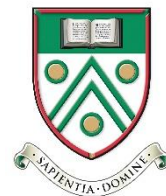


Year 9 Parents' Information Evening

Monday 10 October 2022

Questions & Answers



The following questions were asked through the chat during the online meeting. Most questions were responded to during the meeting, but the answers below may be more detailed than the response originally given.

Are these slides available to download?

- The slides from the evening are available on the website.

The curriculum in Year 9

Why is less time is given to sciences?

- The Sciences are now taught separately as Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The total time for science is the same as in Year 7 and Year 8.

Is there any study material provided for core subjects like science and maths as only Power Points are supplied at present?

- The courses are fully resourced with textbooks and other material all accessible online.

Does OCR have a greater content as compared to other boards? OCR sciences I meant

- There is a common core science content set out in the national curriculum which underpins all the GCSE courses. There are some variations in the additional material to make up the separate science courses, and some differences in the assessment requirements. However, irrespective of the board, science qualifications should have broadly the same levels of content, and are of the same degree of difficulty.

Is the shift in focus in GCSEs (more of a leaning towards understanding the material rather than just recall) - a national shift or is this a local decision?

- This is a national shift. GCSE and A Level qualifications were changed as part of Michael Gove's education reforms dating from around 2015. The 'new' qualifications were brought in over several years, with all in place for the 2019 exam series – the last before the pandemic. The changes included more subject content, a greater 'synoptic' element (ie having to draw together learning from different parts of the course) and more emphasis on the end-of-course examinations.

How many hours of home study per day would you suggest or have experienced to be average and effective.

- Homework is given when it is helpful and supportive in moving students forward in their learning, and we don't operate a fixed timetable. Students are responsible for organising their own time effectively. Typically we might expect Year 9 students to be doing an additional 8-12 hours of study each week outside the school day to complete assignments set by their teachers – but different students will organise that in different ways depending on their other commitments.
- We would also encourage students to read widely as this is good for their general academic development.

Homework questions are being delivered through multiple means like teams or Onenote or email which differs from teacher to teacher. A standardised delivery mechanism should help parents for monitoring purposes as well as students.

We often find HW set on other platforms and not recorded on class charts which can result in the HW being missed by both the parent and student - especially on weekends. So my ask is that whatever platform is used to deliver HW, can it always be recorded on classcharts - thank you.

- The point about recording of homework tasks on ClassCharts is a fair one - we will remind staff about this. Staff may use other platforms to provide students with details of the work, but should still put a summary on Classcharts so that parents can see that something has been set.

If intervention is needed, will that happen in Year 9 or year 10?

- The great majority of students make good progress because of the work done in normal lessons. We have a good system in place to identify students who need additional intervention, and this would normally happen in Year 10 and Year 11.

Target setting, predicted grades, and PTCs

None of our year 9's did SATS, did they sit CATS as this was when they were home schooling?

Some children didn't sit SATs in Year 6 and my daughter was not at school when CAT tests took place. How will you predict her grades?

So is the target grade set by the teachers?

- CATS were taken in the first few weeks of Year 7. The CATS system measures four different types of ability and provides a series of standardised scores. This profile is helpful for staff in understanding the range of strengths and preferences represented in the groups they teach.
- CATS and SATS information can give an indication of students' likely potential achievement. The systems do this by plotting GCSE achievement against CATs scores 5 years previously for the same group of children and looking at the correlation. This statistical tool can then be used to estimate what a new group of students with a particular CATS score now might achieve in 5 years time. This is definitely not a prediction, but a broad indicator of possible potential – it is a target of sorts.
- What is more important is teachers' professional judgement what students are most likely to achieve in the final examinations. This is our 'professional; prediction' and will clearly get more accurate as the evidence builds up across years 10 and 11. of how they are doing in their work against the known standards required to achieve specific grades.
- We think that predictions are much more useful than a statistical target. A **target** basically says '*this is the typical grade that student with the same prior attainment have on average achieved in the past.*' The **prediction** says '*this is the grade we **think** the student is **most likely** to get if they carry on working as they are now, based on the evidence we have to date.*'

When do we get to know the predicted grades? Y9 or10?

