

25 November 2016



St Margaret's Church of England Academy

"Achievement by faith and work"

Dear Parents,

Principal: Mr S Brierley MA NPQH

I am writing to consult with you about some changes we are looking to make to our curriculum for next year.

We are suggesting these changes because GCSEs are changing. New GCSEs will give pupils grades from 9 to 1, not A* to G. The amount of 'coursework' has been reduced – meaning there is more emphasis on the final exam. Many of the new GCSEs have more content too, so we need to give pupils more time to study them. We would like to give pupils more time in two ways.

- Firstly, we would like to reduce the number of GCSEs pupils take from 10 to 9. This will give them more time to study the extra content, and will also lead to pupils taking fewer exams at the end of Year 11.
- Secondly, we would like to give subject leaders the choice of starting a GCSE in Year 9 if they feel that is appropriate for their subject. In order to do this, we need to give subjects more time in Year 9. To achieve this, we are proposing to introduce an options process in Year 8. This will give pupils the choice of dropping some subjects, and of picking up new subjects so that they can experience them before deciding whether to study them to GCSE. We also hope this will lead to even higher levels of pupil motivation in Year 9.

Next year's Year 9

We are proposing to change the number of periods each subject has per fortnight as follows:

Subject	Year 9	
	Current number of lessons per fortnight	Proposed number of lessons per fortnight
English	6	6
Drama	1	0 or 4
Maths	6	6
Science	6	6
Computing	4	0 or 4
French	5	5
German/Spanish		0 or 4
History	3	0 or 4
Geography	3	0 or 4
Religious Studies	2	2
Design Technology	6	0 or 4
Food and Nutrition		1
Music	2	0 or 4
Art	2	0 or 4
Photography	0	0 or 4
PE	4	4
Business Studies	0	0 or 4
Total	50	50



All pupils will study a core curriculum of English, Maths, Science, French, Religious Studies, Food and Nutrition, and PE. They will then opt for at least two subjects out of the following four:

- Computing
- Geography
- German or Spanish, for pupils that have studied this language so far
- History

...and up to three of the following six (ensuring that 5 subjects have been chosen in all):

- Art
- Business Studies
- Design Technology
- Drama
- Music
- Photography

It would be made clear to pupils that they would not be able to take a subject at GCSE unless they had chosen it in Year 9. An Options Evening would be held in January to explain the choices to parents and pupils, and a full 'Options Booklet' would be produced to support pupils in the decision-making process. Specialist help and advice would also be available on request.

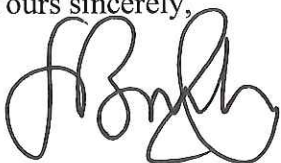
Next year's Year 10

We are proposing to reduce the number of GCSEs pupils take from 10 to 9. All pupils would take GCSEs in English, English Literature, Maths, two Science qualifications and Religious Studies. They would then choose three other subjects (currently they choose four) from the usual list of options. The time allocation for each subject would be as follows:

Subject	Allocations each year per fortnight		Comment
	Current	Proposed	
English	7	8	
Maths	7	8	
Science	9	10	
RS	4 or 5	5	Currently 4 periods in one year, 5 in the other
Computing	1 (in Year 10 only)	0	
Option A	4 or 5	5	Currently 4 periods in one year, 5 in the other
Option B	4 or 5	5	Currently 4 periods in one year, 5 in the other
Option C	4 or 5	5	Currently 4 periods in one year, 5 in the other
Option D	4 or 5	0	Currently 4 periods in one year, 5 in the other; reduced to 0 as pupils would do one less option
PE/Work inspiration	2	2	No changes proposed
PE	2	2	

If you have any comments on these proposals, I would be very interested to hear from you. Please respond in writing or by e-mail to admin@stmargaretsacademy.com by **4pm on Friday 9th December**.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Brierley
Principal