



BELVEDERE ACADEMY

PARENTAL UPDATE: NC LEVELS/NEW GCSE/ASSESSMENT/STRUCTURE

Dear Parent,

As agreed last year, we published an interim KS3 Assessment Policy which outlined the background to a lot of national change taking place in education. This information is still available on our website: www.belvedereacademy.net/node/27. The introduction of more rigorous GCSE and A-Level qualifications as well as the abolishment of NC Levels meant that all schools had to undertake assessment and curriculum reviews. This work has been on-going for a number of years at Belvedere and we have consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, students, parents and governors. This document will outline the key changes that we propose to implement as from September 2016.

KEY STAGES

The concept of Key Stage 3 (Y7, Y8 and Y9) followed by Key Stage 4 (Y10 and Y11) is increasingly disappearing. Many of the new, more demanding GCSE courses will run over three years and will therefore start in Y9. We also feel that in Y7 and Y8, the main focus should remain on transition from primary school and establishing a secure foundation upon which our students can go on to achieve GCSE success. With this in mind, our new revised structure will incorporate the concept of Lower School: Y7 and Y8 with the students progressing to Upper School: Y9, Y10 and Y11 followed by Sixth Form: Y12 and Y13. Consequently, our new pastoral/curriculum structure will be based on the following model:

Revised Pastoral/Curriculum Structure, September 2016				
Key Stage 3	Y7 Y8	Lower School	Transition. Students largely taught in form groups	SMT Lead: Mrs Marshall Head of Lower School: Mrs Beddard
Key Stage 4	Y9 Y10 Y11	Upper School	Some GCSE courses begin and option choices to be made in Y9	SMT Lead: Mr Jamieson Head of Upper School: Mrs Mansfield
Key Stage 5	Y12 Y13	Sixth Form	New 2 year A- Level Courses	SMT Lead: Miss Speed Head of Sixth Form: Miss Palin

There will need to be some interim systems in place and these changes will impact upon how we report progress to the students and to you as their parents.

ASSESSMENT AND STRUCTURE IN EACH YEAR GROUP

Years 7 and 8

Students in Years 7 and 8 will have their progress assessed and reported against age expected related statements specific to each subject. Progress will be reported as 'significantly above', 'above', 'meeting' or 'developing' as compared to these age related statements. Each department has been working on their own age related statements during the summer term and these will be available to view in the new assessment booklet that will be published in September on our website. Students will be set in English and Mathematics based on their Key Stage 2 test scores. In their other lessons, students will be taught in form groups. The concept of colour groups will disappear in these two year groups and next year's Y8 form groups will be largely based on the Y7 colour groups.

Year 9

Students in Year 9 will commence their GCSE courses in English, Mathematics, MFL and Science. With this in mind, GCSE targets will be set in each of these subjects and progress will be reported against the new GCSE grading system of 1-9. In addition, students will study a broad range of other subjects as they have done in Years 7 and 8. Progress will be reported using the National Curriculum levels that you have been accustomed to seeing in Years 7 and 8 and throughout primary school. Students will be set in English, Mathematics and MFL based on their attainment at the academy in Years 7 and 8. In their other lessons, students will be taught in newly formed form groups.

Year 10

Having chosen their GCSE optional subjects in January, students in Year 10 will be studying full GCSE courses. As such, their progress will be reported using GCSE grades which will be a combination of 1-9 (new GCSEs) and A* - E (legacy GCSEs). Students will have target grades in each of their subjects so that progress can be accurately tracked.

Year 11

Students in Year 11 will continue to study the 'new' GCSEs in English and Mathematics and their progress in these subjects will be reported using the 1-9 GCSE grading system. In their other subjects, as has been the case in Year 10, students' progress will be reported using the A*-E grading system.

Year 12

The great majority of students will study three A Levels in a linear way. This means that all of their externally assessed examinations will take place at the end of Year 13. At the end of Year 12, all students will sit a rigorous mock examination in each of their subjects.

Year 13

Students in Year 13 will continue to study A Level content in each of their subjects. For some subjects (legacy subjects), the AS result / grade will count towards the overall A Level award, whilst in other cases (the 'new' A levels) the AS level does not count but instead is a separate, stand-alone qualification.

GRADE CARDS AND REPORTING

Clearly all of the above will mean that grade cards will look different in different year groups next year. We have also had to re-consider our current 'Effort' grading system based on a 1-5 outcome with 1 being outstanding. Under the new GCSE grading system, 1 will be the lowest grade and obviously this could lead to confusion with our current effort system. Again, having consulted a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and governors, we will move to a new system of reporting effort using words with a fuller explanation on the back of the new grade cards. Effort will be graded in the following way:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

We will of course continue to reward our students for their continued effort as well as academic achievement in this new system of reporting, tracking and assessing.

We appreciate that this document outlines a great deal of change over the coming years. We firmly believe, as do the wider staff, the governors and the parental forum, that these changes will ensure the best possible set of outcomes for all of our students as they continue on their educational journey towards more demanding, linear examinations at both GCSE and A-Level.

Should you have any queries, questions or concerns over any aspect of this, please contact either of us at Belvedere.

Yours sincerely,

M. McGarry

S. Jamieson

Associate Principal

Senior Assistant Vice-Principal