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CARDINAL HEENAN
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Putting Our Faith in Education

29 January 2016

Dear Parents

Star Role for Jamie



Year 7 pupil Jamie Cooke will enjoy a welcome rest on Sunday. He has been playing a part in the ensemble of the musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse since 2 December! (Jamie is pictured far left, standing, with cast members.) He will have appeared in 38 performances by the time the show closes tomorrow night. Rehearsals began in October after a series of auditions. He was one of 500 who applied. Jamie is a member of the *Youth Theatre Group* at the Playhouse where he has appeared regularly with the group on stage. Although he has performed in five shows per week for two months, finishing at 10pm, he still managed to attend school, not missing any days except authorised rehearsals and performances. Congratulations to Jamie on a superb achievement. We will certainly be hearing more about Jamie: he has been filming with CBCB recently.

International Triumph for Tessa

Elite gymnast and Year 9 pupil Tessa Archer has just returned from Dallas, Texas, where she won a silver medal as part of the Great Britain gymnastics team. She was competing in the 2016 *Dallas Trampoline & Tumbling Cup*, an 'international invite and elite mobility competition'. She trains at Wakefield Gymnastics Club, home to many past and present world and European champions. Congratulations to Tessa on a most impressive achievement. We are very proud of you!



GCSE Reform

The process of selecting courses of study at Key Stage 4 by Year 8 pupils and their parents is underway. Our two information meetings for parents last week were attended by large numbers of pupils and parents. A booklet setting out details of each core and option subject was given to Year 8 pupils by tutors last week. It may be viewed on the Curriculum page of the school website. Further print copies are available from the school reception office. Taster sessions in the new subjects which our pupils have not yet experienced (*GCSE Triple Science, GCSE Business, GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition, WJEC Constructing the Built Environment and BTEC Children's Play, Learning & Development*) are taking place in school for Year 8 pupils. Pupils will discuss the KS4 curriculum in small groups with Senior Staff. The Year 8 Parents' Evening on Wednesday 3 February, when parents meet with their children's subject teachers (4.00pm to 7.00pm), provides further opportunity for advice, guidance and discussion. Many pupils have already completed an online questionnaire about career choices. Mr Gaffey, our Careers Guidance Coordinator, will provide further opportunities for Year 8 to do so



and for careers interviews this term. Completed choices forms should be returned to Year 8 tutors on the first day back after the half-term holiday, Tuesday 23 February.

Examination Reforms

This is an appropriate time to remind you of educational reforms introduced by the government which impact significantly on all young people of school age. The main changes for GCSE are summarised below:

- Pupils now in Year 11 will be the last group to take the current GCSEs in English, English Language and Mathematics before sweeping GCSE reforms are introduced.
- Pupils now in Year 10 will be the first to sit new GCSEs in English, English Literature and Mathematics.
- Pupils now in Year 9 will be assessed under a new GCSE structure in subjects including English, Mathematics, Religious Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, History, Geography, Spanish and French (where this option is taken).
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 will sit the reformed GCSEs in all their subjects. The reforms apply to Religious Studies, English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, Geography, History, Spanish, French, Music, Physical Education, Art & Design, Food Preparation & Nutrition, Design & Technology
- Vocational qualifications have also been reformed, including those offered to current Year 8: Cambridge Nationals ICT, WJEC Constructing the Built Environment and BTEC Children's Play, Learning & Development
- A new GCSE grading system will be used for all reformed GCSEs.
- Pupils will be awarded a grade from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest.
- **Grade 5** will be awarded to around the top third of students gaining the equivalent of a grade C and bottom third of a grade B. This has been defined as a **good pass** by the Department for Education.
- 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
- Reformed GCSEs will be introduced gradually. The new GCSEs will be graded from 9 to 1, instead of A* to G. Pupils sitting GCSEs in 2017 and 2018 will therefore receive a mixture of 9 to 1 and A* to G grades.
- New GCSEs will not be divided into modules and there will be little or no coursework. This is to avoid the disruption to teaching and learning through repeated assessment, to allow pupils to demonstrate the full breadth of their abilities in the subject, and to allow standards to be set fairly and consistently. This means that the assessment of nearly all pupils will take place at the end of courses in Year 11.
- Tiered papers which cater for pupils of different abilities, currently taken by pupils in a number of subjects, will be used only where an examination paper does not allow pupils at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able.
- Taking a GCSE examination before the summer of Year 11 will be rare. GCSE examinations will be available only in the summer series of examinations, apart from a November re-sit series for English Language and Mathematics. This series is aimed at students who are at least 16 years of age and who are re-sitting papers previously taken.

Further details of the above reforms are available on the Department for Education website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timeline-of-changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels/changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels-that-will-affect-each-current-school-year-group>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460142/new_gcse_grading_structure.pdf

Spring Half-term Holidays: Friday 12 February until Tuesday 23 February

Please note that the half term holiday begins at 3.15pm on Friday 12 February. School re- opens to pupils on Tuesday 23 February. Monday 22 February is a staff training day when pupils are not in school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E A Cox', written in a cursive style.

E A Cox, Headteacher