

# Message from the Head

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week our students have been remembering those who lost their lives and all those affected by the Manchester bomb attacks on 22nd May 2017. Recently, two of our Year 11 students, Elly-Mae and Megan, approached me to ask if we could do something as a school to mark the anniversary. The pupils came up with the 'wear it pink day' idea and I'm proud that so many of their peers are supporting this. We have asked students to make a £1 donation to the associated charity, in return for wearing an item of pink clothing, and I'm sure we will raise a lot of money to help those affected. I praise Elly-Mae and Megan for using their initiative and wanting to do something positive in the wake of this tragedy.

Over the last few weeks a number of our students have been rehearsing for their LAMDA exams. Pupils will sit the exams from one of London's most reputable drama schools next month. We have shared a number of videos of our students rehearsing their monologues, on both the school website and our social media channels, and they are certainly worth watching.

I would like to remind those who use it, that the final late bus of this academic year is on Friday 25th May at 4.00pm. There will be no late bus provision after half term. Students wishing to stay after school will need to organise an alternative method to get home safely.

Attached to this email is my half termly update which includes full details of key school initiatives, projects and other important updates. Also attached is Parental Information on the new GCSE Reforms.

Finally, I would like to wish all parents, carers, students and staff an enjoyable half term break. The final half term of the year is always a busy one as we finish the exam season and look forward to events such as sports day, the prom and the rewards evening.

Best Wishes

Andrew Waller



## Dates for the Diary:

Monday 4th June: School reopens

W/c 11th June: Y7 & Y8 Exam Week

Wednesday 27th June: Year 11 Prom

## Outstanding Achievement Awards:



Abigail  
Apollo College



Amy  
Ceres College



Katalina  
Juno College



Amelia  
Mercury College



Summer  
Minerva College



Jack  
Poseidon College

Well done to all these students who have achieved a superb number of merits this week.

## Carr Hill students teach primary school pupils about prayer

The primary school pupils have been learning about prayer in Christianity as part of their RS curriculum but their visit to Carr Hill gave them the opportunity to learn about prayer across other faiths such as Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.



The Year 6s were invited to take part in the day as part of Carr Hill's ongoing commitment to working with local primary schools in order to help students with the transition from

primary to secondary school. The RS Ambassadors taught students about prayer within different religions before setting them a series of activities including a card challenge where pupils worked in teams to collect a suit of cards by correctly answering questions on prayer in different religions. The activities helped to test the Year 6 students on what they had learned in a fun and interactive way.

RS teacher Mr Churm said: "We would like to thank the students from Ribby with Wrea Primary School for visiting us. We hope that they learned lots of new things from our RS Ambassadors. The challenges were a huge success and the students showed how much they had learned over the course of the day. We hope to see them again soon."

Assistant Headteacher Mr Johnstone said: "The RS Prayer Day is one of many opportunities pupils from local primary schools are given to visit Carr Hill. We are proud of the links we have with our local primary schools and we know that frequent visits such as these help students to feel more confident about the beginning of their secondary school journey."

## Carr Hill student takes a stand on school funding



Haidee was motivated to contact Mark Menzies MP when her parents received a letter from her siblings' primary school stating their school budget had been cut dramatically. Concerned about the future for her siblings and their peers, Haidee wrote a letter detailing her concerns and giving examples of how the reduction in funding would impact young people in her area.

Haidee, who has also written to the Prime Minister about her concerns regarding fracking, said: "I felt that it was important to speak out and make sure people understand the result of school funding reductions. I don't think it is fair that students should lose out on things like after school clubs."

Assistant Headteacher Ms Hilton- Peet said: "Haidee is a shining example to all. I think it is brilliant that she is keeping up to date with politics and the impact it can have on our lives. Not only that, she is also trying to do something about the things that concern her. Well done, Haidee."

### Contact Us:

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Post Ofsted Parent/Carer Update: May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

I write to inform you of developments in the school over the past half term.

