

Making a Success of Year 10

Notes for Parents



WELCOME TO YEAR 10

Choice and Opportunities

Year 10 offers students a wealth of opportunities to be successful and it is important that they take full advantage of these.

For the first time your child will have been given the chance to choose some of the subjects they can study and will be specialising in option choices that will support and influence their future education and career choices. To maximise their chances of success your child will need to work hard and make the very best use of the time available during the two years.

For some students additional English and/or Maths have been offered in place of an option subject and this gives them the opportunity to improve their chances of gaining a C grade in these essential subjects. Independent Study has also been offered in place of an option subject to some students who we feel would benefit from not having to sit so many GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 and could use some additional time during the year to concentrate on consolidating their knowledge and understanding of their other subjects. These are valuable opportunities to support improved progress and it is important that students take full advantage of these.

The Changing National Environment: Higher standards and higher expectations

There is no doubt that the bar has been raised this year and standards and expectations at GCSE are higher than they have been previously. The exams are more demanding and students who would have gained a C or A* grade in previous years will have had to achieve a higher standard this summer to gain that same grade. Students need to push themselves to reach this higher standard and parents whose children sat exams before Summer 2014 need to remember that the standard is not the same. Higher standards and expectations will continue at a national level and students and parents need to be fully aware of and prepared for this.

The move to end of course examinations

GCSE students no longer follow modular courses that enable them to break their learning and revision into smaller sections, complete exams during their courses and re-sit modules if they do not get the grades that they were capable of. Instead GCSE exams are now linear meaning that examinations are taken at the end of two years of study (in Year 11). Students can only re-sit if they wait a full year and more credit is given for examinations taken and passed for the first time.

Linear examinations mean that students will have at least 2 external examinations in the summer of 2016 for each of the GCSE courses that they are studying; English, Maths, Science and up to four option subjects. This is a lot of exams and means that two years worth of learning will need to be remembered, explained, analysed and evaluated for each exam for each subject. Linear

examinations are more demanding and require a different set of skills including the ability to memorise information that has been learnt, organisational ability to keep track of learning, notes and resources, effective revision skills and the ability to recall and apply large quantities of information to examination questions.

Some examinations will be taken at the end of Year 10.

Some GCSE examinations will be taken in Year 10 because of the requirements of the course (Science) or to reduce and manage the exam burden for students (RE and English Lit – for some)

GCSE Science students will take a full GCSE exam in core Science at the end of Year 10. This is an actual GCSE examination and should be prepared for in this way.

GCSE RE students started their course in Year 9 and so will take this GCSE exam at the end of Year 10. Although this will be slightly more demanding for students, it will give more time to core and option subject exams in the summer of Year 11.

Students in the ‘M’ population started studying for GCSE English Literature in Year 9 and they will take this exam at the end of Year 10. This will enable these students to have the opportunity to gain an additional GCSE but free up all of their time in Year 11 to study for their English Language GCSE.

It is important that students prepare themselves fully for these early exams and gain the best GCSE grades that they can in Year 10.

Increased emphasis on examination marks rather than internal assessment

Changes in examination board regulations mean that for the majority of subjects there is an increased emphasis on examination marks rather than controlled assessment (coursework completed in school and marked by the teacher) Students who tend to do better in controlled assessment rather than exams need to be aware of and prepare themselves for this.

Changes to BTEC courses

BTEC courses are an alternative but equivalent qualification to GCSE and these too have become more demanding. BTEC courses are no longer 100% assessment but now include an examination that students have to pass to complete the course. There are also much tighter deadlines for completing and submitting work and the standard of work produced matches GCSE standards.

KS4 Highlights and Key Dates

Year 10 September 2014 – July 2015

October 14 – July 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controlled Assessments – these will take place during Year 10 and the first half of Year 11 at a time when the teacher feels students are ready to complete
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	them. Details will be available on 'Show my Homework'.
19.11.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10 ISA Day 1 (Science practical exams)
8.01.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Boys' Attainment – Part 2
12.02.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y10 Parents' Evening
13-16.02.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10/11 Ancient History Visit to Rome
05.03.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10 ISA Day 2
27.03.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE Mock Examinations for RE, English Literature (M population) Core Science
08.05.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Report
May-June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>GCSE actual examinations – RE (2 exams) English Literature (2 exams) M Population Only, Core Science (3 exams)</u>
22-26.06.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10 Mock Exams – all subjects not externally examined
TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview Project
06.07.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History Visit to Berlin
06.07.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Visit to Spain
06.07.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Experience
13.07.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10 Celebration (Provisional)

Year 11 September 2015 – May 2016 (2 terms and 4 weeks!)

