



14 November 2012

Dear Parents / Carers,

Year 8 Exams

In 2008 the statutory assessments (SATs) that used to be held in year 9 were abolished by the government. Since then Hinchingsbrooke has held its own assessments in year 9 to mark the end of key stage three. Previously this has involved students taking a single exam in each of English, Maths and Science. Recent changes to the exams at the end of key stage 4 have meant that as a school we have looked again at our assessment regime.

Following this review there will be some changes made to the structure of formal assessments across the whole of key stage three. Year 8 will now have an exam week in April. This will include exams in the following subjects:

Subject	No of papers	Duration
English	1	60 mins
Maths	1	60 mins
Science	1	60 mins
Core language	1	60 mins
History	1	60 mins
Geography	1	60 mins

There are several reasons for this change. Firstly we believe that this will increase the rigour of our assessments and mean that we are better able to accurately measure student's attainment during key stage three. Secondly, exam boards have now been instructed to move to linear exams at Key Stage 4. This means that students will take all their exams at the end of the course rather than taking some modules earlier as has been the system recently. This effect of this is that the mocks that students will take in the final year of courses are the first chance the majority will have to experience a formal exam. Practicing the skills required to study for an exam earlier will help students to be better prepared for the external exams to come.

The year 8 exams will all be held in the week beginning April 15th 2013. Before the exams all students will receive an individual exam timetable as they would for external exams. This will show their candidate number and where their seat is. They will be expected to line up for the exams and follow procedure in the exactly the same way students do for external exams.

To help students prepare for these exams an advice booklet will be published next term. It will guide them as to the content that will be on the exam as well as provide information about how the exams will work.

Students will also be given advice and guidance in assemblies and form times so that they know what is expected of them.

It would be very helpful if you could support your son/daughter with his/her exams by encouraging him/her to prepare fully. Students should take time to revise for each subject and make use of online resources such as BBC Bitesize or SAM learning. They may also need help in making sure that they are fully equipped for the exams by having all necessary items of stationery with them for each session. Your son's/daughter's subject teachers will be confirming exactly what they will need for each exam.

If you have any questions about the content of the exams or other subject specific concerns then these should be raised with the relevant department in the first instance. If you have any other questions or queries then please feel free to contact me using the details below.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alistair Dewar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

Alistair Dewar
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