

PRESS RELEASE
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Inspirational 2021 GCSE results for BHCET

Students were praised for their courage, resilience and fortitude throughout the pandemic as they collected exam results that will form the bedrock of their continued learning.



Students at Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust's schools – Carmel College, Darlington, St John's Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Bishop Auckland, The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Hartlepool, St Michael's Catholic Academy, Billingham and Our Lady & St Bede Catholic Academy, Stockton – enjoyed success after adapting their studies to lockdown, remote learning and year group bubbles.

Chief executive of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust Dame Maura Regan said: *"The disruption to students' education over the past two years has been unprecedented yet these young people have taken it all in their stride with a cheery fortitude that is a lesson to us all."*

Carmel College principal Mike Shorten said: *"We are all so proud of the students. It is always a privilege to be able to celebrate their success with their families. It has been a tough year and the students and staff have worked so hard, showed resilience and can now rest knowing it has all been worthwhile."*

St John's headteacher Lisa Byron agreed saying: *"We are incredibly proud of our students and their impressive results. It really reflects their commitment and determination to do well. Despite the*

difficult year, they have been resilient and dedicated to their studies, whether working at home or in school. We are delighted with their excellent efforts and we wish them every success and happiness as they begin their further education or training courses."

Headteacher of St Michael's Catholic Academy Helen Keough also paid tribute to students who she said had been "courageous" in the way they'd met the challenges of the pandemic.

"We are all so proud of the wonderful students — the pupils have been so courageous and the results they have received today are a testament to that courage," she said.

"They are testimony to their hard work and determination in overcoming the challenges of the lockdowns, the isolation and remote learning. They are a generation of students that have shown incredible resilience and strength of character and they thoroughly deserve the success they have achieved."

Some students had been concerned ahead of their GCSEs about missing out on exams at the end of Y10. But staff had worked with them to explain the process with exams still taking place in the school hall to prepare them for the future.

English Martyrs headteacher Stephen Hammond said: *"As we reflect upon their time with us, we are filled with immense pride. The strength, resilience and fortitude demonstrated by these young people is something to behold. Qualities such as these will take them far and we have no doubt that our students are moving on to bright futures."*

Our Lady & St Bede Catholic Academy head teacher Mo Wilkinson added: *"Whilst it has been an incredibly challenging year for all our pupils, they have done exceptionally well. They have been through a rigorous programme of assessments and examinations and have thoroughly earned their results. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of them."*

Dancer Emily Petty had reason to celebrate life yesterday after surviving the Manchester Arena bombing to go on to pass her GCSEs. The 16-year-old Carmel College student will now continue her studies at a dance college, the next step towards her Broadway dreams.

Emily had just started Carmel College in Year 7 when she travelled with her mum Joanne to the fateful Ariana Grande concert.

"We heard a loud bang and just thought it was a balloon but then people started to panic and we could see smoke coming from the foyer," said Emily, who has been dancing since she was three and will now study dance at The Works Academy, Sunderland.

Joanne added: *"I just grabbed her by the scruff of her neck and ran. Everyone was pushing and panicking and from what people were saying I was expecting to see terrorists with guns. We were crying and a nice man took us back to our hotel because we were lost."*

Emily was diagnosed with PTSD and had counselling with the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service. She also had to cope with the death of her grandfather and her other grandparents going into homes. Joanne said: *"She lost her confidence, wouldn't go out without me and couldn't sleep."*

Emily added: *“The dance really helps me as it makes me feel like I am in another world and I can forget about it. Carmel has been brilliant too and so supportive throughout.”*

She hopes one day to be a professional dancer either backing celebrities or working in theatre on Broadway, New York.

A scholarship with rugby league side Newcastle Thunder led to a lightning move for a budding rugby player.

Joe Bradley switched from his home town of Widnes in Cheshire to Carmel College in the middle of his GCSE years, a move which saw him try extra hard to pass all his nine subjects.

The fullback, who is also part of the Newcastle Falcons development player programme, headed to the North-East because he believed there were greater opportunities in the region. He will start his scholarship with Newcastle Thunder in September and study an extended diploma in sporting excellence at TyneMet College, which has close links with Northumbria University, where he hopes to read a degree.

“We were looking for an outstanding school and found Carmel,” said Joe, whose dream is to play for a professional club and his country.

“When I came for a look round, the rugby lads took me on a tour and that was it, I was convinced. The school has been brilliant, really welcoming and supportive with my rugby. I instantly made loads of new friends and am thrilled that all my hard work has paid off with my results.”