Dates to be confirmed in September 2015

- Controlled Assessments – on-going
- Post 16 Opportunities and Choices programme
- Mock Exams (December 2015)
- Parents Evening
- Year 11 ISA Day (Science practical exams)
- Science Triple ISA Day
- School Report
- BTEC courses completed (May 2016)
- Modified timetable - revision and exam technique (from May 2016)
- Final GCSE Exams (from May 2016)

Factors Affecting Student Success

The Classroom

Staff will be delivering well-planned lessons designed to stretch, challenge and support students. Students need to ensure they make the most of every minute of lesson time by being focussed and engaging with the work set. Students must speak to staff about any work that they do not

understand. Relationships between staff and students are good which will help students to do well, however students must complete all of the work that they are set to the very best of their ability.

Marking and Feedback

Students will receive written and verbal feedback from staff through marking and in lessons. This will identify what students have done well (strengths) and what they now need to do to improve (targets). Students will be expected to show that they have acted upon this advice and this will be done in a number of ways:

- Students may complete corrections in a different coloured pen
- Students will add to and extend their work, often in a different coloured pen
- Students will redo work that is not of the required standard
- Students will show in their next or future pieces of work that they have acted on staff advice and staff will recognise this through their marking.

Students need to take responsibility for engaging with this process of improvement.

Independent Learning Skills

Students have to develop their ability to learn independently so that they can succeed with their courses and examinations. Independent learning occurs when students take responsibility for consolidating, extending, enriching and guiding their own learning in each subject and will improve their ability to secure higher grades at GCSE. Independent learners need to be organised, resourceful and resilient and during their time in school and staff will be working to develop students' ability to be independent.

Controlled Assessments and ISAs (Science Practical Examinations)

Students must be fully prepared for these assessments and aim to achieve the best grade that they can to improve their chances of success in the final examinations.

On-going Review, Consolidation and Revision

Time is at a premium with linear courses and it is important that students establish good learning habits from the start of Year 10. This will require them to:

- Complete all work set in class and for homework in full and to the very best of their ability
- Review work completed for each subject on a regular basis (weekly) to identify any areas they do not understand or are less confident with
- Use notes, textbooks, revision guides, websites to improve their understanding of topics they are unsure of. Seek help from their peers or staff if they still do not understand
- Read around their subjects and seek extension work if they are B/A/A* grade students to improve their chances of gaining top grades

- Complete revision notes, mind maps, revision cards etc for each topic as they go along rather than waiting until the end of the year or course.
- Consolidate and check their understanding of each topic by completing revision and past paper questions

Work Ethic

Students need to get into the habit of working hard throughout the two years and **being honest** about the amount of work they are actually doing. Work will include completing classwork, homework, extension, review and revision and students should be including elements of each of these into their weekly study programme.

Poor work ethic and failing to appreciate the amount of work and commitment needed to be successful at GCSE are key characteristics of students who underperform.

Barriers to Success

It is important for parents and students to recognise and address any barriers to achievement that may arise during the two years.

Attendance

Students must attend school everyday unless they are too ill to do so. Holidays can have a devastating effect on exam performance, particularly when exam questions relate to work covered when a child was on holiday. Non urgent medical and dental appointments should be made out of school time wherever possible.

Research across the country has shown that:

- 100% Attendance – students are likely to achieve target grades
- <90% - minus one grade per subject
- <80% - minus two grades per subject

Punctuality

This is commented upon in references and needs to be addressed if it is an issue so students do not miss learning, arrive late for exams or establish bad habits that could affect their future employment!

Ready to Learn

Arriving at school well rested, fed, with a positive attitude, the right equipment and a commitment to working hard and behaving well means students are ready for learning and well prepared to be successful.

Aspirations

Students who know what they want to achieve in terms of Post 16 courses, university or careers choices often find it easier to motivate themselves to do well at GCSE. Supporting your child through helping them to develop their goals and aspirations can be a powerful and motivating force for success.

Talking to your child about their plans for the future, working with them on researching the options and helping them to identify ambitious and aspirational plans can be very rewarding for them and for you as parents.

Need more help or advice?

Mrs Hodgetts	Vice Principal (Student Support)
Mr Ward	Head of KS4
Mrs Woodus	Student Support Worker
Mrs Ford	The Hub Manager
Mrs Bate	Learning Mentor
Miss Dickens	Attendance Officer

Contact details for Student Support staff and Heads of Faculty are available on the school website. To discuss any additional support for your child that is not subject specific please contact Mr Ward or Mrs Woodus in the first instance.

GOOD LUCK!