

## Update from our Exams Officer - Mrs Abbe Hayward

The Department for Education has just published these:

### “Top facts about the new GCSEs” :

1. The new GCSEs in England have a 9 to 1 grading scale, to better differentiate between the highest performing students and distinguish clearly between the old and new qualifications.

2. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the old A\*.

3. The first exams in new GCSEs for English language, English literature and maths were sat in summer 2017 and the rest of the new GCSEs will be introduced over the following three years to 2020.

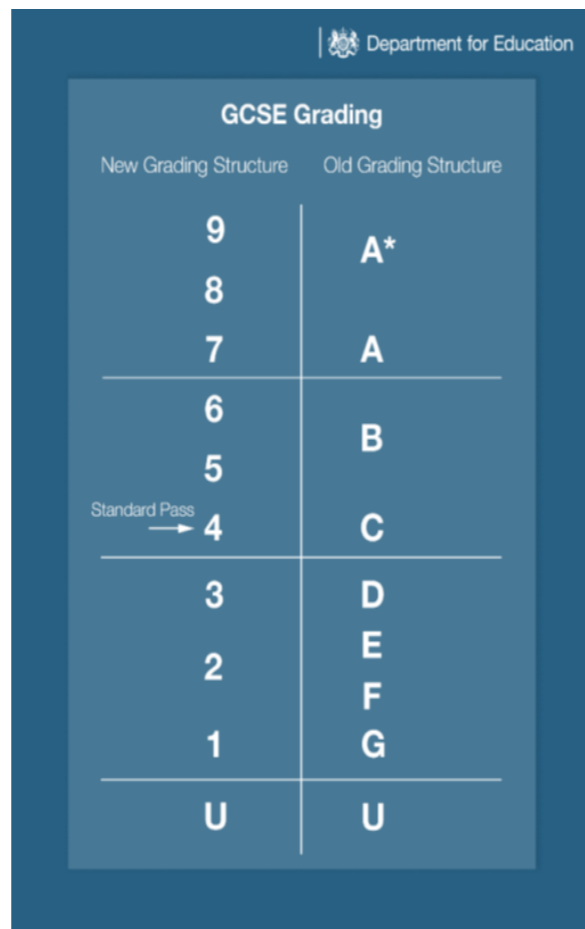
4. The old and new GCSE grading scales do not directly compare but there are three points where they align, as the diagram shows:

- The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
- The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
- The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.

5. Although the exams will cover more challenging content, students will not be disadvantaged by being the first to sit the new GCSEs. The approach used by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England, ensures that, all things being equal, broadly the same proportion of students will get grades 1, 4 and 7 and above in the reformed subjects, as would have got G, C or A and above in the old system.

6. The Department for Education recognises grade 4 and above as a ‘standard pass’ in all subjects. A grade 4 or above marks a similar achievement to the old grade C or above. It is a credible achievement for a young person that should be valued as a passport to future study and employment. A grade 4 is the minimum level that students need to reach in English and maths, otherwise they need to continue to study these subjects as part of their post-16 education. This requirement does not apply to other subjects.

7. Employers, universities and colleges will continue to set the GCSE grades they require for entry to employment or further study. We are saying to them that if they previously set grade C as their minimum requirement, then the nearest equivalent is grade 4. The old A\* to G grades will remain valid for future employment or study



GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

### GCSE Results day:

#### Thursday 23rd August

Please could Year 11 students come and pick up GCSE results from our Weston site between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon on Thursday 23rd August.

If students are not present in person on that morning, their results will be posted first class that day.

Term 5

24th May 2018

### NEWSLETTER

## A few words from our Acting Principal - Mr Tony Hill

Dear Parents/Carers

It has been a busy term for our students, especially our Year 11 students who have started their GCSE exams in the last few weeks. I am very proud of the way they have approached this challenge and encourage them to continue revising over the half-term break.

All of our Centres continue to offer our students a very varied education programme including the setting up of a ‘Zoo Cycle’ at our Primary provision at which the students and the staff both enjoyed watching the life cycle of various creatures, cookery lessons at KS3 and Tuition which I’m sure will be helpful to them in the future, Year 10’s attending Work Experience placements and both Year 9 and 10 continuing their Bushcraft days.

Our students are working on various ‘Sow and Grow’ projects across the sites and our Tuition students

have already picked their first peas.

I am pleased that the Tesco’s stores in Nailsea and Portishead have allowed us to be one of the beneficiaries of their ‘Bags of Help’ scheme and hope you will support us if you shop in either of these stores.

In Term 6 we will say goodbye to our Year 11 students as they complete their GCSE exams. All our students have made plans for Year 12 and we would like to wish them every success in the future and hope that we receive updates on their progress.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and wish you an enjoyable half-term break. We look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 4th June.

Tony Hill, Acting Principal

## Inset Days 2018/19

The agreed inset days, for your diary, for the academic year 2018/19 are as follows:

**Monday 3rd September 2018**

**Monday 5th November 2018**

**Friday 5th April 2019**

**Monday 22nd July 2019**

**Monday 23rd July 2019**

These dates can also be found on our website, alongside the academic term dates for 2018/19. The last school day for our students at the end of term 6 (the end of the academic year) will be Friday 20th July and students will return to school in term 1 on Tuesday 4th September.

