

PRESS RELEASE

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Portsmouth Academy for Girls celebrates best ever GCSE results

A Portsmouth state school is celebrating its best ever GCSE results - just three years after its predecessor was placed in special measures by Ofsted.

Portsmouth Academy for Girls has enjoyed rapid improvement under the leadership of Natalie Sheppard, who returned to her hometown in 2013 as Principal after a teaching career in inner-city London.

64% of pupils at the St Mary's Road school have achieved the benchmark of 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C, including English and maths – a rise of 16% from last year, making this one of the most rapidly improving schools in the country. 75% of students achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, and more than 1 in 4 (28%) of all grades was an A* or an A.

More than half of pupils at the school are classified as coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, but the school refuses to see this as a barrier to educational achievement

There are some strong individual success stories – 15 year old Alishia Robinson, of Southsea, who is the youngest student in the year group, achieved an incredible 7 A*s and 4 As.

The school replaced the former City of Portsmouth Girls' school after it was placed in special measures for inadequate achievement, after which it joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in September 2013.

The school has recently been officially recognised by the University of Exeter as a fully accredited 'Thinking School'. Less than 100 schools internationally have achieved this prestigious status, which recognises achievement in encouraging pupils to think reflectively, critically, and creatively.

From September 2016, the school is changing its name to The Portsmouth Academy and will become co-educational in September 2017.

Principal Natalie Sheppard, who has overseen the school's remarkable improvements since 2013, said:

"We are so proud of every single one of our students. They have worked incredibly hard to 'Aspire and Achieve', according to our school motto, and these results will open so many doors for them.

"This year's results are a huge credit to our staff, who have worked tirelessly to support every single student – with absolute conviction that they could, and would, succeed."

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