



Science Specialist School

Ref: 10-11-085

15 December 2010

TO YEAR 10 AND 11 PUPILS AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Pupil and Parent/Guardian

Key Stage 4 Newsletter

This Autumn Term has been a busy one. Year 11 have recently completed their Mock Examinations and the process of learning from the experience is well under way. We hope the Mock Examinations have given them the insight and practice which will usefully prepare them and lead to even better performances "on the day". At the beginning of next term all Year 11 pupils will be interviewed by either the Examinations Officer or the Controlled Assessment Co-ordinator and will bring home to you a letter detailing their Projected GCSE/BTEC/Digital Applications/Functional Skills/Project grades (revised in light of their Mock Exam performance), their Entry Levels and their Effort grades in their subjects. I would be grateful if you could sign the confirmation slip that will be attached to this letter and return it to form tutors by Friday 21 January 2011 so that the entries can be processed.

Please note that there are GCSE examinations in January 2011 for Geography (Year 11), Resistant Materials, Graphics, Latin and Science (Years 10 and 11) and in March 2011 for Modular Mathematics (Year 11 resits) and Science (Year 10 & Year 11 resits). There are also ICT and English Functional Skills exams in January. Please see the School website for the detailed timetable of all external examinations. Pupils are routinely reminded in school of these dates.

Year 10 will be working towards and completing Controlled Assessments in several subjects next term. The timetable is on the School website and parents are asked to make sure that, unless there are unavoidable absences, eg illness, pupils are in school for these.

Year 10 Parents' Evening will be on Wednesday 9 February 2011, from 3.00pm to 7.00pm.

Please find detailed below, by subject, relevant information that I hope will be helpful to you as Year 10 and Year 11 pupils move into the Spring Term.

YEAR 11

GCSE ART

Pupils must spend time going over their sketchbooks for their current project and ensuring all of their designs, observations and experiments are completed to a high standard. Pupils must make sure that they go through their books, annotating each experiment and ensuring that they have clearly explained how they have developed their ideas. For those who need to improve or complete aspects of their previous project, this is the ideal opportunity to spend time at catch-up sessions enhancing the standard of their work. (Pupils should see their Art teacher with regard to when these catch-up sessions take place.)

BTEC ART AND DESIGN

Pupils should continue to develop their research in their sketchbooks for the Multicultural project. They should look carefully for artefacts that show a design they can see has been influenced by the different cultures studied. For those who need to finish work off for the Sea Life/Nature project, this would be a good opportunity to respond to the assessment feedback and work on improving aspects of their previous project in order to enhance their grade.

DRAMA

Pupils have completed their portfolio elements as Controlled Assessments. These pieces of work will not be available for re-writing. They have also completed Units 1 and 2 of the course and are well positioned to begin their preparation for Unit 3 - their final practical examination piece of performance. The marks gained for this will be the only marks awarded for performance skills. After school rehearsals and a strong group working ethos will reward them in this next part of the course.



A Leading Edge School

ENGLISH

Coursework for English and English Literature should by now be complete; any pupils with coursework outstanding will have to complete this work at home or during after school catch-up sessions. This year, work in lessons will focus on preparation of the skills and texts for examination. This is particularly important given that 60% of the final English grade is based on two examinations and 70% of the Literature grade is based on one examination.

The final examinations for both English and English Literature will take place in the Summer Term. In the Spring Term, Year 11 will receive a booklet outlining exactly what the final exams will entail, with exemplar questions. Towards Easter, revision classes will also be offered and it is in the pupils' interest to attend these sessions.

GEOGRAPHY

The current Year 11 pupils have now completed their two Controlled Assessments; the first being based on the field visit to Hengistbury Head and the second being a geographical investigation. These account for 25% of the total GCSE marks. In January the pupils will sit their "Decision Making" paper worth another 25% of the final GCSE grade with the terminal exam in June accounting for the remaining 50%.

There will be extra revision sessions during the first three weeks in January when pupils are preparing for the Decision Making paper. Further revision classes will be held after the Easter break.

