

Island school celebrates first A-level results

STUDENTS from Christ the King College celebrated its first ever set of A-level results with A* and A grades in abundance.

Every single student from the school's sixth form gained entry to the university of their choice, and 99 per cent of the overall grades were A* to E.

Among those achieving the highest grades were David Parsons, who rang the college from the Soul Survivor Christian festival to confirm the A* and A grades that secured his place at Cambridge University.

Matthew Honnor also

achieved straight A* and A grades and will study maths at Warwick.

Jack Wilson also managed two A*s and an A to study physics at Bristol. Also celebrating with four A*s and As was Brandon Tsang who will be reading medicine at Imperial College, London.

Principal Pat Goodhead said: "What makes these results unique is that they have been achieved by students who, throughout their journey, have been the 'pacesetters' for the rest of the college, with no older student role models.

"These results are a real testament to them and the outstanding, caring staff we have at Christ the King."

The college's 16-year-olds were also celebrating their GCSE results. At least 58 per cent of this cohort managed five grades of A*-C, including English and maths.

Among those who did well was Jack Ellis, the older brother of 13-year-old Joe Ellis, who died from cancer over the summer. He achieved six As and a distinction in his sports studies, despite the difficult time his family was

experiencing during the exam period. Eleven GCSE students at the college managed a staggering 141 A* and A grades between them.

Meanwhile, the college has also been successful in gaining the International School Award from the British Council, and has been accredited for three years from September 2014 until August 2017.

This is a badge of honour for schools and colleges that do outstanding work in international education, such as links with partner schools overseas.

Visit to Islamic centre is inspiring

PARTICIPANTS from our diocese's Inspire spirituality course were given the chance to visit a mosque near Wickham.

They went to the Al Mahdi Centre, a newly-built venue for spirituality, worship and community, after an invitation by the imam, Sheikh Fazle Abbas.

A round-table conversation earlier this year on the experience of personal prayer within the two faiths had left both Inspire course members and those from the Al Mahdi community wanting to continue the conversation.

They experienced midday prayer, were given an insight into the recitations that accompanied the various bodily prayer positions, had lunch together and conversations in small and larger groups.

One Inspire course member said: "We were given a wonderful insight into the spiritual practice of our Muslim friends and were struck by the openness and gentleness, warmth and hospitality of the Al Mahdi people, and by the charm, grace and faith commitment of the young people present."

Another said: "We were reminded that the intention for prayer should be simply to 'seek closeness to the Almighty' and that the Holy Book repeatedly encourages stillness and contemplation."

The participants were left with the question 'what now?' as they wondered about a continuing dialogue to enable further understanding between the two faith traditions.

To visit the Al Mahdi Centre contact: info@almahdi.org.uk.

Cathedral hosts festival of mind

OUR cathedral will host the launch of Hampshire Festival of the Mind on October 3.

The launch from 10am will include a talk by Dr Rachel Perkins OBE, exhibitions, talks and workshops, as well as stalls and entertainment from 7.30pm.

The festival is a new initiative from the Good Mental Health Cooperative and community groups in Hampshire, and is sponsored by our Cathedral Innovation Centre. For details, see www.hantsfestivalofthemind.org or ring 023-9281 4875.

Students' joy at record GCSE haul

HOLLY Sayer couldn't read or write until she was 10. But she's celebrating passing 10 GCSEs.

The 16-year-old managed an A* in English Literature and an A in English Language and now hopes to go to Cambridge University.

She was just one of the success stories at Charter Academy, where students achieved a record number of top-grade GCSEs.

A total of 79 per cent of its 16-year-olds managed five grades between A* and C, including English and maths. The figure was one of the best in Portsmouth, and a marked improvement on the 68 per cent figure last year.

Five years ago, when St Luke's C of E School became Charter C of E Academy, 79 per cent of its pupils didn't achieve five A*-C grades including English and maths. Now that figure has been completely reversed.

Holly, who achieved two A*s, three As, two Bs and two Cs, now has her sights on becoming a film director.

"I didn't learn to read and write until I was about nine, 10 years old, but that had been because I'd moved around a lot," she said. "I hadn't really got a lot of schooling in. It wasn't until I came to this school that I was



(Above, l to r): Harley Restall, Lee Backhouse, Bonnie Potter, and Adam Geraghty from Charter Academy; (left): Holly Sayer

you go and get it." Her classmate Lee Backhouse passed 11 GCSEs, including two As and four Bs. He's now at South Downs College on a musical theatre course and wants to become an actor.

"I want to do something I enjoy and because of how passionate I am about drama, I really want to carry that on further," he said. "The school has helped me to realise that and they've convinced me the higher grades I get, the more likely I am to get into either a good drama school or a good university where I could carry on that drama further."

Charter Academy, which is sponsored by ARK Schools, is the

only C of E secondary school on the mainland, and mainly serves the inner-city of Portsmouth.

The new chair of governors at Charter Academy has now been unveiled. It is the Archdeacon of Portsmouth, the Ven Joanne Grenfell.

Joanne takes over from the Rev Alex Hughes, who combined the role with being vicar of St Luke's and St Peter's Churches in Somers Town before he moved to become Archdeacon of Cambridge.

She said: "I'm delighted to become involved with Charter which has a crucial role in offering high quality education with a Christian ethos in a more deprived part of our city."

diagnosed with dyslexia and that's when they took action.

"Personally I'm quite heavily dyslexic and yet my favourite subject is English. The only way I could get round it was through the extracurricular help that I was given. I kind of have the theory that if you want something then