G-whiz! Delight at exam results

Thurstable School and Colchester Academy see 20 per cent-plus rise in “good” pass mark

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THE majority of schools in North Essex saw an improvement in GCSE results.

Thurstable School and Colchester Academy were the biggest winners—with massive increases in the percentage of pupils getting at least five A* to C grades, including English and maths.

The turnaround is, in some part, linked to last year’s English exam fiasco, which saw lower than expected grades.

At Thurstable School in Tiptree, 74 per cent of students got five A* to C including maths and English. It was a huge improvement on last year’s 48 per cent.

Headteacher Miles Bacon said: “This is an excellent set of results, and I am delighted for our students, parents, staff and community.”

“Thurstable is a great school. I am proud to belong to it and we are going to go on getting better.”

Colchester Academy recorded a big increase with 58 per cent of pupils getting 5 A* to C grades, up from 37 per cent last year.

Principal Fiona Piergallini said: “This is a remarkable achievement. We are moving from strength to strength with significant momentum.”

St John’s School also saw a big improvement with 71 per cent of pupils getting A* to C grades—up 11 per cent on last year.

The Gilberd School in Colchester bettered its best results for a second year running with 88 per cent of students achieving five A* to C grades including English and maths, up from 56 per cent last year.

Headteacher Linda Exley said: “Seeing students achieve the grades they have worked so hard for is always a highlight of the year.”

Results were on the up at Philip Morant School where 68 per cent of pupils got 5 A* to C grades, including English and maths, up five per cent.

Honywood Community Science School in Coggeshall saw 60 per cent of pupils achieving five A* to C grades including English and maths—up six per cent on last year.

Colchester Royal Grammar School celebrated another successful year, with all of their 101 students achieving five A* to C grades including English and maths. Half of all grades were an A*. Top performers were James Hirst, from West Bergholt, and Tim Kwok from Langham, who both celebrated 14 A*s.

Colchester County High School for Girls celebrated the best results in its history, with one student achieving 12 A*s.

Out of all the grades achieved, 88 per cent were A or A* and 96.2 per cent were at A* to B. All students gained five A* to Cs, including maths and English.

Headteacher Gillian Marshall said: “This has been an amazing year with all 112 students achieving outstanding results in all subjects.”

Results were down at some schools.

The Colne Community School in Brightlingsea recorded 61 per cent of students achieving the benchmark, down from 69 per cent last year.

Principal Nardeep Sharma bemoaned the Government raising the bar, changes in education policy, reduction in school funding and the constant tinkering with examinations boundaries.

At St Helena School in Colchester, 40 per cent gained at least five C grades including in English and maths, down from 42 per cent last year.

That is below the target for attainment set by the Government.

At Thomas Lord Audley in Colchester, 35 per cent reached the benchmark, down from 38 per cent.

St Benedict’s College saw 61 per cent reach the benchmark, down by one per cent on 2014’s results.

Manningtree High School saw 64 per cent of students achieve five or more grades between A* and C, including English and maths, down four per cent year.

Headteacher Deborah Hollister, who was overseeing her last results day at the school, said: “To do this well in another year of exam result turbulence is testament to the hard work of students, teachers and parents.”

The number of pupils at East Bergholt High School who achieved five A* to C grades, including English and maths, was 54 per cent, down from 62 per cent last year.

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan said the new threshold for secondary schools will require 60 per cent of pupils to achieve five GCSEs, including English and maths.

Those failing below the targets, including some rated as good by Ofsted, will be labelled as “coasting”.

Schools falling into the category will be expected to produce a plan to improve and will be given assistance by “expert” headteachers. Those that do not improve will be turned into academies.

The relevant results at St Mary’s School and Colchester High School were not received.