HISTORY

By the end of Year 10 pupils have completed two thirds of the course, including their Controlled Assessment and the Paper 1 topics USA 1918-41 and International History 1919-39. In the Autumn Term of Year 11 pupils commenced study of their Paper 2 topic, Britain 1890-18. In particular they studied Liberal Reforms and Votes for Women campaign, and in the early Spring Term they will study Britain in WWI. As Paper 2 is a source-based paper, pupils will be using their growing knowledge and understanding of the topics to critically evaluate the reliability and usefulness of sources. The Year 11 mock examination was in the style of the final exams, and pupils sat a full Paper 1 and Paper 2 exam. The second half of the Spring Term and early Summer Term are spent revising and considering exemplar questions and effective answering techniques. A Department revision booklet will be available after Christmas and the Department hopes to be able to offer OCR Modern World History revision guides at cost price. Furthermore, the Department will be providing extra revision sessions in the run-up to the examinations. Whilst all pupils will be encouraged to attend such revision sessions, we will be actively seeking the attendance of particular pupils who we feel will benefit greatly and we thank you in advance for your parental support.

ICT

Information and Communication Technology – Some pupils will have taken the Functional Skills practical examination during the mock examination period if they were considered ready to pass at that stage. There are three further windows, in January, March and June and the remaining pupils will be entered as they progress towards the independent skills required in Spreadsheet Modelling, Handling Data and Presenting Information. All pupils will continue to follow the ICT scheme of work until the end of Year 11.

ciDA - Year 11 pupils are currently working towards their "Graphics" projects. The "Using ICT" project should have been completed by half term in time for final assessment in November 2010 .

LANGUAGES

There are four skill areas in learning Modern Foreign Languages; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and Reading are each worth 20% of the final GCSE grade and writing and speaking are each worth 30%. The pupils are prepared for all four skills throughout the course. The written and spoken parts of the examination are assessed by way of Controlled Assessments, which are completed in school, under supervision. Listening and Reading are assessed via examinations at the end of Year 11.

In Year 10, pupils should have completed three Controlled Assessments; two written and one spoken. Two further Controlled Assessments in Speaking and one more in Writing will be completed in Year 11. From the three assessments in Writing and Speaking, the best two will be submitted.

Catch-up classes will be arranged later in the year to make sure all pupils have completed the necessary Controlled Assessments to the required standard.

MATHEMATICS

In January a series of after-school revision classes will begin. Pupils will be given a timetable detailing the days and topics for each week. There will be two separate sessions, one for pupils whose target is a grade C, the other for higher grades, to ensure that the level of work is appropriate. Packs of practice exam papers are available for purchase along with revision guides and workbooks. Pupils should be using the revision website www.mymaths.co.uk for at least one hour per week. Passwords are given to pupils by their Mathematics teacher. It is vitally important that all pupils bring their scientific calculators to lessons in order to develop proficiency. We recommend the Casio fx-83GT plus if you are purchasing a new calculator for your child.

MUSIC

Composition Coursework

Two compositions should have been completed by the pupils by now. For compositions to be complete they must be recorded and written down in some way. The Music Department equipment is available at all times by prior arrangement with either Mrs Clayton or Mr Lawrenson.

Performing

Two performances must be recorded by February half term 2011.

Solo Performance - most pupils have completed this already.

Group Performance - pupils must have an independent part within the group. This was recorded at a concert on 2 December 2010.

Listening

Pupils need to make sure they are always looking for opportunities to broaden their musical experience by listening to the radio and looking out for interesting television programmes. After Christmas the focus of all our lessons will be preparation for the listening exam. This is a very challenging paper and will need our full attention - it will be one of the first exams taken. There will also be twilight sessions that run after school and it is recommended that pupils attend.

PDL

Although most pupils will have completed their Controlled Assessment, some may still have work to do. This contributes 60% of the final mark.

