

Making a Success of Year 11



Notes for Parents

WELCOME TO YEAR 11

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 2015 for each of the GCSE courses that they are studying; English, Maths, Science, RE and up to four option subjects. This is a lot of exams and a 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.

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 Vocational (BTEC and OCR National) courses

Vocational 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.

Some examinations have already been taken at the end of Year 10.

Some GCSE or equivalent examinations have already been taken in Year 10 because of the requirements of the course - GCSE Core Science, BTEC Health and Social Care and OCR National ICT.

KS4 Highlights and Key Dates

Year 11 September 2014 – July 2015

October 14 – January 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled Assessments – these will take place during the first part of Year 11 at a time when the teacher feels students are ready to complete them. Details will be available on ‘Show my Homework’.
13-24.10.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post 16 Options Programme
24.10.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 School Report
13.10.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Science ISA Day 1 (Science practical exams)
22-23.10.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE Residential
1.12.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Mock Exams
8.01.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Boys’ Attainment – Part 2
16.01.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Mock Exam Results Day
28.01.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y11 Parents’ Evening
29.01.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Science ISA Day 2
13-16.02.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 10/11 Ancient History Visit to Rome
25.02.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Triple Science ISA Day
24.03.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Interim Report Issued
TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Leavers’ Assembly
May 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified timetable begins, masterclasses, revision and exams
May-June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>GCSE examinations</u>
TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 11 Prom
20.08.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>GCSE, BTEC and ICT National Results Published</u>

Factors Affecting Student Success

A Successful Year 10

Students need to ensure that they have successfully completed Year 10. They will know this if they have:

- Completed all work for all of their courses

- Have kept their notes, folders etc safely ready to use for mock and final exam revision
- Prepared effectively for the Year 10 mocks with extensive revision and have revision resources (cards, mind maps, notes etc) that can be used again for the mock and final exams
- Achieved good or better results in assessments during the year and in the mock exams showing that their revision and exam techniques are successful
- Developed a good work ethic and positive attitude to success

If your child has not been successful in any of the above then urgent action will need to be taken by them to address this.

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 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 throughout Year 11. 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.

Not addressing issues arising from Year 10

Students who do not address any issues arising from Year 10 (see above) will make it extremely difficult to fulfil their potential this summer.

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!