

The Curriculum at KS3

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are making some changes to the way we organise the curriculum at KS3; Year 7 to Year 9. The way the school has been organised until now is in three streams; the Challenge stream, the Broad stream and the Support stream. Those streams have been established at the beginning of Year 7 based largely on KS2 SATs results. Children placed in the Challenge stream stay in the same class for all of their subjects and take two languages. Children in the Broad stream also stay in the same class for all their subjects but don't take two languages. It is not possible to move between the streams, so once a child is placed in Year 7, they stay there until they begin GCSE courses in Year 10.

We feel that there are some problems with this arrangement:

- Students in all sets only get to know a handful of other students, potentially limiting their social development
- Students who are strong in one subject but less strong in another can't be set in a way that reflects that
- Students in the Challenge sets have no motivation to work hard to keep their place because it is guaranteed
- There is no progression route into the Challenge sets for those students in the Broad sets who show the most promise
- Consequently, there are currently some students in the broad curriculum performing better than students in the challenge curriculum

I have discussed this with the senior leadership team and governors at length. It is our intention that every child is challenged and stretched, that we encourage and reward excellence, and that we as a school demonstrate our belief that those who work hardest deserve most reward.

For those reasons, we will move from this rigid two-tier system to a model in which all students are on the same curriculum, but where it is possible to set separately in maths, science and languages. It will also be possible to set in English, though they will follow a model with at least some mixed ability classes. A student who is very strong in maths but less so in French could now be in the appropriate set for both, rather than under-stretched in one or overwhelmed in the other. It will provide a much more personalised curriculum for most students, and will make it easier for teachers

The best way to predict the future... is to create it.

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to provide appropriate challenge for every child. It will still be possible for the most able students to study two languages. Extra support will in place for those students who need it.

Students in the current Years 7 and 8 will be set at the end of this year based on their performance over the year, ready for September. Sets will be reviewed twice a year: halfway through and at the end of the year. If it is necessary for students to move sets at times other than that, we will be happy to discuss that with both students and parents.

I think this is a very positive change. It will provide greater motivation, it will allow for universal challenge and support, and it will enhance the school community.

As always, if you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Hunter', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Andy Hunter
Headteacher