**Carr Hill High School & Sixth Form Centre**

**Consultation on proposal to change to a three year Key Stage 4 (Years 9-11)**

1. Introduction

GCSEs and school accountability measures are going through a process of change with the first new courses in Maths and English being examined in 2017, the majority of other courses in 2018 and Technology in 2019. Progress 8, based on progress made from KS2 in a set of 8 recognised qualifications at GCSE is now the new accountability measure for schools. At the same time, Advanced Levels are also being reformed. It is the intention of this national programme of reform that qualifications are more challenging with the purpose of raising aspiration across the country. In responding to such major change, schools need to rethink their curriculum offer and also how the curriculum is delivered. In response to this:

* In 2016 we made it compulsory that students at Carr Hill must chose an Ebacc subject (MFL, History, Geography or Computer Science) to ensure that virtually all students from exams in 2018 onwards would have the relevant 8 qualifications of Maths, English, Science (2), an Ebacc Subject and 3 further recognised subjects.
* As schools get to grips with new, more content driven GCSEs and the effective end of coursework/controlled assessment, except in practical subjects, the proposal is that **from September 2018** students at Carr Hill (current Year 7 onwards) will begin their GCSE courses at the beginning of Year 9 and spend three years rather than two studying for these qualifications.
1. Rationale
* Students will have more time to study for the new specifications and be able to cover the increased content and prepare for the higher demands of the examinations
* Increased time will allow subjects to incorporate extra-curricular activities without the worry of losing time which the current structure creates
* Starting the GCSEs earlier will allow for the necessary skills to be taught as discrete units at the start of the courses
* Staff delivering the new specifications are already aware of the challenges of trying to deliver the courses within 2 years
* Maths and English are effectively teaching GCSE over a longer period and are seeing the benefits
* Changing the curriculum structure in Year 9 will allow for more time to be given to Science which currently does not have the time in Year 9 to reflect that the subject is preparing for 2 or even 3 GCSEs
* Students who are better prepared for GCSE examinations will be better prepared for Post 16 courses
* Many schools have already made this decision and report positive effects including more focussed Year 8 students, greater challenge and pace in a condensed KS3 and students more engaged from Year 9 in courses they have chosen.
1. Concerns:
2. Is this permissible?

Yes – many schools have already adopted this approach, the DfE says that schools are best placed to judge the curriculum (so long as we deliver the national curriculum) and Ofsted is looking for a broad and balanced curriculum.

1. Does this not narrow the curriculum for students?

It is true that students will no longer have to study Performing Arts, Technology or Art in Year 9 unless they chose to do so and, depending on options taken, may no longer be studying History, Geography or MFL. However the benefits of the changes outlined above are considered to outweigh the disadvantages as students will be better prepared for GCSE qualifications and they are competing nationally for post 16 courses and apprenticeships. The quality of what is delivered in Years 7 and 8 is very high and the curriculum time given to Performing Arts, Technology and Art in Years 7 and 8 is already higher than in many schools.

1. Are students mature enough to make choices in Year 8?

Provided that students are given adequate information through the options process, careers talks, PSHE lessons and in mentoring time there is no reason to suggest that students are not capable of making choices. It would be important though that students are allowed to change options at least in the first term of Year 9 and that courses are delivered in such a way as to facilitate this.

1. Will students remember material they learned in Year 9 for exams in Year 11?

The way courses are delivered in the new specifications has to be rethought. It is not possible, whether over 2 years or 3 years, just to deliver the course and then revise at the end. There needs to be constant interleaving of material by revisiting previous topics taught through regular assessment and recapping.

1. a) Current curriculum structure

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Year 7** | **Year 8** | **Year 9** | **Year 10** | **Year 11** |
| English  |  8 | 8  | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Maths |  8  | 8  | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Science |  6 | 6  | 6 | 10/12a | 10/12a |
| PE |  4 |  4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| RS |  2 | 2  | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| MFL | 4 | 4 | 4 |  |  |
| Technology | 3 | 3 | 3 |  |  |
| History | 3 | 3 | 3 |  |  |
| Geography | 3 | 3 | 3 |  |  |
| Performing Arts | 3 | 3 | 3 |  |  |
| Art | 2 | 2 | 2 |  |  |
| PSHE | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0b | 0b |
| Computing | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Ebacc Optionc |   |   |  | 5 | 5 |
| Option |   |   |  | 5 | 5 |
| Option  |   |   |  | 5 | 5 |
| **Total** | **50** | **50** | **50** | **50** | **50** |

a Triple Science students have 12 lessons, others have 10 Science lessons + 2 study

b PSHE delivered through drop down days

c The Ebacc option requires students to choose one from History, Geography, an MFL or Computer Science.

 b) Proposed Curriculum structure

Following a voluntary meeting of Middle Leaders to discuss possible structures and then an extended Leadership Team meeting to consider what is feasible both in terms of timetabling and financially, the following curriculum structure is proposed from September 2018:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Year 7** | **Year 8** | **Year 9** | **Year 10** | **Year 11** |
| English (Lang & Lit) |  8 | 8  | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Maths |  8  | 8  | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Science |  6 | 6  | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| PE |  4 |  4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| RS |  2 | 2  | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| MFL | 4a | 4a |  |  |  |
| Technology | 3 | 3 |  |  |  |
| History | 3 | 3 |  |  |  |
| Geography | 3 | 3 |  |  |  |
| Performing Arts | 3 | 3 |  |  |  |
| Art | 2 | 2 |  |  |  |
| PSHE | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0b | 0b |
| Computing | 2 | 2 | 4c | 0 | 0 |
| Ebacc Optiond |   |   | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Option |   |   | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Option  |   |   | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| **Total** | **50** | **50** | **50** | **50** | **50** |

Notes:

a it is intended that the school’s first language will be Spanish from the new intake in September 2017 and students in the three top sets will be expected to continue with a language to GCSE alongside a humanity or Computer Science.

b PSHE will be delivered in Years 10 and 11 through drop down days

c Some students will have additional literacy/numeracy in part of this time

d The Ebacc option requires students to choose one from History, Geography, an MFL or Computer Science.

By introducing the GCSE options through 3 hours rather than 5 in Year 9, this allows the school to continue to deliver sufficient computing and not to lose any PE.

The proposed structure means that Triple Science does not need to be an option subject.

The proposed structure means that the vast majority of students will continue to study 9 subjects or 10 if studying Triple Science. Consideration was given to the idea of increasing options to 4 with students studying 10 or 11 subjects but it was felt that this would go counter to the rationale of the proposed change given increased content and exam demands and wanting to make the curriculum demands more manageable for students.

1. Next steps
2. The consultation process will be as follows between April 18th 2017 and June 29th 2017:
* SLT finalise consultation document on April 18th
* Consultation document to staff on April 19th
* Governors Students, Curriculum and Standards Committee to discuss the proposal on May 10th 2017
* Parents of Year 7 invited to Information evening on Thursday May 25th 2017
* Student voice exercise with Year 7 before Half Term
* All written submissions to the Headteacher from faculties, individual staff, governors, parents, carers and students by June 16th
* Full Governors meeting on July 5th to make a final decision
1. If the proposal is accepted, Faculties will have 12 months to prepare for the changes at KS3 and 4 before implementation in September 2018
2. If the proposals are accepted, students in current Year 7 will make options choices by Easter 2018 in Year 8 following receipt of all the appropriate information and guidance from September 2017

Please respond to this consultation either in writing or via email to: keystage4consultation@carrhill.lancs.sch.uk

Andrew Waller

April 2017