Teenager Joshua Joseph had an unlucky break when he slipped in the gym he attends in Northallerton snapping both his arms.

The 16-year-old Carmel College student had been doing box jumps in his gym when he slipped breaking both arms during his GCSE studies.

“It was horrible and very painful,” said JJ of Northallerton. “I ended up missing most of Year 10. My arms were broken and dislocated so my mum had to write for me and the teachers had to print out the material I needed. Other students were great too helping and it proved to be worthwhile as I got great grades. I wasn’t expecting to do this well.”

He will study A Levels in biology, chemistry and maths after which he hopes to go to university.

Sixteen-year-old Carmel College student Cecily Gibson, of Darlington, was celebrating yesterday after securing top results despite a family tragedy that left her older sister in a coma.

“It was two days after Florence’s 17th birthday when the car she was in crashed into a tree and she suffered terrible brain injuries and had to be put into an induced coma,” recalled Cecily. “She was in hospital for 18 months and now needs carers which was difficult for everyone. We still don’t know whether she will ever recover fully.”

“She is doing amazingly well at the moment and I am really proud of her. But if I have beaten her with my results I might get a different gesture than a thumbs up.”

Heptathlete Darcey Garbutt is on a fast track to the next step of her life after securing 10 GCSEs. The talented 16-year-old, of Darlington, represented County Durham coming a creditable 11th in a prestigious North competition in Hull after just six weeks of competing in the heptathlon, which comprises 80m hurdles, long and high jump, 800m, 200m, shot and javelin.

The Carmel College student is hoping one day to compete in the Olympics, inspired by GB sprinter Adam Gemili whose kit she looked after at a Diamond League competition at Gateshead.

“He was so lovely and I was devastated for him when he pulled up with an injury at the Olympics,” she said.

Darcey, who was placed fifth in the England 100m finals and seventh in the English Schools championships will now study A Levels in English, RE and history before, hopefully studying a degree at either York, Durham, or Loughborough universities.

The constant fear of deportation was no barrier to success for Aiswarya Jose, of Darlington.

Her parents came to the country from Krala, India, on student visas more than ten years ago but are in constant negotiations with the UK government to stay permanently.

“It has been a worry,” said the 16-year-old Carmel College student, who collected her results with her mum Lovely. *“My dad became ill and we were homeless and we had to live in a convent for three years. Deportation was a worry, so I am very pleased to pass my GCSEs.”*

A Thai boxer is kicking it up a notch after securing top GCSEs. St John’s Catholic School and Sixth Form College student Adam McAuliffe, 16, from Newton Aycliffe, will now study sport and nutrition while continuing to compete in Muay Thai.

“I’ve been doing the sport for five years and it’s now just been accepted into the Olympics,” he said. *“I’m fighting in the European Championships and am number one in the UK in the sport.”*

St John’s top performing girl, Imogen Walton, 16, from Spennymoor, and top performing boy, Matthew Mellody, 16, from Newton Aycliffe, were both delighted with their results.

“It’s been such a weird year,” said Imogen. *“The mocks actually felt quite similar to actual exams but it’s been so uncertain that the whole experience has made us all appreciate everything a bit more.”*

Matthew, who had two older sisters to live up to who also did exceptionally well at St John’s Catholic Academy, achieved the highest grades in his year, eight grade 9s and two grade 8s.

"It was a really unconventional year but I made sure I attended all the live lessons and worked hard. My favourite subject is maths and I want to go to the University of Durham because that's where both of my sisters went."

A group of St John's Year 11 students, who were the winners of the Future Business Magnates competition when they were in Year 8, were over the moon with their GCSE results.

Callum Giblin, Amadeuz Norwicki, Ella Stanbridge, Erin Clarke, Alice Chilvers, Katy Mattinson, Jessica Dailey and Rebecca Lees, were enjoying success once again.

Callum Giblin, 16, from Crook, who also received the Father Towers Award at St John's Catholic School for his positive attitude, excellent endeavours and wider contributions to school life, is staying at the Sixth Form for his A Levels.

Amadeuz Norwicki, 16, from Newton Aycliffe, was thrilled with his results. "I found lockdown really tough but we all got through it and I'll be staying at St John's for my A Levels," said Amadeuz.

"Eventually I want to do something with Languages and Japanese Studies and I'd love to do it at the University of Newcastle."

