

Tongue Lane, Leeds LS6 4QE

Telephone: (0113) 887 3240
Facsimile: (0113) 294 0320
E-mail: info@cardinalheenan.com
Website: www.cardinalheenan.com
Headteacher: Miss E A Cox MA MBA



23 January 2015

Dear Parents

Update on Changes to Key Stage 4

You will be aware that significant changes to the examination system are being introduced for pupils now in Years 9, 8 and 7 who will be sitting GCSEs from 2017 onwards.

The National Curriculum for 14-16 year olds is being reduced in size and will now be defined as rather short lists of knowledge to be taught, rather than detailing the content, skills and approaches to be taken. The familiar National Curriculum "levels" will be withdrawn. From 2018 onwards (current Year 8 pupils) GCSEs will be characterised by:

- **Linear assessments.** This means that there will no longer be "modules" where students are taking part of the examinations at various times during the GCSE course. All examinations in a subject will be taken at the end of the summer term of Year 11.
- **Assessment by external examination papers only.** Practical examinations module tests, controlled assessment and "coursework" will only be permitted by examination boards where this is essential to assess the particular learning in a course. In many subjects, such as English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Religious Studies, History and Geography, all coursework will disappear. Even in the few subjects where practical assessment may remain, this is much more likely to be in the form of timed practical examinations.
- **No re-sit opportunities.** It will no longer be possible to "re-take" parts of examinations at separate times. With the exception of English and Mathematics, GCSE examinations will be available in the summer examination series only, so any re-sits will have to take place a full year after the first time the examination is taken. In English Language and Mathematics there will be one re-sit in the November following the June series.
- **Current grading structure to be replaced by numbers.** The familiar A*-G grades at GCSE will be replaced with a numerical scale where 9 is the highest and 1 the lowest grade. The new numerical grades do not align with existing grades. In particular, the standards required to "pass" and to achieve top grades will be significantly higher than in the present GCSEs.
- **Greater demand and discrimination for the top grades.** Arrangements will be made (and have already been introduced to current GCSEs) so that the number of pupils gaining pass and top grades will not increase from year to year unless there has been a substantial improvement in performance nationally. GCSE grades awarded to an individual will depend much more on a pupil's relative performance compared with the national situation rather than standard achieved.
- **Content changes to GCSE to make them more challenging with emphasis on factual knowledge and less on skills and understanding.** This means that in Mathematics there is more emphasis on remembering formulas and solving problems. The new GCSE in English Language will require pupils to read 'a wide range of texts'. English Literature will focus on four areas of 'classic literature'. Answering examination questions on unseen texts (ie texts which pupils read for the first time during the examinations) will be a new requirement.
- **Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in a wide range of subjects.**
- Finally, the main measures of success for pupils and schools are also changing rapidly. Emphasis will be placed on pupils achieving high grades in both English and Mathematics and in the "points score" of their highest grades in E Bacc subjects (Sciences, Languages, Geography, History, Computing) and other GCSE and vocational subjects.

New GCSEs in **English Language, English Literature and Mathematics** will be introduced first, for pupils currently in Year 9 (January 2015). These will be marked under the new system in June 2017. It is currently proposed that 'reformed' GCSEs in **art and design, biology, chemistry, physics, core science, additional science, computer science, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious studies** will adopt the new grading system for the 2018 examinations, with all other subjects following in 2019.



New School Uniform

The school will be introducing a new uniform from September 2015, following consultation with governors and parents at the last Parent Forum meeting. The consultation with parents was very supportive of a new uniform that will address issues of smartness and consistency. The new uniform is smart, practical and provides value for money. Although feedback has been broadly supportive, concerns were raised about costs. The school will take the following actions to mitigate these concerns:

The new uniform will be introduced in stages across the year groups:

- All Year 7 pupils transferring from primary schools to Cardinal Heenan in September 2015 will be required to wear the new uniform, including PE kit.
- For pupils in Years 8 and 9 the new school uniform will be compulsory from September 2016.

Pupils now in Year 10 may continue to wear the current school uniform and PE kit until they leave in July 2016.

