



# Changes to GCSE and KS3 Grading Information Booklet for Parents

## Changes to assessment in Years 10 & 11

As you are probably aware the government has made radical changes to the structure and assessment of GCSEs. We are moving away from the familiar system of A\*-G grades to a new system of grading with numbers. In addition to the changes to the structure of the GCSEs, the government is also raising the expectation of the standard of GCSE that will be considered as 'good pass' from a C to a new grade 5.

These changes have large implications for target setting in schools. At Lodge Park Academy we feel that it is vitally important for students receive the new target grades as soon as possible. Consequently the school is well advanced in preparations for the new GCSE grading system and is ready to begin rolling out the new targets. This booklet is intended to explain what the new grades mean so that you can better understand the changes we've made to your child's target grades on their new progress report.

### What do the new numbers mean?

Because 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.

We have included an explanation sheet from OFQUAL below that provides further information concerning the proportions of students that receive each grade compared with the old system

### Which subjects are affected?

Due to the number of different GCSEs that are being updated, not all subjects will be moving to the new 1-9 system at the same time. It is quite possible that your child will have a mix of letter and number grades when they receive their targets this year. This is the same nationally and your child will not be disadvantaged in any way by this.

Year Group	GCSEs to be Graded 1-9
Current year 11 and below	Maths, English Language, English Literature
Current year 10 and below	Art & Design, Biology, Chemistry, Dance, Combined Science, Drama, Food & Nutrition, Geography, History, French, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Religious Studies
Current year 9 and below (When they begin their GCSEs in Yr10)	Design & Technology, ICT, Media Studies,

### What is considered a 'good' pass?

To align the UK with the best education systems in the world the government has raised expectations of achievement and will now consider a 'good pass' at GCSE to be a grade 5. You will see from the OFQUAL leaflet included that this inevitably means a smaller percentage of students are expected to gain this standard than gained a C grade in the past. We will be altering our targets in KS3 to ensure that all students at Lode Park are on track to aim for this standard.

# New GCSE Grading Structure



Reformed GCSEs will be introduced gradually over three years from September 2015. They will be graded from 9 to 1, instead of A\* to G.

Students awarded GCSEs in 2017 and 2018 will therefore receive a mixture of 9 to 1 and A\* to G grades.

Students will not lose out as a result of the changes. We will use a statistical method (known as comparable outcomes) so that:

- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above;
- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve a grade A and above;
- the bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G;
- a grade 5 will be awarded to the top third of students gaining the equivalent of a grade C or bottom third of a grade B. The Department for Education has decided that grade 5 will be a 'good pass'.

In addition, the top 20 per cent of those who get a grade 7 or above in each exam will be awarded a grade 9.



# New GCSE Grading Structure



NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE	CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE
9 8 7	A*
6 5 4	B C
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>GOOD PASS (DfE)</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;">5 and above = top of C and above</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #00838f; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>AWARDING</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4 and above = bottom of C and above</div>	
3 2 1	D E F G
U	U

### **Changes to Years 7, 8 and 9**

In addition to the changes to GCSEs the government has also radically changed the Key Stage 3 curriculum for our Year 7, 8 and 9 students. The change in content means that the old assessment system of levels is no longer applicable.

To ensure that parents and students can continue to monitor progress effectively we have adopted a new approach to KS3 assessment. This system is being implemented by most schools across the UK and is designed to reflect the changes that the government has introduced into primary schools but also to provide a strong platform to prepare students for raised expectations at GCSE.

### **Grading in Years 7, 8 & 9**

Central to the new assessment approach is that all students will be required to reach an 'expected standard'.

***Expected Standard: A student will be considered to have met the expected standard for the end of Year 7, 8 or 9 if they are on track to achieve at least a Grade 5 in their Yr11 GCSEs in a particular subject.***

As always departments will be regularly marking books, setting tests and extended tasks to track student progress. Students will receive regular feedback to ensure they know the next steps that they must take to progress. Any students identified as not meeting the expected standard will be offered further interventions such as study supports to ensure that they catch up.

### **Will my child be adequately challenged?**

In addition to targeting students who are below the 'expected standard', departments will also be stretching students to move to 'beyond' it. In many instances this will not be about moving on to a new topic, instead students will be encouraged to deepen their knowledge further to ensure their conceptual understanding is thorough. This will provide the foundation students will need to ensure they are ready to start the new and more challenging GCSE programmes of study.

### **How will the changes affect my child's progress report?**

Half-termly progress reports will remain the same for years 10 and 11. The only change will be that the Minimum Expected Grades on the report will reflect the new GCSE grades. Students will also receive:

- An attitude to learning grade
- A minimum expected grade (1-9 or A\*-G grading)
- A predicted grade to indicate if a student is on track to gain their GCSE target grade
- Current attainment as a GCSE grade

Given the exam system has been relatively stable for a number of decades we realise that these changes will be confusing for many parents.