



KING JAMES'S SCHOOL

KNARESBOROUGH

4th November 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

YEAR 10 LEARNING CYCLE DATA: CHANGES FOR REFORMED GCSEs ONLY

As you will be aware, the government is in the process of implementing sweeping reforms in education. One of these reforms is the introduction of new GCSEs and A-Levels over a 3-year rolling programme. Your son/daughter will take new GCSEs in all – or nearly all – of their subjects (only business, economics, design technology and astronomy are yet to be reformed). These qualifications are harder than before, have new assessment methods and are graded on a 9-point numerical scale (9-1) rather than the A*-G we are all familiar with.

Our department areas have worked extremely hard to prepare for the introduction of these new courses including preparing schemes of learning, re-writing assessments and engaging with information from the exam boards. One of the biggest challenges we face however, is providing forecast grades on the new 9-1 scale. These new grades do not map directly across to the old A*-G grades (one has 8 grades and the other has 9) and, due to the assessments being completely different and more challenging, the tests and test scores are not comparable either.

We have eagerly awaited further information from exam boards and the government on how to predict 9-1 grades accurately but unfortunately, this has not been forthcoming. The advice from the exam boards themselves is to not offer 9-1 forecasts and simply focus on the skills and knowledge students need for the assessments. We are aware that this is not acceptable for parents and students as GCSEs are the stepping stone to the next phase of education or training and therefore predicted results are an important part of planning for the future.

To resolve the conflict between not having clear external information upon which to base forecasted grades and the need to let you and your child know how they are performing, we will be providing the following information on Learning Cycle reports for **reformed GCSEs only**.

For Learning Cycle 1, you will receive the following information:

1. A current assessment grade which will state whether your child is **Above Expectation (AE), On Expectation (OE) or Below Expectation (BE)**. This is based on the assessments completed in class throughout the learning cycle which produce concrete test scores or positions on a mark scheme. Teachers use the assessments to make a judgement on whether students are mastering their knowledge and understanding well taking into account their starting point.
2. A **forecast band** which will indicate the numerical grade we believe your child is most likely to achieve. This must be treated with caution as, until the first group of students have completed the new exams in two years' time, we have no indication of where the grade boundaries will lie.

Forecast bands will look like this:

Forecasting bands	9	7-8	5-6	3-4	1-2
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Colleges and employers will set their own entry requirements but the government is moving to a system where 5 is the new 'pass' grade.

Please rest assured that the forecast grades are informed by professional judgement and any additional information we can locate, but we firmly believe students will be best served focusing on detailed, specific feedback provided in the classroom related to what they can and can't do. If they strive to do their very best and follow the advice of their teacher, this is the most significant way they can fulfil their potential.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at the school or one of the following people:

- Stuart Giles, Assistant Headteacher
- The relevant Head of Department

Yours faithfully

MRS H MILLETT
Deputy Head Curriculum & Standards