



4th January 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: The New GCSE (9-1) Mathematics and English Grading

In 2013 the Department for Education announced plans for reforming GCSE qualifications. GCSE Mathematics and English Language and Literature are in the first group of the new, reformed GCSE qualifications that is being taught and examined in 2017.

GCSE (9-1) Mathematics will still have two tiers (Foundation and Higher), but the new tiers cover slightly different ranges of grades than before. The Foundation tier now covers a slightly wider range of grades, as it now goes from Grades 1 to 5 (comparable to up to high Grade C / low Grade B performance from the old scale). The Higher tier will now cover Grades 4 to 9 (comparable to Grade C from the old scale and above), whereas the previous Higher tier included grades from Grade D and above. This means that the easiest questions on the GCSE (9-1) Higher tier will be slightly more challenging than the easiest questions on the previous GCSE's Higher tier. Higher tier learners just missing out on a Grade 4 however, can still pick up a Grade 3 result.

Learners currently in Year 11, compared to the previous years, may now find themselves entered for a different tier, even if their ability is the same. This is one consequence of the changes in grading and tiers.

Neither GCSE English Language nor English Literature have tiered papers, so all students will sit the same papers.

As the content in the new GCSEs is so different there is no simple and direct way to convert between the old GCSE A*-G grades and the new number grades. However, to ensure that the new system is fair to those students taking the new exams the government has fixed the percentages of students gaining particular grades against the old system. So for example, the same proportion of students that gained an 'A' and above in the old GCSEs will now gain a grade 7 and above in the new GCSEs. However, this does not mean that a grade 7 is equal to an A grade as the content is so different.

As a result of this model, examination boards will not be releasing grade boundaries until the current Year 11 cohort have taken their GCSE exams in the summer. The Pre Public Exams (PPE) exams which the students recently completed have therefore been graded using advice from a collaborative network of schools across the country. This has resulted in what we feel is the best fit in terms of grade boundaries for the new exams whilst remaining extremely conservative in our estimations. There are many factors which can affect the outcome of the PPE exams such as the amount of revision, quality of revision, the pressure of exam papers, exam technique, etc.

The outcomes of the PPE exams have also had a direct impact on our predicted grades of exam results in August, which are also conservative and have also been made using the advice taken from a collaborative network of schools.



All students in Year 11 have been issued with the results of their PPE exams **only as a percentage score or raw score** at this stage; **grades** for these exams will be published by the school at the results assembly*. The girls will also receive a Personalised Learning Checklist in Mathematics and detailed feedback in English which will show specific areas for improvement as a result of their PPE exams.

The students will be receiving their PPE **grades** on *Tuesday 17th January during period 5 in a special results afternoon.

I would like to draw to your attention to the forthcoming **Year 11 Parents Revision Challenge Evening** on the **23rd March** at 5.30-6.30pm. This is a very important event where we will be discussing revision, giving out resources and going through the revision and examination timetable. Please make sure you have put a note in your diary and I will be sending out further details in due course.

Yours sincerely



Mr L Conduit-Smith
Deputy Headteacher

