

LETTER FROM THE MATHS DEPARTMENT REGARDING NEW MATHS SETTING IN YEAR 9 JUNE 2016

Dear Parents

As the students begin their GCSE options and groups are changed we hope the information below about maths sets is informative and answers any questions you might have.

At the beginning of year 9 each of the two option lines had 9 sets in it, with 5 different schemes of work covering the range of abilities. The sets were not numbered 1-9. The students are in a very fortunate position that with the staffing available and to fit the overall timetable structure, maths is taught in 3 bands in years 10 and 11 with 7 sets in each band. We have been able to reduce the number of students in each set and improve the individual attention each student gets. The new numbering system may give the impression to some students that they have moved down. Set numbers across bands are also not comparable. **Every** set is taught by a maths specialist and at a level appropriate to the students. Students have been set based on their performance throughout year 9.

You may be aware that the Maths (and English) GCSE's have changed and this year group will be the second to sit the exam that is graded 1-9 in 2018. We have taken this into account with the work already covered in year 9. There is an increase in complexity of content, problem solving and a wider range of grades available on the foundation papers which will now cover up to the present grade B.(a grade 5). This includes topics such as trigonometry and much harder algebra including simultaneous equations. Nationally there will be more students who sit the foundation papers and after our experiences this year this will be the case. The number of papers has been increased to 3 one and a half hour papers. After a recent trial by an exam board documentation said "the foundation papers are like the old intermediate papers which were graded B to E". In the higher papers 50% of the questions test material at grades 7, 8 and 9.

As the students' progress through years 10 and 11, a range of intervention strategies are put in place. We move students as we think is appropriate and this might include a tier change. Schemes of work are designed so that we can do this. Above all, it is important that students have a positive attitude towards the subject. This is best achieved when students are able to access the majority of the curriculum. We are not teaching to the exam – we are teaching students the skills so that they can apply them in a range of contexts. Any decisions about final tier of entry for the exam will **not** be made until after the mocks in year 11. I hope this helps to explain and reassure. The maths department is very proud of its achievements and we always push every student to achieve as high as they can.

Mrs J Fisher

J Fisher

Head of Maths Faculty