We have been working hard to devise and implement precise plans that will have a positive and measurable impact on our students. The revised school improvement plan now focuses on four areas:

- Ensuring we achieve excellent student outcomes for all
- A community where all are proud to belong with excellent behaviour, attendance and opportunity
- Excellent leadership and management at all levels
- Development of effective, sustainable use of school resources contributing to school improvement

The Governors held their first School Improvement Committee meeting with the Local Authority school advisor on May 6<sup>th</sup>. This in itself is part of developing excellent leadership at all levels. At this meeting Governors looked in detail at the predicted outcomes for the summer while acknowledging that predictions are much more difficult this year due to the new specifications and exams in virtually all subjects. All the data we have suggests improved attainment overall at KS4 and especially in the core subjects of Maths, English and Science. It is not possible to predict what the Progress 8 score will be as that will depend on the actual performance of all students across the country this summer. I have attached some questions and answers regarding the new GCSE exams which has been produced by the Association of School and College Leaders. Post 16 outcomes are looking very promising with positive value added for both A level and Vocational courses.

The Teaching and Learning Focus we have developed is called 'progress for all' and this will inform all lesson judgements, CPD, appraisal over the coming year and the schemes of work for the new key stages. Staff are currently developing revised schemes of work for when we move to a 3 year key stage 4 in the autumn. One of the principles in these revised schemes is what is referred to as 'interleaving' – frequently revisiting topics after giving students 'time to forget' in order to aid their memory of the large amount of content and to make links between topics. Assessments will be designed not just to test the most recent topic or block of work but assess understanding of previous work so that again it is being frequently revisited. Developing vocabulary and extended writing will also be the key areas of the literacy focus.

In the past couple of weeks we have observed over 30 lessons across every subject in school and the School Advisor was present for a few of these observations. We saw good levels of challenge, engagement and differentiation within these lessons with students really focussed on their learning.

As a result of the options process in Years 8 and 9 this year we have viable groups in all subjects apart from Textiles which we were not able to run at all in either Year 9 or 10 and Music in Year 10.

I am happy to report that we have no staff vacancies for September and that there has been need for very little in the way of recruitment this year. We have been able to make some excellent

appointments for the new school year - Mrs Aspden will join us from LSA as the new Head of English; Mrs Swainson is moving from a school near London to be the new Head of Art & Photography; Mr Graham-Hyde who is currently at Runshaw College will teach Psychology, Sociology and RS; Miss Kealey will join us as teacher of Geography.

We continue to focus on attendance which is stubbornly remaining at around 94.5% when we aim for 96%. Attendance has a real impact on progress and I would ask for your support in making sure that your sons and daughters are in school and not absent for minor issues. It is often said, but while 90% attendance sounds good it means, on average, one day off in every 10 - this is why attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence by the Government. We do make home visits on a regular basis to check on the welfare of students if they are not in school – as the authorities would expect us to do. Could I ask that leave of absence forms be returned three weeks before the requested date as far as possible – though it is important to emphasise that holidays in term time are not authorised.

Punctuality is important – both in school and as a life skill. After half term we will be trialling a new system for those who arrive after the bell at 8.55am. Students who arrive after 8.55am will be issued with a lunchtime detention from 1.45pm – 2.05pm (during examination season this will be 12.45pm – 1.05pm) which allows students to have their lunch and go to the toilet. If a student fails to attend the lunchtime detention then they will be issued with a serious defiance detention for the same day.

I would like to thank parents and carers who have supported school in tackling any behaviour issues with their sons and daughters and reinforcing the message of positive behaviour for learning. I am pleased to report that the number of Fixed Term Exclusions has dropped dramatically on this stage last year and that the number of demerits given for behaviour issues has begun to decline according to our weekly analysis.

Plans for the revision of the pastoral structure are now well underway. The staff responsible for particular year groups from September are as follows:

Year 7	Mr A Penney
Year 8	Mrs E O'Donnell
Year 9	Miss L Coulthard
Year 10	Mrs J Beesley
Year 11	Miss G Clancy

There will be an opportunity for a 'meet the mentor' evening in the second half of this term so that you can meet you son or daughter's new mentor and Head of Year. We will send out the dates for these events straight after half term.

