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Limerick results bring more smiles than tears

While some were less than delighted with the new grading system, the majority of Limerick students were thrilled with the actual marks. Arthur Quinlan reports

THERE was mixed reaction in Limerick to the new 13-point grading system in the Leaving Certificate examination but one thing was clear: there was a higher percentage of smiling faces as the results were issued yesterday morning.

At Ardscoil Rís, the newest secondary school in the city apart from the two community schools, Mr Michael J. Field, principal, was very happy with the 100 per cent success of the 120 pupils who sat the examination. He told *The Irish Times* of the advantage of the system, although he admitted that it had not been fully operative yet. "It will remove the random element from the allocation of places in the colleges and universities." He said the system seemed to be successful in that while the higher results were excellent, the marvellous grades received by the pass standards were very gratifying for all the staff.

The Rev Dermot Murray, SJ, headmaster of Crescent Comprehensive College where 155 sat the exam successfully, thought the examinations were too tightly crammed into the days when some pupils had to sit two heavy subjects on three days. This, he said, was physically very tiring on young people but he agreed that if it were spread out more it would

lead to a longer period of tension. Father Murray suggested a greater variety in the manner in which the subjects were set out.

John Hanrahan (17), North Circular Road, Limerick, who got six honours at Ardscoil Rís and plans to do Commerce at UCD, agreed that the new system "will eliminate the bottleneck of random selection that occurs when college places are allocated". He said it also removes the element of chance and a good pupil has nothing to worry about.

Brian McCormack (17), Ashbrook, Limerick, also at Ardscoil Rís, got six honours including five As in Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Applied Maths and English and a B in French. He said he did not like the new system. "If you get an A," he said, "that is an achievement but the new system fragments the grades and tends to be unfair." He expressed gratitude to his English teacher, Jim Doherty, as "I was never very good at English."

Shane Bourke (17), NCR, who got five A1s and two A2s, said it was a fair system, the questions were logical and "if you studied them you could observe the pattern and the grading". The system, he added, "provided a finer tuning of the bands". He plans to study law.

Two pupils at the school who

sat the pass papers, were very happy with their results. Jason Daly (17) of Moyross, a six footer who plans to join the Garda Síochána, described the system as "excellent". The results, he said, were great and the effort was not unduly difficult to cope with.

His friend, Martin Quinn (18), also of Moyross, who has already begun work as an apprentice electrician, got five honours in pass subjects including C2 in English and Maths, B2 in Geography, B1 in Art, C3 in Business Organisation and D1 in Irish. "When I came out of the examination hall I thought I did badly until I saw the results," he said.

Sinead Field (18) of Patrickswell, Co Limerick, who got six honours at Laurel Hill, Cnocna Labhras, and plans to do medicine at UCD, is a daughter of the principal and after arriving at her father's school at Ardscoil Rís, was jumping for joy at her results.

A 19-year-old who did a repeat to gain entry to the veterinary or pharmaceutical college, was critical of the grading in the Music section. He went up in all his grades but got a B in Music which was the same as in his previous exam despite an intensive grind. "They are," he said, "grading music to a much higher standard than the other subjects and it would appear almost impossible to get honours in Music."

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