

GCSE pupils congratulated by Kirsty Williams

In the second year of reform of GCSEs in Wales, results also show an increase of 50% in the number of entries for Science – ensuring that a far greater number of young people have the higher level skills needed to drive Wales' future economy. This reflects a change in entry patterns in schools and a move away from significant entries for vocational science qualifications.

Individual sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) entries are up by over 10% and the number of pupils gaining A*-C in these sciences has also risen. A*-C outcomes remain stable with 9 in 10 achieving these results.

Visiting West Monmouth School in Pontypool, Kirsty Williams said:

“I want to congratulate pupils who are receiving their results today and to thank the teachers who worked so tirelessly to deliver these new qualifications.

“Today marks a culture change for Science in Wales. Entries are up by 50%, with more pupils gaining A*-C and more achieving the very top grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This shows the importance that both we and schools attach to this subject and I am confident that together we will continue to go from strength to strength, as we saw with last week's A Level results.”

Last year the Education Secretary announced measures to discourage schools from entering thousands of pupils too early unless they were ready. This is borne out by this year's results showing an overall decrease in the number of students entered before they have completed their full programme of study – otherwise known as early entry.

These pupils were entered early either last summer or in November and did not return to sit the exam again this summer. However, while numbers have fallen, early entry has still had a significant impact on some subjects.

Different and early entry patterns have had an effect on subjects such as English. As made clear by JCQ, the most accurate picture of attainment is 16 year olds irrespective of when they sat the exam, whether that's last summer, November or this summer. This shows an English Language A*-C rate of 63.3%.

“Today's results are, of course, only one part of a picture that will be pieced together in the autumn”, the Education Secretary continued.

“Early entry has had an impact on some of these results and that's why the final picture will change. You only have to look at

previous years where the autumn results have been several percentage points higher than the data published in the summer.”