Any opportunity to widen pupils' experience of current affairs contributes to their success in this course - their understanding of the world and their role within it is a crucial part of their success.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Practical marks including performance, analysis and rules will be finalised after Christmas in four sports chosen by each pupil. Revision workshops will be held on Fridays after school from 2.20pm to 3.20pm and during Wednesday lunchtimes. Pupils should now be using their revision guides to familiarise themselves with the theoretical aspects of the course, ensuring that they have four practical activities that can be assessed and making an informed decision about the level of entry best suited to them; Short Course; Full Course or Double Award.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (Full Course)

Religion and Life: The Department has developed support material available to pupils for each of the four units covered: revision guides, including all essential notes, practice revision exercises, examples of possible exam questions.

Judaism: One important aspect of the study is to understand specific terms. As these are unfamiliar, continuous revision of key words will be of great value. The Judaism textbook contains a glossary, and the revision guides identify the words appropriate to each of the four units.

We have now developed links with Jewish synagogues in Bournemouth which we visit each year along with a further trip to the Holocaust Memorial Exhibition in London.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Short Course)

The Department has developed support material available to pupils for each of the four units covered: revision guides, including all essential notes, practice revision exercises and examples of possible exam questions.

There is no longer any coursework requirement for the short course GCSE in RE.

SCIENCE

Year 11 GCSE Additional Science

Pupils have now completed the "GCSE Science" course and they started studying for their second GCSE in Science (GCSE Additional Science) in September. This course will be examined by three 45-minute written examinations (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) which will be taken in January and May. These three examinations combined account for 75% of the final "GCSE Additional Science" grade; the remaining 25% is assessed using an Investigative Skills Assignment (ISA). The ISA involves pupils carrying out a Scientific Investigation set by the examination board. Their practical skills will be assessed, and they will sit a classroom test which will assess their ability to present their data and draw conclusions as well as analyse and evaluate results that are supplied to them.

Year 11 Separate Sciences

Pupils are now studying in preparation for their examinations in January 2011 (Thursday 13 January 2011, Monday 17 January 2011 and Wednesday 19 January 2011); pupils will sit a 45-minute written paper for each discipline, each examination accounts for 25% of their final grade for each GCSE subject. As part of the course pupils are also carrying out Investigative Skills Assignments (ISAs). The ISA involves pupils carrying out a Scientific Investigation set by the

examination board. Their practical skills will be assessed, and they will sit a classroom test which will assess their ability to present their data and draw conclusions as well as analyse and evaluate results that are supplied to them.

Revision for GCSE Additional and Separate Sciences

As part of their Science lessons, intensive revision sessions will take place prior to the examinations. Some revision guides are still available for purchase; a new revision guide is required for the Year 11 Science course.

Year 11 BTEC Applied Science

Pupils have now nearly completed the first two units studied in Year 11 and assignments are ongoing from these units. Prior to the Christmas holiday two new units will have begun. Pupils who have not fully completed all assignments to at least a "pass grade" from Year 10 are required to arrange a time with their teacher to work on these assignments after School.

TECHNOLOGY

Art Textiles: Controlled Assessment ends at the beginning of January 2011.

Catering (Double Award): Controlled Assessment finishes early 2011.

Graphics Products (Full Course): Controlled Assessment finishes early 2011.

Resistant Materials (Full Course): Controlled Assessment finishes early 2011.

BTEC First Certificate Health & Social Care - The work is assignment based, there is no exam and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work. They must complete all the units of study. Their work is kept in a portfolio and is graded Pass, Merit or Distinction, depending on its quality.

TRAVEL & TOURISM

The present Year 11 have completed two of the three units to achieve their BTEC first which is equivalent to two GCSEs.

YEAR 10

GCSE ART

Pupils should continue to find images and photographs that link to the theme of "Portraits". They need to extend their previous artists' research and link their understanding of this to the development of their own designs.

BTEC ART AND DESIGN

Pupils need to ensure that all planning stages are complete up to the present day. They need to refer to the week by week plan and if any work is incomplete or below the standard of which they are capable they need to take this opportunity to catch up in after school catch-up sessions or at home.

