

Underachievement in tests

Dear parents and carers,

You may be aware from the national press that there have been significant changes made to the new English and maths GCSEs, with most other subjects being reformed for first teaching from September 2016.

Some of the changes are as follows:

- Increased difficulty, due to some AS-level topics being brought down into the GCSE;
- No controlled assessments or coursework for any GCSEs;
- No modular exam, so all exams in all subjects will be taken at the end of Year 11;
- Change of GCSE grading from A* - G to 9 - 1;
- Pupils will only have 1 chance to take an exam; no resits allowed.
- There is an increased expectation on committing knowledge to memory.

Due to these quite significant changes, we have to train pupils to cope with and be successful in exams, and part of that process is raising expectations with end of unit or topic tests. Some parents and carers may be aware that we have started to insist on pupils taking *re-sits* of tests if the teacher deems their performance to be unsatisfactory due to a lack of revision or application. We will be applying this re-sit rule to all pupils in all year groups from January 2016, with re-sit sessions scheduled for Mondays 3pm - 4pm. If your child is required to take a re-sit, you shall receive a text message or phone-call to inform you on the Friday before the re-sit session. We expect your full support in ensuring your child meets all our expectations and performs to the best of their ability. Where a pupil has underachieved despite thorough revision, we will naturally put additional intervention into place to further support your child; this may happen at lunchtimes, during lessons, or during an agreed session after school.

In light of these changes to GCSEs, we must respond as a school and do what we believe is in the best interests of our pupils. At times we expect the re-sits may cause some inconvenience to pupils, but they must learn that it is simply not good enough to sit a test without thorough revision. They must develop the skills and resilience to cope and be successful with the new GCSEs.

Many thanks for your continued support.