

July 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may be aware of changes to GCSE English and Mathematics from September 2015 which are summarised below. More teaching time than in the current GCSEs is required and we want our students to be well prepared for the new qualifications in the best possible way. Next academic year students in year 10 will be timetabled for an extra period of English and mathematics each fortnight which means that **all** students will have a lesson on a Wednesday period 5 week A. Students studying full course RE will also have a lesson on a Wednesday period 5 week B.

GCSE English Language

The new English Language GCSE will encourage students to read a greater range of high quality, challenging literature and non-fiction texts from a range of genres and types (from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries). There will be a greater focus on making sure that students are able to write clearly and accurately, in good Standard English. There will also be an increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar, including an understanding of grammar terminology.

Tiers will be removed from GCSE English Language. This means that specifications and question papers will have to cover the full range of abilities.

GCSE English Literature

The new English Literature GCSE will encourage students to read a wide range of classic literature fluently with the assessment of:

- A 19th century novel
- A Shakespeare play
- A selection of poetry since 1789 including representative Romantic poems
- British fiction or drama from 1914 onwards.

Tiers will be removed from GCSE English Literature. This means that specifications and question papers will have to cover the full range of abilities.

There will be increased assessment of unseen texts. The quality of writing in the response to texts will be assessed and the study of literature will remain a compulsory part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

All English GCSEs will have terminal assessment with no controlled assessment.

In both English and mathematics GCSEs a new grading system will be introduced. Students will be awarded a grade from 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest.

GCSE Mathematics

There is more teaching time than the current GCSE with a broader, deeper mathematical content. There are additional requirements to provide clear mathematical arguments with a greater focus on problem-solving. The enhanced content, includes number (with explicit reference to formal written methods of calculation), ratio, proportion and rates of change (with reference to simple interest in financial mathematics).

The examination time is more than the current GCSE with more questions involving solving problems, which may require multi-step solutions.

There will continue to be tiered examination paper with the Foundation tier covering grades 1-5 and the Higher tier grades 4-9.

More information about the new courses and the ways in which you can support your son/daughter will be given in a parent's information evening on Wednesday 9 September at 6.00pm. In the meantime if you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs R B Stevens
Deputy Headteacher