DRAMA

An essential element for success in this subject is pupils' adherence to an agreed rehearsal schedule in support of their lesson activities. Support of fellow group members is an important factor - both in their practical work and in their preparation for the final examination. To this end pupils are expected to meet their homework requirement in Drama by attending after School rehearsals twice a week when pupils are working on a project. In addition to their commitment to rehearsals, successful candidates will also be keen to maintain a course diary of new ideas and techniques they have experimented with, along with a record of performance material they are developing or have enjoyed watching recently. Whilst the emphasis in Year 10 is on building confidence in the use of a range of techniques and creating dramatic responses, often through physical forms of expression, candidates should also spend some time reading a wide range of play scripts (a reading list is available). Written work has begun in the first of their Controlled Assessments and there will be two more of these during Year 10.

ENGLISH

Pupils are following the new AQA syllabus for GCSE English Language and English Literature, which will lead to two separate GCSE certificates at the end of Year 11. These two GCSEs are taught as a combined course across three lessons per week. During Year 10 and Year 11, pupils will produce assessment work under controlled conditions as a replacement for coursework from the old-style GCSEs. These assessments will be taken in lessons, but pupils will work under exam conditions (any pupils who have access arrangements for exams will have equivalent access arrangements for Controlled Assessments). It is very important that pupils are not taken out of school during this year in order for them to be able to complete their assessments successfully.

GEOGRAPHY

From January, "CPG" Revision Guides will be available through the Department at a reduced price.

There is one Controlled Assessment to be submitted, worth 20% of the final GCSE grade. One-day field trips to Hengistbury Head in Dorset will take place in June 2011. The Controlled Assessment will be based on data collected during these visits.

HISTORY

In the Autumn Term pupils will have completed their Paper 1 "depth study" of the USA 1919-41. They will then proceed to study aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1948, which supports the Controlled Assessment task they will complete in the Spring Term. In the Summer Term pupils will study International History 1919-39 and this is the final topic on Paper 1.

ICT

Information Technology (Short Course) - Core ICT is studied throughout Years 10 and 11 leading towards the "Functional Skills" practical examination. When passed at level 2 this carries the same points score as a grade B at GCSE short course. Pupils will be entered for the examination when it is considered they are ready, as there are a number of entry points during the year.

CiDA - Pupils are working towards completing their Using ICT project. This must be completed and submitted for final assessment by the end of March 2011.

LANGUAGES

There are four skill areas in learning Modern Foreign Languages; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and Reading have a weighting of 20% each towards the final GCSE grade, and Speaking and Writing have a 30% weighting each. The pupils are prepared for all four skills throughout the course. The written and spoken part of the examination is assessed by way of Controlled Assessments throughout Years 10 and 11. Listening and Reading are assessed via examinations at the end of Year 11.

In Year 10, the pupils will complete one spoken and one written assessment during the Summer Term. In Year 11 a further two written and speaking assessments will be taken during the Autumn and Spring Terms.

MATHEMATICS

There is no controlled assessment requirement for pupils taking the standard two-year course. This means there is a greater emphasis on exam techniques. There are two written papers, a "non calculator paper" and a "calculator paper". It is vitally important that all pupils bring their scientific calculators to lessons in order to develop proficiency. We recommend the Casio fx-83GT plus if you are purchasing a new calculator for your child. Pupils will participate in traditional past paper work for about a term prior to the Summer examination in Year 11. There are two tiers of entry: Foundation, covering Grades C-G and Higher, covering Grades A*-D. Pupils should be using the revision website www.mymaths.co.uk for at least one hour per week. Passwords are given to pupils by their Mathematics teachers. Some pupils will take GCSE Statistics at the end of Year 10. These pupils will complete a controlled assessed piece of work and will need to ensure this is of a good standard.

MUSIC

Composition and performance are the main features of this course. Pupils are developing their skills and working towards their first GCSE compositions. Performances are both solo and ensemble. We began the course by looking at Classical Music from the 20th Century. The next area of study is to do with world music. We will also be looking at classical music from 1600 to 1900 and popular songs. Pupils should always be looking for opportunities to widen their musical experience through TV, radio and live performances.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Pupils continue to build a portfolio of work using technology. This term pupils will be focusing their attention on multi-track recording, using the recording studio. All work needs to be evidenced and logged.

