

Talented pupils celebrate early exams success

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PUPILS at an Exeter school are celebrating passing GCSE examinations early — some by up to three years.

Magdalen Court School, in Victoria Park Road, has had a record number of 13 to 15-year-olds achieving A* to C grades this summer.

Most pupils take their GCSEs at age 16 after studying two years for the exams.

Vijaya Howard, from Whipton, is among 21 pupils at the school who took exams early.

She took only a year to achieve a B grade in photography — and she is just 13.

She said: "I was only 12 when I started the course. We had to research photographers who had done work similar to what we were doing, and think about

what kind of photos we would do. Then we had to write up what we had learnt. My parents are really pleased I did so well."

Fourteen-year-old Tom Jackson, from St Leonard's, also scored a grade B in GCSE photography.

He said: "I was really up for doing it. I thought it would help me get somewhere and it did motivate me.

"The course was hard, but photography is all about finding the right places to take pictures.

"My parents are really pleased with what I've done."

Pupils Sharmilla Chapman and Luke Johnston, both aged 15, scored an impressive five GCSEs each — all at grades A to C.

Sharmilla earned passes in art, home economics, photography and a double award in health and social care.

She said: "I found the courses quite easy."

Senior school headmaster Jeremy Bushrod said: "For these pupils to do their GCSEs in a year, at their level of maturity, is all down to very hard work.

"The reason we encourage pupils to take some GCSEs early is to try to give them some self-belief and to make them realise they can succeed, which is very important for teenagers.

"It gets them to concentrate on academic work at an age when many schoolchildren tend to be 'going through the motions'.

"They should still be enjoying extra-curricular activities and hobbies, but this gives them a little bit of focus.

"We never put people in for any exams if they are going to be pressured. We only enter them for the exams when they feel they are ready."