The FBM team's project was a jigsaw designed to get people talking and support well-being. They decided to donate the winning prize money to support the school in achieving a well-being award, leaving a legacy at St John's that would encourage people to talk about their mental health.

Team member Ella Stanbridge, 16, from Spennymoor, continues to help people. *"I'd love to work in the humanitarian sector. I think it's such a meaningful thing to do,"* she said.

Similarly, Erin Clarke, 16 from Newton Aycliffe, wants to turn her attention to helping animals, *"I want to work with animals, hopefully something like zoology,"* she said.

Another animal fanatic, Kylah Gillespie, 16, from Newton Aycliffe, said: *"I want to work in a job that focusses on animal behaviours."* Kylah achieved eight grade 9s, one grade 8 and one grade 7.

Kylah is also a talented musician, *"I've played the flute since I was nine years old and had online lessons over the lockdowns. I actually did my Grade 5 exam over Zoom,"* she said.

Cody Hall, 16 from Bishop Auckland, wants to go on to study a media, film studies and performing arts degree with the dream of becoming an actor.

"It was hard over the lockdowns and being at home, motivation was the hardest thing," said Cody.

Talented pianist and saxophonist Matthew Curry, 16, from Crook, achieved two grade 9s and five grade 8s.

Matthew holds a Grade 7 in piano and Grade 5 in the saxophone. *"I should probably practice the saxophone a bit more,"* he said.

Octawia Przybyl, 15, from Newton Aycliffe, achieved one grade 8, three grade 7s, overcoming a stammer and not having English as a first language to achieve her results.

There were tears of joy at St Michael's Catholic Academy, Billingham, where the school was celebrating 72 grade 9s across the year group.

At Our Lady & St Bede Catholic Academy staff spoke of their pride at how well pupils had coped with the challenge of the pandemic.

Among the students getting excellent results was Sophia Andreocci. Sophia is originally from Italy and only joined the school in year 9.

Headteacher Mo Wilkinson said: *"She has worked incredibly hard throughout her time here and taken every challenge thrown her way. Her determination has resulted in her achieving some brilliant results."*

Kirstan Soralde was the only pupil to achieve grade 9s across the board in all his subjects.

Staff described Kirstan as a humble and gracious young man who had worked tirelessly to achieve these results.

Evie Wells achieved seven grade 9s and three grades 8s, including a grade 9 in fine art which she took as an extra GCSE. She also achieved over three grades higher than her target grade across all subjects.

Medge achieved seven grade 9s and two grade 8s. He achieved over three grades higher than his target grade across all subjects and was the boy with the highest progress score in the year group.

Year 11 students at The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College were also congratulated on their GCSE results in a challenging year of the pandemic.

In their assessed work 84% of Year 11 students achieved or exceeded their target grades, with 51% achieving five grade 9-5 GCSE passes, including maths and English, and 76% achieving five grade 9-4 GCSE passes including maths and English.

Mr Hammond said: *"We are overjoyed that so many of our students are returning to study a range of A level and BTEC qualifications with us in our sixth form."*

Max Denning was incredibly happy with his nine grade 9s and one grade 8 with Elena Cain collecting seven grade 9s and three grade 8s, both are looking forward to the challenge of sixth form.

Twins Ellen and Sophie Bradley managed to secure six grade 9s, eight grade 8s and six grade 7s between them.

Other top achievers were Leona Slaughter with eight grade 9s and two grade 8s and Freya Howe with seven grade 9s and three grade 8s.

It was all smiles for Harvey Cornforth, Charlotte Hamilton, David Swift as they collectively achieved an outstanding six grade 9s, nine grade 8s, six grade 7s and six grade 6s.

Another two students joining EMS6 are Millie Addison who picked up six grade 9s and four grade 8s and Sam Duong who was very pleased with his five grade 9s, two grade 8s, one grade 7 and one grade 6. Sam is looking forward to studying Maths and Further Maths as part of his course choices in September.

Joel Holvey, who was a member of our Improtech Elite Football Academy, has joined Rotherham United and achieved nine grade 5+ at GCSE.

After overcoming many challenges and with the help and support of teachers and support staff, Kristian Emmerson achieved one grade 9, grade 4 in both maths and English language, and grades 5 and 4 in combined science.

A special mention went to two students who joined in Year 11, Hallie Bennison and Daniell Ong, who achieved 14 GCSEs at grade 4+ between them.

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