



Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School

Principal: Mr E Hodges



13th August 2020

Dear Student and Parents/Guardians

Whilst a vast majority of pupils have received some excellent results and should be very pleased with their achievements, we anticipate some concern over certain grades. As a result, I am writing today to share with you our approach to creating Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) and how we perceive these grades to have been used through the government's standardisation process.

As I am sure you would hope and expect, we took a very systematic and structured approach to the creation of CAGs. We started with a statistical analysis of year 13 mock exams and year 12 end of year exams. We included an element for coursework / performance for those subjects where that existed and then finally included an element to cover classwork and homework. The weightings we gave to these elements varied from subject to subject based on that subjects' specific requirements. We then went through a review process where we looked at the grades based on prior performance and also went through a Trust moderation process which considered our approach to be exemplary. The process was also validated by our governing body.

As a result, we submitted CAGs which, taken as a whole, would have been almost identical to last year's year 13 results. An A*-A percentage of just over 40% and an Average Points Score (APS) of 40.6 as compared to 40.1 last year. Over the last 3 years our average A*-A percentage has been 37.9% (2017), 34.7% (2018) and 40.5% (2019). Our APS (based on 60 for an A*, 50 for an A, 40 for a B etc) has been 40.4 in 2017, 39.1 in 2018 and 40.1 in 2019. After standardisation this year our APS has been given as 37.0 and our A*-A % as 30.3%. Both of these figures are lower than anything we have received during my time at the school.

We found out on Friday that for A Level cohorts of more than 15, which is the vast majority of our A Level subjects, that our CAGs would not be considered and that results would be worked out instead according to a statistical algorithm, where only the school's rank order is used. However, this appears to have led to a range of inexplicable anomalies that we will appeal against.

Below is a table which shows some departmental performances for the last 3 years and results this year where we will be seeking further explanations. Please note, the CAG is the grade we put forward; the Summer 2020 is the actual result.

	CAG 2020 APS	CAG 2020 A*A	Summer 2020 APS	Summer 2020 A*A	Summer 2019 APS	Summer 2019 A*A	Summer 2018 APS	Summer 2018 A*A	Summer 2017 APS	Summer 2017 A*A	Average APS 2017 - 2019	Average A*A 2017 - 2019
Biology	39.06	40.63	29.69	18.75	37.38	35.71	28.72	20.51	33.49	25.6	33.20	27.27
English Literature	38.11	29.73	34.59	16.22	38.15	29.63	38.82	29.41	36.56	25	37.84	28.01
Geography	39.17	33.33	35.42	16.67	40.8	32	37.25	20	35.6	16	37.88	22.67
Mathematics	42.47	51.55	38.35	42.27	42.02	52.53	40	42.42	42.98	51.1	41.67	48.68
PE	34.58	16.67	30.83	8.33	35	16.67	32	6.67	33.33	25	33.44	16.11
Politics	40	33.33	36.67	23.81	42.81	40.63	38.79	30.3	38.54	31.7	40.05	34.21

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Product Design	38.71	25.81	30.97	12.9	35	20	36	13.33	37	5	36.00	12.78
Psychology	38.29	24.39	33.17	12.2	37.5	29.17	40	26.09	36.59	20.5	38.03	25.25

On this basis I can share that the school, supported by the Trust, will be appealing the results in the subjects included in this table on the basis that a statistical error has occurred. It currently appears inexplicable that results awarded in 2020 are lower than in each of the last three years which are being used by the statistical model to generate results this year. If you have taken these subjects, no further action is required by you. The school will put its case to the exam board and we will inform you of the outcome as soon as we have it. Whilst we will do all we can to appeal these results, one possible outcome is that the exam board may turn down our appeal on the basis that it is outside of this year's unique appeal process.

If you wish to appeal any other subject then please contact us as outlined in the information in your results envelope. Due to the unprecedented nature of the situation we cannot currently be clear on exactly how long the appeal will take, nor can we judge the chance of successfully gaining changes to grades. We would encourage students to proceed with their planning on the basis of what they have, not what they might get.


I appreciate that this places students in a very difficult situation that is not of their making. I would like to assure you that the school will do all it can within the parameters of the appeals guidance. Within your results envelopes you will find a sheet with your CAG and your mock grade. We were informed on Wednesday this week about the possible use of what the government called a 'valid mock grade' but at the time of writing we are awaiting further guidance on this. If your mock grade is different to that published in Term 3 it is because we have applied exam board grade boundaries from 2019 to these, not internal grade boundaries which were typically higher.

It is likely that students will be able to use their mock grade if it is higher than their current final grade, but we await guidance on how this will be put in place. Universities have been asked by the government to hold open places for students who are going through an appeal process and to show additional flexibility in awarding places this year.

Regardless of these challenges I know that many of you, probably the vast majority will have received some excellent grades that will enable you to access the next stage of your education or employment. Across the school we still gained 11% A* grades and have an average grade of a B-.

Everyone at the school is at your disposal to try and support you in the best that we can. Both students and parents should feel free to contact us over any issues and we will do our best to support you with them.

Yours sincerely



E. Hodges
Headteacher