

Grammar regains crown for best performance in country

State school back at the top

A WESTCOUNTRY state school has regained its crown as the best school in the country.

According to the Sunday Times Parent Power league table, Colyton Grammar School in East Devon is the best performing in the UK.

The school had dropped to third place last year, but regained its top ranking in 2008.

Headmaster Paul Evans said the result was down to the hard work everyone at the school had produced.

"We've been working hard to match our curriculum to the needs of our students," he said. "This reflects the achievement of our young people who have done very well and the staff at the school who have helped them get there."

"In 12 months' time, if we're still top of the list, then it will be a fantastic achievement."

Colyton's pupils achieved 95.1 per cent A or B grades at A-level and 88.3 per cent A* or A in their GCSEs this year.

The Maynard School, an independent girls' school in Exeter, was the second best independent school in the South West, behind Chel-

OLIVIER VERGNAULT

tenham Ladies' College. The school jumped to 36th place nationally from 101st last year after pupils gained 91.6 per cent A/B grades at A-level and 85.4 per cent A* or A in GCSEs.

Headmistress Dr Daphne West said it was a "wonderful" recognition for their achievements.

"The results are a testament both to the high calibre of teaching they enjoy here and to the atmosphere of mutual support between pupils that is so strong at The Maynard."

She added: "Exam results are only part of the picture. Confidence, purposefulness and enjoyment are key elements in The Maynard recipe and girls benefit hugely from an abundance of academic and extra-curricular opportunities."

Meanwhile, Torquay Boys Grammar School and Churston Ferrers Grammar School near Brixham, both in South Devon, were ranked eighth and tenth respectively in the region and 81st and 90th in the whole country.

Roy Pike, Torquay Boys Grammar School's

headmaster, said this year's results had not been as good as last year's, but he looked forward to "a tremendous year and much better results".

"It is good to be in the top 10 schools in the regions and the top 100 best schools in the country," he said. "It's a tribute to both staff and students and their hard work."

Bob Owers, head teacher at the Brixham school, said that although Churston Ferrers had dropped in the national ranking from 73rd in 2007 to 90th this year, the school was still in the top 10 in the South West.

He added: "A school is only as good as its pupils, teaching staff and governors, so it's good news for our school."

Meanwhile, Feniton Church of England Primary School, in Feniton, near Honiton, and Ermington Primary School in Ivybridge were among the top 10 best primary schools in Cornwall and Devon.

Exeter Junior School was named the best independent prep school in the region and 35th best in the country.



Colyton pupils celebrate excellent grades

CHRISTMAS 08

Chagford

Season's in full swing

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CHRISTMAS preparations are well under way at the picturesque Dartmoor town of Chagford, which will be providing plenty of festive fun for the whole family.

Kicking off the celebrations is the annual Wonderworks craft fair which takes place in the town's Jubilee Hall this weekend for anyone seeking something special for their family or friends.

The fair will see 23 exhibitors from all over the South West sell and display their stunning range of handcrafted products from ceramics, jewellery and furniture, to quilts, baskets and more.

The big night for the community is Tuesday, December 9, when the people of Chagford can shop 'til they drop - or at least until the closing time of around 8pm.

Those travelling to the town will find themselves surrounded by seasonal style with more than 50 Christmas trees organised by the Chagford and District Business Association, along with individual window displays.

In some shops there will be free mince pies and mulled wine, and Father Christmas will be on hand throughout the evening to greet the children of Chagford and from further afield.

Local butcher Andy Martin will help to keep hunger at bay with his own hog roast and there will be the sounds of Samba band Beatroute echoing through the streets together with music from Chagford Gospel Church Choir.

The evening will also see items from the Chagford Primary School Band and, as guests of the town, Hatherleigh Silver Band, followed by plenty more surprises including stalk walkers and fire-juggling street performers. To round off the Late-Night Shopping Evening, the parish church bells will ring out in true traditional style.

Member of Chagford and District Business Association, Chris Webber, whose family also runs Webber & Sons in The Square, said the



Christmas in Chagford

evening was a way for businesses to give something back to the community.

Chris said: "The Late-Night Shopping Evening is a great way of bringing people from the town as well as the surrounding area together."

"To say thank-you to the locals there will be a free draw where we will be giving away £150

worth of shopping vouchers to spend in local shops. Every one of the shops that night will give away free draw tickets if you make a purchase."

In the run-up to Christmas, many of the town's shops will be open from 11am until 4pm on every Sunday for three weeks - starting from December 7 - for anyone seeking some last-minute gifts.

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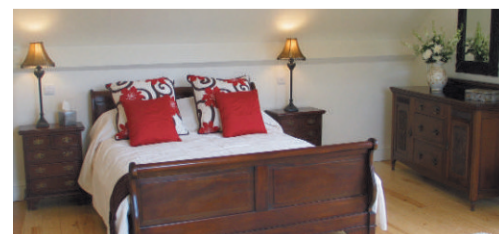
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