

VIDEO – And the exam results are out today

Although there is a reducing school roll across Scotland at S5 and S6, the number of passes at Higher level has remained much the same as last year according to the exam results published today. It was not enough for Green Education spokesman Ross Greer MSP who said the annual drop must be carefully monitored.



l-r Amy Jackson, Nairn Ross, Callum Brown, Kyle Rowan, Deputy First Minister John Swinney, Alistair Hampton, Lewis Britain and Sophie Gardiner all S5 and S6 pupils at Firrhill High School

There were 147,000 Higher passes with a pass rate of 78% compared to 77% in 2017. There was a record number of entries for the Advanced Higher of 24,331 since changes were made to that qualification a couple of years ago. The attainment rate

is high at 80.5%.



Deputy First Minister John Swinney during a visit to Firrhill High School on exam results day 7 August 2018

The Deputy First Minister John Swinney visited Firrhill High School in the south of Edinburgh where he met pupils who had just discovered whether they got the results they either needed or expected. Braving the cameras, they opened their envelopes, and in the main were pretty pleased with their grades.

WATCH OUR VIDEO REPORT BELOW

Mr Swinney told us that he did well enough in his Highers and O Grades, as they were then, to get a place at the University of Edinburgh.

We asked about the changes to exams over the years and how the education system might need to change in future. He replied : "Although qualifications may change here and there the crucial thing is that we maintain standards. The Scottish

Qualifications Authority are the guarantors of standards within our qualifications system to make sure that young people have a qualification that is really robust and gives them the opportunity to benefit from the strength of what has been assessed.

“So consistency is really important What I am focused on is closing the poverty related attainment gap by making sure that we deliver excellence and equity for every young person in Scotland. Excellence by improving standards, and equity by making sure that we close that attainment gap.”



Deputy First Minister John Swinney with S5 and S6 pupils from Firrhill High School

Mr Swinney continued : “My congratulations to the thousands of young people on their hard work and effort leading up to today, and to the teachers and lecturers who have worked tirelessly to prepare them. Results day is a time to celebrate the achievements and dedication of learners right across the country, especially in this the Year of Young People.

“Higher passes remain stable despite a continuing fall in the number of young people on the school roll, while the number of Advanced Highers being taken continues to grow.

“At subject level, we have seen a continued rise in passes in Mathematics at Higher and Advanced Higher, with the National 5 Application of Mathematics pass rate up 11.3 percentage points. Pass rates for English fluctuated in both directions across the different qualification types – up 5.3 percentage points at Advanced Higher level but falling at Higher and National 5 by 1.4 percentage points and 2.4 percentage points respectively.

“I am pleased to see the much greater range of skills-based qualifications is also delivering for students, with the number of awards increasing to 50,305 this year, more than double the number in 2012.

“It is important to remember that we will always see slight variations in pass rates and the results show that we have a robust, credible assessment system in place.

“To address pupil and teacher workload, this is the first year where unit assessments have been removed from National 5, and the overall pass rate remains high at 77.4%.

“It is clear that our young people have performed strongly, against rigorous standards, and are now in an exciting position to decide what they go on to do next. Results day is the culmination of months of hard work and it is important to remember that, whatever the outcome, it is only the beginning of a journey. Anyone who did not receive the results they had hoped for, or who is just unsure about their next steps, should get in touch with the SDS exam helpline for access to expert careers advice.”

[Deputy First Minister John Swinney visits Firrhill High School on exam results day](#) from [The Edinburgh Reporter On Vimeo](#) on

[Vimeo.](#)