

Dear Parent or Carer,

### **The new GCSE science specifications for 2016-2018.**

In view of the curriculum and qualification changes being proposed by the government we have reviewed which examination body to follow for the sciences. The final specification approval was granted last week 29th April by Ofqual for first examination 2018. As a consequence we have been able to make an informed decision on which course would be best suited for our students. We have conducted a thorough review of teaching resources, assessment styles, literacy accessibility for all available specifications and examination boards. Pleasingly, this led to an overwhelming consensus in favour of moving from EDEXCEL to AQA, specifically following the AQA Trilogy Specification. Students in our upper stream will also follow the Trilogy Specification with the option of accelerating on to taking the AQA separate science examinations after the Year 10 Mock examinations. The subject content and required practicals within the Trilogy course are also in the separate science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) GCSEs providing the flexibility to move students between courses easily.

Teaching of the new specification began with year 9 students from Sept. 2015, using transition material that had been made available from the examining bodies. Students have been assessed continuously throughout this course across all three sciences using available assessment material available from AQA and EDEXCEL. Students will be streamed based on their current attainment for the start of year 10. This could involve class changes. Students have already completed the first topics for Biology and Chemistry including a number of required core practicals.

The core practicals are directed from the specification, these will be practised within lessons. The core practicals are not externally assessed but will feature within the six end of course examinations. Controlled assessments that other cohorts will be familiar with are no longer part of any accredited science GCSE specifications.

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course in the summer of 2018. The examination details are listed below including helpful webpage details concerning the accredited specification.

### **Trilogy (8464)**

There are six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- Foundation and Higher Tier
- 70 marks
- 16.7% of GCSE

### **The Separate Sciences (Biology (8461) , Physics (8463), Chemistry (8462) )**

There are six papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Higher Tier
- 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE

**The relevant AQA specifications can be found on the following webpages:**

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-trilogy-8464/specification-at-a-glance>

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/news/all-our-new-gcse-sciences-have-been-accredited-by-ofqual>

### **Useful resources and advice to support your child:**

As yet the accredited course has no relevant revision guides released. We will communicate these home via our web page or Twitter page (@OBHSSCI) as soon as they are published.

In the mean time we recommend the use of published practice assessment material with mark schemes. Practise at home in preparation for all topic assessments, here is the relevant link.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-trilogy-8464/assessment-resources>

If you have further enquiries concerning the new GCSE Science specification please contact Mrs Glaister, Curriculum Leader for the Sciences.

Kind regards,

Mrs Glaister

*Curriculum Leader of Science*