- Your son/daughter will receive initial predicted grades in Maths and Science in Year 9
- Predicted grades are given on each of the reporting occasions in Year 10 and 11, i.e. 3 times a year. These grades should get progressively more accurate as students move through Years 10 and 11, as they are based on an increasing range of evidence from assessments, classwork, exams etc. as well as teachers knowing the students better.

There were lots of questions about parent-teacher consultations (PTCs). Key points raised were:

Some parents do not like online PTCs and would prefer face-to-face meetings.

The length and number of appointments was an issue for some.

Other parents like online PTCs but pointed out that some teachers simply talked through the whole appointment.

Parents have to navigate several different systems to get information about their children.

- PTCs, whether face to face or online, always have been based around 5 minute appointments in Years 7-11 and 10 minutes in the Sixth Form. This has been the common pattern in most secondary schools. We have always had problems with some appointments overrunning and causing problems for other parents. The online system prevents this by strictly limiting the length of the appointment.
- The number of slots is going to be limited by the availability of teachers. Teachers' pay and conditions limit the number of hours that can be devoted to parents' meetings and other events outside school hours. Teachers may have multiple classes within a year group and may therefore need to prioritise which students they see.
- If we doubled the length of the appointments, teachers would only be able to see half the number of students – and this would not be popular!
- Used properly, the 5 minute conversation gives you an **overview** of the student's performance. Serious issues or areas of concern can be followed up separately with the teacher outside the meeting.
- For parents and teachers to make best use of the 5-minute slot, there must be an understanding on both sides about what we are trying to achieve. Teachers need to give clear concise high-level information, and parents should focus on one or two key questions they wish to ask. ***We acknowledge that we have some work to do in school to ensure that all staff use the 5-minute appointments well.***

If we have to contact a particular teacher with a concern how do we do that? Email the teacher requesting a call back?

- If you want to contact an individual teacher, please get in touch using the main school email address school@lgs.sloughg.sch.uk and your query will be passed on to the teacher concerned, or someone else who can deal with the issue you are raising. Teachers will respond to you directly within a reasonable timescale so you can then have a direct email or phone conversation with them. Please remember that teachers might typically have around 250 students across their classes and there is therefore limited time to respond to email queries.

Looking ahead – subject choices in Year 10/11

How many additional subjects can you choose for the GCSEs?

- In Year 10 and 11, students follow core courses in sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Maths and English (Language and Literature), plus a language, and three other GCSE subjects, freely chosen from the list.

Can students do any subject of GCSE exams in year 10 from school?

- We do not allow students to take GCSE exams in any of their subjects in Year 10. They do not need to.

Miscellaneous questions

What is the process for selection for DofE?

- Students will have an assembly from the leader of the Duke of Edinburgh Award later in the year. The process includes writing a letter of application about why they feel they should be considered for the award.

In 2022 Grade 9 was received in how many subjects?

- 45.1% of all grades awarded were at grade 9

My daughter gets distracted while doing homework on the iPad. How can I support her effectively?

- This is about her own discipline and work habits. Start with a conversation with her about why she gets distracted and what by. Perhaps you could....
 - think about supervising her studies for a while to get her into better habits.
 - look at the JAMF parent app which you can use to put controls on the iPad at home – see the school website [here](#) for further information.

Where do I get login details for classcharts?

- If you have problems logging in to any of the apps needed, please contact our IT technician team through the school main phone number 01753 598300 or the email school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.

Is this shoe box is compulsory?

- This is a community initiative in Year 8 and 9 promoted by the Phase Leaders Mrs Reid and Mr Badshah, and designed to help students think about others who are less fortunate than themselves. We hope all students will take part to some extent, but it is not compulsory.