for culture and sport, has announced the council is prepared to look at working with a private sector or social enterprise to reopen facilities at the Clocktower, including the cinema.

Mr Winchester said after the meeting: "I am delighted with the

number of people who signed the petition.

"I think Monday was a low-key celebration for us.

"We asked the council to look at constructive proposals and they appear to be doing that. There does seem to have been a step forward."

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