Fundraising Success

Cardinal Heenan pupils presented a cheque for £3,075.47 to CAFOD, the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales, on Tuesday 20 January. This sum was raised by pupils in school in response to CAFOD's Ebola appeal. Ben Oldham, Leeds Diocesan Manager at CAFOD, was in school to make a presentation on Climate Change to pupils in our school's CAFOD group.



Many thanks to all parents for supporting your children's fundraising efforts so generously during our Advent appeals and to Miss Whitford who facilitates our pupils' CAFOD group.

Year 8 Girls are Champions Again



Year 8 girls at Cardinal Heenan are Sport Hall Athletics Champions for a second year in succession. Following a narrow victory over Roundhay School, our girls took on teams from all over Leeds in the City Final at Pudsey Grangefield School. Cardinal Heenan athletes finished in either first or second place in every track event. Imani Todman gave a particularly strong performance in the six lap individual race, winning by half the length of the sports hall and lapping another competitor. Ese Ogieva, Imani Todman, Ellie Cavanagh and Maiana Duka completed a comprehensive double points victory in the 4 x 2 team relay.

All our girls contributed to field events and were declared comfortable victors ahead of Morley Academy and Brigshaw High School. They now head over to Halifax to challenge for the title of West Yorkshire Champions for the second year running.

Congratulations to Imani Todman, Ellie Cavanagh, Ese Ogieva, Grace Armitage (Capt), Ruby Joseph, Mariana Duka, Mia Cavanagh and Lillie Joseph on their impressive achievement.

Year 8 Options

It was pleasing to see such large numbers of parents and pupils attending our options information meetings yesterday evening.

An options fair for pupils will take place during the school day on Monday 26 January. Year 8 will have the opportunity to meet older pupils already studying the various KS4 courses and to ask questions of the learners themselves. A special assembly on options will also take place on Monday. In the coming weeks pupils will have also have opportunities to sample the new courses available. The choices form will be issued to Year 8 pupils on Monday afternoon.

Next Wednesday, 28 January, the Year 8 Parents' Evening presents an opportunity for Year 8 parents to meet with their children's subject teachers. The meeting begins at 4.00pm and finishes at 7.00pm. Senior staff and the teachers who will be delivering KS4 courses will be available to discuss curriculum choice with parents and pupils. The choices forms must be returned to school by Tuesday 24 February.

Key Dates for Year 11

Monday 9 February to Friday 13 February 2015: GCSE French and Italian Speaking Tests

The speaking components GCSE French and GCSE Italian will be examined by individual appointment in the week commencing Monday 9 February 2015. The times of speaking tests are displayed on the noticeboard in the Languages Corridor. The results of these GCSE examinations will count towards final GCSE grades.

Wednesday 11 February 2015, 4.00pm to 7.00pm

Issue of Year 11 Annual Reports to Parents

Tuesday 24 February to Friday 27 February 2015: GCSE Spanish Speaking Tests

The speaking components GCSE Spanish will be examined by individual appointment between Tuesday 24 and Friday 27 February 2015. The times of speaking tests are displayed on the noticeboard in the Languages Corridor. The results of these GCSE examinations will count towards final GCSE grades.

Wednesday 11 March 2015, 7.00pm: Year 11 Examination Preparation Evening for Pupils and Parents**Tuesday 24 March and Wednesday 25 March 2015: GCSE Art examination**

The GCSE Art examination will be scheduled over 10 hours. This a compulsory component for all pupils entered. The results of this GCSE examination will count towards final GCSE grade awarded in Art.

Friday 8 May 2015: Year 11 Leavers' Mass**Monday 11 May 2015 to Friday 12 June 2015: GCSE Examinations**

GCSE examination papers are scheduled from 11 May to 2 June. Most of our examination candidates will sit their final paper on Friday 12 June. The GCSE Statistics examination takes place on Thursday 18 June. GCSE Italian Listening and Reading is scheduled for Monday 22 June 2015.

Year 11 GCSE Results Day: Thursday 20 August

Yours sincerely



E A Cox
Headteacher