

THE ASHCOMBE SCHOOL

A LEVEL (and AS) EXAMINATION RESULTS 2009

The Ashcombe School's 2009 A-level results have maintained the very high standards set over the years. The Headteacher, David Blow, welcomed the results:

“Each year, we have seen extremely high results for a wide range of students, and we are delighted that this year's results have maintained last year's significant increase. The standard of teaching here is outstanding, and the students have responded with enormous commitment and hard work, whilst engaging in a wide range of extra-curricular and social activities.”

The average points score for candidates was 369 UCAS points (compared with 373 in '08, 357 in '07 and 347 in '06) and 931 QCA points (compared with 940 in '08, 910 in '07 and 902 in '06) and a 98% subject pass rate. A new points scheme (“QCA”) is in operation replacing the “UCAS” scheme (see end for details)

Over half of the subject grades were A or B. There were many outstanding individual results:

- **eleven** students gained **4 or 5 A grades** (*subjects with A grade listed in italics*) (Alice Hearn (*Maths, Further Maths, Economics, Geography, General Studies*), Laura McDonald (*English, French, History, Maths, General Studies*), Amy Black (*Maths, Physics, Sociology, General Studies*), Jessica Blincow (*Biology, Chemistry, Geography, General Studies*), Ali Bush (*Classical Civilisation, History, Politics, General Studies*), Luke Caldwell (*Chemistry, Maths, Physics, General Studies*), Zara Colville (*English, History, R.S., General Studies*), Alex Crumbie (*Economics, History, Music, General Studies*), Zena Moore (*Art, History, Music, General Studies*), Anastasia Orme (*Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Spanish*), Emily Watts (*Biology, Chemistry, Physics, General Studies*)).

Laura and Anastasia will be going to Cambridge to study History and Natural Sciences respectively, Amy to Exeter to study Maths, Jess to Bristol to study Biology, Luke and Alice to Oxford to study Physics and Geography respectively, Ali to King's London to study History, Zara to Durham to study Theology, Alex to Sussex to study International Relations & Philosophy, Zena to Edinburgh to study Architectural Design

- **eight** gained **3 A grades** (Hannah Brewer, Tim Halford, Victoria Legg, Daisy Maugouber, Verity Miles, David Millingen, Tim Thorp, Charlie Ward). David is going to Oxford to study German & Italian.

The Lower Sixth's AS results were also overall very pleasing with an average pass rate of 90%. **Ten** students gained **5** grade As (Emma Antonio, Louisa Barker, Naomi Bryer, Rebecca Cannon, Phoebe Hill, Rachel Lawrence, Jamie May, Emily Tolhurst, Mike Whetnall, James Yarde) and **seven** gained **4** grade As at AS: (Hannah Coughlin, Alex Eggs, Martin Hands-Clarke, Catherine Jolly, Molly Nyman, Amita Raval, Sarah Rose)

David Blow (Headteacher) said “As a comprehensive school we pride ourselves in offering opportunity as widely as possible by keeping restrictions on entry to A-level courses to a minimum. We possibly have the most open entry policy onto A-level courses of any comprehensive school in Surrey. As a result, a number of students who in most institutions would not have been allowed to begin A-level courses have gained commendable grades, thereby giving them access to university places. For example, we have 26 candidates whose average GCSE grade was C or below and 19 of them gained an average D grade or above. Making particularly outstanding progress were Philip Barden, Adam Davison, Chris Evans, Hugh Fitzgibbon and Tom Frost who all gained at least two B grades at A-level. Further, **all** students

in this all-ability comprehensive gained at least 2 grade Es (the normal requirement for pursuing a Higher Education course). What is particularly pleasing is that achievement across the spread of ability is outstandingly good.”

“One of the key reasons for our success has been a consistent focus on the interests of the students, developing a broad range of skills and responsibilities. An excellent pastoral team works with the students identifying concerns at an early stage and offering constructive guidance.”

In addition to the headline news there are a number of more technical points which may be of interest:

1. It is important to note (especially in the light of the annual ritual debate in the national news about standards rising/falling) that simple comparisons with previous years could be misleading. This was the eight year when upper sixth candidates had pursued the new ‘Curriculum 2000’ in which A-level has been split into a Lower Sixth AS course and an Upper Sixth A2 course with most students pursuing an additional subject course in the Lower Sixth compared with previous years. At the end of the Lower Sixth students were able to ‘drop’ one of their four AS subjects taking forward just three to A2 level. Previous generations of students did not have this opportunity which must, overall, have a positive effect upon results and in part may explain the apparent national rise in the level of performance since the changes.
2. We remain concerned that there remains a discrepancy between the standards required in different subjects (so that students of comparable ability will gain lower grades on average in certain subjects, especially maths, sciences and languages; it is unsurprising that students may wish to choose subjects where they are more likely to gain higher grades).
3. The Ashcombe School refuses to participate in national press analysis of A-level results because of the unsophisticated manner in which data is interpreted and the simplistic conclusions which are drawn. For example, in one newspaper last year, selective and comprehensive schools are listed together in the same table! Although not participating in national league tables The Ashcombe School analyses its results in accordance with criteria used by the national press (*described below) and is pleased to share information from such analysis with the local community. We are delighted that our results are very similar to those from last year, and that they are likely to place the school amongst the highest performing comprehensive schools in the county and country.

New points system - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

- A-level: A = 270 pts, B = 240 pts, C = 210 pts, D = 180 pts, E = 150 pts, U = 0 pts
- AS-level: A = 135 pts, B = 120 pts, C = 115 pts, D = 90 pts, E = 75 pts, U = 0pts
- Scores in subjects which students took at AS level are included

Previous points system Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS)

- A-level: A = 120 pts, B = 100 pts, C = 80 pts, D = 60 pts, E = 40 pts, U = 0 pts
- AS-level: A = 60 pts, B = 50 pts, C = 40 pts, D = 30 pts, E = 20 pts, U = 0pts
- Scores in subjects which students took at AS level are included