

December 2008

Dear Parent / Carer

## RE: The implications of National Curriculum Test Reforms for Year 9 students

As you may be aware, on 14 October 2008, the Secretary of State announced that the key stage 3 national curriculum tests are no longer statutory for 2009. This letter is to let you know how these changes will affect your son / daughter this year.

We were already moving towards a model of a three year GCSE programme at Haydon Bridge High School, but this announcement has made it possible to begin this process sooner.

In English, most of the first two terms of year 9 are spent on developing skills, such as persuasive writing, literary analysis and preparation for a Shakespeare assignment. The department will formally test before the Easter holidays and students will be put into sets. Although these will be flexible, they will effectively be the sets in which students begin Year 10 GCSE English courses, the teaching of which will commence after the Easter Holidays.

Since September, all year 9 students in Mathematics have been working towards completing a GCSE module in "number" (module 3) which is examined on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and is worth 27% of their final GCSE grade.

In Science, all year 9 students have started their GCSE course. The new Science curriculum incorporates pioneering teaching techniques and periods of industry led learning. Students will have completed a single GCSE by January of Year 10 and will then move either to an Applied or Double GCSE route, where students will leave year 11 with two GCSE's in Science. In addition, some students will follow a triple science route, leading to three separate science GCSEs.

We believe that this national change confirms our view that three year GCSE courses in the core subjects will enable all our students to achieve at a higher level.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H McCormick  
Assistant Head - KS3

