

School has no effect on higher study

PUPILS who go to university from schools which perform below the Scottish average do just as well on degree courses as those from above average schools – even if they have fewer A grades at Higher.

Researchers from St Andrews University in Fife found students with three As at Higher from a “below average school” performed as well at the institution as those with four As at Higher from an

“above average school”. Dr Laurence Lasselle, a senior lecturer in economics from St Andrews, will discuss the findings today at a conference on widening access at Edinburgh University – part of a series of events run by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Another presentation will highlight the fact Scottish universities are still dominated by the middle classes, despite a recent expansion

of places. Dr Cristina Iannelli, an education sociologist from Edinburgh University, said the expansion had led to opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

But most had secured places at “lower-status” institutions rather than the ancient universities. Her presentation states: “Education policy, on its own, cannot eradicate social inequalities. Wider social reforms are needed.”