PDL

PDL consists of a combination of PSHE and Citizenship.

There is no examination in this subject and it brings an opportunity to widen pupils' experience of current affairs locally, nationally and internationally and will enhance their understanding of the world and their role within in. Topics covered include The Drug Debate, Mental Health and Looking Ahead.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

60% of the pupils' final mark is Controlled Assessment. This takes the form of a variety of practical activities, which are continually assessed throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to attend extra-curricular clubs and participate in their preferred activities outside School to improve their performance.

40% of their final grade is a 2-hour exam, sat at the end of Year 11 which will include aspects covered in both theory and practical lessons, and is divided into four sections:

- A Health, fitness and factors affecting performance
- B Principles of training
- C Factors affecting individual performance and participation
- D Social and cultural factors affecting participation.

The course allows pupils to achieve a double award. Pupils will sit the first exam at the end of Year 10 – this will inform the school of the level of award the pupil could achieve at the end of Year 11.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (Full Course)

The Department has developed support material for the course: there are essential notes, practice revision exercises and examples of possible exam questions available to the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Short Course)

The Department has developed support material for the course: there are essential notes, practice revision exercises and examples of possible exam questions available to the pupils.

SCIENCE

GCSE Science

This course is taught as six separate modules. Pupils have now taken two modular examinations, the results of which should be with us after Christmas. Pupils are currently studying for their next two modules which are examined on Wednesday 2 March 2011. The final two modular examinations will be taken on Tuesday 28 June 2011 and the results from the six modules account for 75% of the "GCSE Science" grade. From Wednesday 29 June 2011 pupils will be completing two "Investigative Skills Assignments" which make up the remaining 25% of the "GCSE Science" grade. The "Investigative Skills Assignments" involve pupils carrying out a practical investigation, recording and graphing their results and then completing a written exam related to the investigation. The assignment must be carried out in "controlled conditions" in School. In order for your child to achieve the best possible marks, attendance is vital. We, therefore, strongly recommend that you do not request your son/daughter to be absent from school during this period.

GCSE Separate Sciences

Pupils studying Separate Sciences have been examined on three of the modules that they have studied and they are now working on the next three modules. Their next examinations are Biology and Chemistry structured tests on Thursday 13 January 2011 and Monday 17 January 2011.

Year 10 GCSE Science and Separate Sciences

Revision takes place during lesson time in the run up to all module tests where pupils look over their work and take practice tests. After school revision sessions are also made available; they are advertised by staff and on the electronic bulletin. Revision guides can be bought through the Science Department.

BTEC Applied Science

Pupils studying for a "First Certificate in BTEC Applied Science" are continually updating their portfolios of work and have completed some of the assessed assignments.

TECHNOLOGY

Art Textiles: Controlled assessment continuing throughout Year 10.

Catering: Controlled assessment continuing throughout Year 10.

Resistant Materials: Controlled assessment continuing throughout Year 10.

Health & Social Care BTEC First Certificate - The work is assignment based, there is no exam and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work. They must complete all the units of study. Their work is kept in a portfolio and is graded Pass, Merit or Distinction, depending on its quality.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

This is a BTEC first course run by Edexcel. The Year 10 pupils are following a new format where they need to complete six units over the two years. The first three units completed in Year 10 are equivalent to one GCSE and the following three units completed in Year 11 are equivalent to a second GCSE. Throughout the course, pupils will be required to complete assignments in a variety of ways. Each assignment can be pre-read and advice given on how to improve, so pupils need to act on this advice. Pupils will be given the opportunity to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction, depending on their standard of work. It is important that pupils keep their folders up-to-date and take responsibility for this

Finally, may I wish you and all Year 10 and 11 pupils a very Happy Christmas and New Year and trust that you will all benefit from a festive and a relaxing break.

Yours sincerely

Miss R E Matthews
Assistant Headteacher