As you are no doubt aware, government real terms cuts have put a huge strain on schools up and down the country. We continue to work hard to monitor our spending carefully so that we can support our learners in making good progress. Unlike many schools, we have managed not to run in to a deficit but rising costs mean that it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide the high quality learning opportunities our students deserve whilst managing our budget, particularly in subjects such as Design Technology and Art. Governors are therefore going to meet later this term to discuss the possibility of requesting voluntary parental contributions and we do hope that you will support us in this.

Despite the financial restraints on the actual school budget, a considerable amount of work will be done on the site as we have received external funding to improve facilities:

- The 4 classrooms in 'Old Science' are in a very poor state and a considerable amount of condition led work will be undertaken by the Local Authority to improve the heating, lighting and infrastructure. This work is likely to begin at the start of June and last until October half term – it is a large project and there would never be a school holiday long enough to cover the extent of work needed. As 'Old Science' is a separate building it will be secured by the contractors and we will draw up plans with them for access routes and fire evacuation.
- Lancashire Catering Service have agreed to invest a considerable amount of money in improving the dining area, extending the available space to eat by 120 seats and providing an additional food sales point. This will certainly ease congestion at lunchtime. This work is due to be done over the summer holidays.
- The third major piece of work to be done in the summer holidays will be an upgrade to the network and wireless system in school which will greatly speed up access to and running of the system.
- The Local Authority has also agreed to reroof the Hub – a roof which has been causing problems for some time. This work has to be scheduled as yet.

To finish with, I have put in recent e-letters the fact that so many students are engaged in really wonderful extra curricular activities and make a really positive contribution to school and their community. We look forward to celebrating that at the Rewards Evening in July.

With best wishes and thanks for your continued support

Andrew Waller  
Headteacher

## GCSE Reforms, 2018

### Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

#### 1 I have heard GCSEs are changing, what does this mean?

GCSEs are now graded on a new 'reformed' scale of 9 to 1, with 9 the highest grade (rather than A\* to G for the 'unreformed' GCSEs), to distinguish clearly between the reformed and unreformed qualifications.

The government and Department for Education (DfE) specified that the new GCSE syllabuses will include more challenging and knowledge-based content, with exams only at the end of the course. English and maths were graded 9 to 1 in 2017, and this year the following 17 subjects will have numbered grading: ancient languages, art and design, biology, chemistry, citizenship studies, computer science, dance, combined science, drama, food preparation and nutrition, geography, history, modern foreign languages (MFL), music, PE, physics, and religious studies (RS). Most others follow in 2019. During this transition, students will receive a mixture of letter and number grades.

#### 2 If the exams are harder, what will happen to the grades this summer?

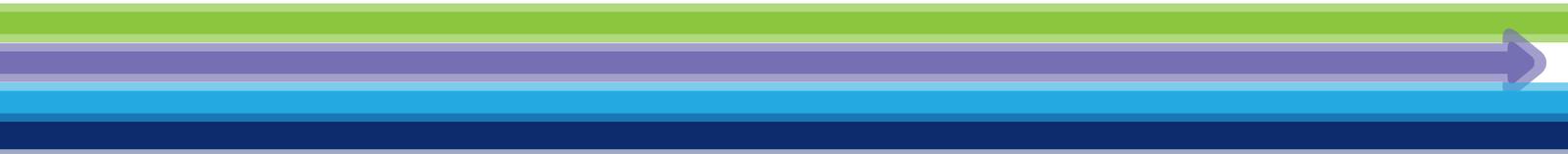
Although the exams will cover a wider, more challenging range of content, the independent exam regulator Ofqual has made it clear that students sitting these examinations for the first time will not be disadvantaged. Whilst students may come out of exams feeling they have done less well, as we saw in 2017 with the reformed maths and English, broadly the same proportion of students who achieved a C and above in each of the legacy qualifications will achieve a grade 4 and above in the new, reformed GCSEs. The exam boards will base standards on results of 16 year-olds who took unreformed GCSE qualifications, so that it does not disadvantage this year's Year 11 students.

