

The happy, smiling faces of students and staff conveyed delight, amazement and relief as students celebrated their GCSE results. Proud as ever, Sue Marooney, Headteacher since 2003, was full of praise of the Durrington team. “Schools are working in a time of unprecedented change with the level of challenge increased in all subjects and a two tier grading system using 9-1 in English and mathematics and A\*-G in all other subjects. We needed more than ever for staff and students to reflect our school motto and to indeed ‘go beyond their best’. Although we have a long established track record of success it still requires immense commitment, hard work, rigour in all we do and a relentless focus on excellence from all, to continue improving. Great teaching underpinned by subject expertise from staff, a determination to persevere, sustained hard work from students and strong support from home mean that, together, there is no barrier we cannot overcome”.

A few students shared their stories: “It took me so long before I felt I was getting anywhere, but my teachers didn’t give up; she believed in me and eventually I started getting better marks.” Another said, “I really wanted top grades and was happy to work hard, but what really made the difference was that teachers knew when to encourage me to keep going independently. They call it the ‘good struggle’ and when I needed them, they came alongside me and helped.”

Below is a small reflection of high attaining students;

- Decs King achieved 7A\*s and three grade 9s
- Monte Wren achieved 6A\*s, three grade 9s and a B
- Carolyn Acevedo achieved 7A\*s, two grade 9s and a 7

The new English and mathematics examinations saw 76% and 77% of our students achieving a pass (4 is approximately a grade C) and 62% achieving a good pass (5 is approximately a grade B) in each subject area.

Alongside our consistent and sustained success across the board, we were delighted to have further increases in the number of students gaining the top grades, such as in chemistry where 50% of students achieved an A\*/A and 90% students A\*-C; 44% of students in geography gained an A\*/A and 84% A\*-C and art and design where 46% of student gained an A\*-A grade and 100% A\*-C grades. These are just a snapshot of the many successes this year. The government expected very few students nationally to attain grade 9s. At Durrington 29 students achieved this “gold standard” in one or more subjects.

Recently appointed as one of only 22 National Research Schools, this will further accelerate progress as Durrington enters the next exciting phase of its development.

*24 August 2017*