



OXTED SCHOOL
BRINGING OUT THE BEST

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26 January 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Oxted School Curriculum Change 2018-2019

As you are aware the Key Stage 4 curriculum has undergone extensive change in the last few years with the introduction of the new GCSEs. We are only into the second year of that change, but it is clear that these new GCSEs are significantly different to their predecessors in two significant respects.

1. The new GCSEs have more content than the old GCSEs and the content is also more challenging, frequently bringing in topics and concepts that used to be only taught at Key Stage 5. More teaching time is required and this has not been a problem for the core subjects of English, Maths and Science as they already start the GCSE syllabus in Year 9. However, the option subjects cannot do that as they are constrained by the two year Key Stage 4, which means it is proving difficult to cover the entire syllabus in the time allocated
2. For most of the new GCSE's assessment is linear, with the end of key stage exams and no coursework. This means that it is crucial that students thoroughly learn the content so they can adequately prepare for these more challenging exams. To do this there needs to be more interleaving of topics and more time devoted to assessing past knowledge. This also requires more time than the current 2 year provision at KS4 allows

As a consequence of these two significant changes which we believe that it would be in the best interest of our students if we moved to a three year Key Stage 4.

There are some additional benefits to this change:

- It helps teachers to develop a more consistent and positive relationship with students as it gives them more time to thoroughly know all of their students' needs
- Evidence from other schools indicates this better prepares students for the new GCSE's, reduces the amount of students wanting to change or drop subjects in Year 10 and Year 11 and has the added bonus of improving behaviour in Year 9
- It should also be noted that currently about 50% of State secondary schools have already converted to a three year Key Stage 4 and were we not to change our student would have only two years to prepare for their GCSE's whilst many other students would have had three years



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We feel it is essential to make these changes now so that our students are not disadvantaged in anyway. Therefore, any child currently in Year 8 will be choosing their GCSE options this year and the accompanying letter from Mrs McNamara explains how this process will be managed and details the guidance and support your child will be given to ensure that they make the best choice.

To assist with the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 during the first term of Year 9 the option subjects will focus primarily on key skills and concepts, without necessarily starting the GCSE content. This will give students some time to adjust to the greater demands of their new GCSE courses. Moreover, if there was clear evidence that a student had not made a suitable choice, they could potentially move to another option (timetable constraints permitting) without missing out on important content.

There is no reason for this change to narrow any student's program of study and we are committed to providing our students with a broad and balanced curriculum. There are over 20 option subjects to choose from in Key Stage 4, this highlights our commitment to provide an education which caters for all of our students' needs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N O'Flynn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr N O'Flynn
Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum
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