#### 3 Will my child be disadvantaged taking these exams?

In short, no. Whilst it takes a few years for teachers and students to get used to new qualifications and there are fewer past exam papers for students to practise on, the exam regulator Ofqual recognises that teachers are not as familiar with the new qualifications as they were with the old ones. Understandably, it would not be fair to penalise students for this, so the exam boards use statistics to help set grade boundaries. For example, a student who would have previously achieved a grade C or above would be expected to get a grade 4 or above in the new GCSEs. While the content and assessment have changed, Ofqual will make sure that grades are awarded fairly and your child will not be disadvantaged by the changes.

#### 4 Why has this new grading system been introduced?

The introduction of the 9-1 system increases the number of higher grades than the previous A\*- G system. By using 9-1, there are now six different grades from 4 to 9, rather than four in the old system (A\*, A, B, C), which means individual students can be more accurately recognised in terms of their results. The revised



scale will also enable employers and others to easily identify which students have taken the new, more challenging GCSEs.

## **5 How does the new grading system match the old one?**

The new grade scale will not be directly equivalent to the existing one. However, to be fair to the students and to give meaning to the new grades, Ofqual has decided there will be some comparable points between the old grades, and the approach to awarding will ensure that, in the first year of a new qualification, broadly the same proportion of pupils will:

- achieve a grade 7 and above, as currently achieve a grade A and above
- will achieve a grade 4 and above, as currently achieve a grade C and above
- will achieve a grade 1 and above, as currently achieve a grade G and above

It is important to realise the new GCSEs have more grades. While it is true to say that the same proportion of candidates will achieve a 4 and above as currently get a C and above, it is not true to say a grade 4 is directly equivalent to a grade C. This is because of the expanded number of grades above a 4. So, a grade 4 represents the bottom two thirds of a grade C, while a grade 5 is equivalent to the top third of grade C and the bottom third of grade B.

## **6 As the top grade is grade 9, will there be similar numbers of 9s awarded to A\*s currently?**

There is more differentiation in the reformed qualifications, as there are three top grades (7, 8 and 9), compared to two in the unreformed qualifications (A and A\*), so it will be the case that there will be less grade 9s than A\*s previously.

## **7 I want my child to aim for the equivalent of a grade C across all subjects but I am confused as to whether they should be aiming for a 4 or a 5**

Because the same proportion of candidates will get a 4 and above as currently get a C and above, aiming for 4 and above is equivalent to aiming for C and above. This is, and will remain the level that pupils must achieve so they are not required to continue studying English and maths after secondary school. The government has defined a grade 4 as a 'standard' pass. Where employers, FE providers and universities currently accept a grade C, the government expects them to continue recognising a grade 4.

## **8 I have heard there will be a 'standard' pass and a 'strong pass', what does this mean?**

The government will publish schools' results, not just at the 'standard pass' (grade 4 and above), but also at the 'strong pass' (at grade 5 and above) in school performance tables only. The number of pupils achieving a 'strong pass' will be one of the measures by which schools are judged.

## **9 How will employers be informed and educated on the differences between the new and old grades and qualifications?**

The DfE, the independent regulator Ofqual and exam boards have designed a variety of products and channels including social media, to ensure all stakeholders can access the information they need. This includes ensuring employers understand that the new GCSEs are more demanding, and that a new grade 4 represents a similar level of achievement to a current low to medium grade C (the threshold for a level 2 qualification).

Ofqual's films and digital platforms to communicate the changes to GCSE grading can be found [here](#).

## **10 Will employers and colleges be asking for a 4 or a 5 as part of their entry criteria?**

Employers, colleges and universities will continue to decide the level of GCSE grades needed to meet their individual employment or study requirements. The DfE is encouraging employers, colleges and universities to have realistic expectations of pupils who sit the new, tougher GCSEs when setting their entry requirements for work or further study. Employers and colleges will also need to recruit the same number of students as previously, so are likely to set their criteria in terms of the equivalence of C and above, and 4 and above.

## **11 Will A levels be changing their grades too?**

No, A levels will retain their A\*-E grades, and AS qualifications their A-E grades.

ASCL Curriculum and Assessment Specialist Suzanne O'Farrell