### Important dates for your diary

Last Day of Term	<b>Friday 25th May 2018</b>
First Day of Next Term	<b>Monday 4th June 2018</b>
Next Inset Days	<b>Monday 23rd &amp; Tuesday 24th July 2018</b>



## News from Assistant Vice Principal Mrs Alyson Mitchard - Primary

Every term is always very exciting but this term is extra special because this is when we create our very own 'Life Cycle' zoo. At the beginning of the term we had a tank full of frog spawn, 10 eggs in an incubator and we also had a delivery of 5 very special caterpillars. Over the term the children have visited our 'Life Cycle' zoo and watched all the changes that have happened and been rewarded with 7 chicks, 5 butterflies and a tank full of frogs, all of which are now in their new homes. The children were remarkable in the way they cared for the creatures and in the process they learnt a lot about the life cycle of different animals.



Our school topic during term 5 continued with 'Living Things and Their Habitats' but also included 'Plants'. All the children have been growing different things but everyone has grown a sunflower for our very own 'Sunflower growing competition'. We look forward to revealing the winner at the end of term 6. As part of our plants topic, each week at Monday breakfast everyone has been trying a new fruit and then spending the week finding out how it grows and where it comes from. Some of the fruits we have tried have included; mango, passion fruit, pineapple, pomegranate, sharon fruit.

Our focus for our Wednesday special breakfast is; 'We all have difficulties but it is cool as it makes us good at other things'. Each Wednesday breakfast we have been finding out about different disabilities with a focus on how it may make some things difficult for the person but equally it makes them good at other things. We have been looking at what it is like to live with

## News from Assistant Vice Principal Mrs Nicola Young - Tuition

Term five has come and gone extremely quickly. The Year 11 students have been revising and have started their GCSE exam programme. It is a pleasure to witness our Year 11 cohort progress and develop into mature students; who have embraced the GCSE exams with such commitment. Good luck everyone only six more exams to go!

Our Year 10 students have been working incredibly hard in Art producing mixed media skull inspired pieces. In Biology our recent required practical's have

Down's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, deafness, blindness, Autism and physical disabilities. It has been a valuable experience in developing everyone's empathy.

This was supported by a visit from Liz, a representative from Guide Dogs for the Blind who brought Lee and his guide dog to visit the students. Lee shared his experiences of being blind and how having a Guide Dog allows him to live a normal life. The children were very inspired by the visit and are organising a Spring fayre to raise money for Primary students to sponsor their own Guide Dog.



It is always lovely to see lots of you at our parent/carers 'Homework' work shop where you get to experience some ideas for things you could do to support your child with their homework challenges. It is really important that the children complete at least a couple of their challenges so that they can begin to experience homework in a positive way and the tasks also encourage you to spend time together. Also please can I remind you of the reading challenge. The children have all been set the challenge to listen to or read 1000 pages. There are lots of prizes to be won as the students hit different markers along the way, so please encourage your child to complete the challenge. It is so important that they are reading every day.

I always like to take this opportunity to remind you that we really do value the support you give us as a school and please hesitate to contact us if you have any worries at all.

given the Year 10 students the opportunity to use microbiology techniques and complete microscope work which has proved both challenging and enjoyable! Our Year 9 students continue to tend to their plants and have enjoyed the food technology opportunities this term, fish goujons being surprisingly popular even with a healthy cornflake crumb coating!

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable May half term.

## News from Assistant Vice Principal Mr Peter Williams - Year 9, 10 & 11

Term 5 has seen the VLC Weston students as busy as ever.

For the year 11 cohort this is the last term that they will be with us and the staff are preparing for their departure by buying lots of tissues. The year 11 students have continued to work hard in preparing for their GCSEs and have already sat their first Biology paper. All the staff wish them well in their exams.

Many year 10s are continuing with successful work experience placements throughout the term. They were also a part of the group that welcomed Weston-super-Mare's Member of Parliament Mr John Penrose MP to the centre. Mr Penrose gave the students an insight to what it was like to work in Parliament and how the government worked. He also took time to answer the student's questions.

## News from Lead Teacher Miss Ashlee Copeland - Year 7 & 8

Term 5 has been very productive and our students have enjoyed many creative and educational activities.

### Cookery

Cookery has been very popular and students have made a wide range of tasty foods including sweet and sour chicken, Victoria sponge and chocolate brownies. Year 8 students thoroughly enjoyed our 'Ready, Steady, Cook' challenge.



### Art

Students have been exploring painting with watercolours and they have produced some lovely pieces of artwork.

### Science

Nutrition has been a topic this term and students took part in a crisp burning experiment. This focussed on the energy created by the crisp as it burned.

The theme for the Year 9 Enrichment activities this term has been 'action and the world around us'.

As a part of this they have been orienteering at Ashton Court, climbing Brent Knoll and are visiting Slimbridge Wetlands Centre.

The year 9s and 10s are continuing their Bushcraft days where they are taking part in a variety of activities out in the wild.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents/carers of year 9 and 10 students for their understanding with regards to the timetable changes that have been put in place to enable the GCSE exams to take place.



### Gardening

Students have been getting to grips with the garden area and growing peas which are coming on well. They have also planted some lavender and roses which we look forward to seeing in bloom.

### Tesco bags of Help

Fortunately we were accepted by Tesco for their 'Bags of Help' scheme and their stores in Nailsea and Portishead are currently collecting tokens on our behalf. If you shop in Tesco you can deposit your token to support the Voyage Learning Campus between now and the end of May. Every little helps and any funding will be used to create a quiet and pleasant space, where students can go to calm down if needed.

Thank you for your continuing to work with us to help support your child. It is vital that we work together so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.