



Dear Parent,

Response to the changes to a three year GCSE Curriculum

Responses were sought from parents, pupils (of all years) and teaching staff. Governors were also consulted. The consultation ran from the end of December to January for staff and from January to February for pupils and parents. It was an online survey, following a written explanation sent to all parents and assemblies for pupils. There was a parents' assembly and all could make representations about the proposed changes. Overall the results were as follows:

Pupils 55% in favour

Parents – 91% in favour

There were five submissions from staff, and the feeling was very positive towards this change.

I have noted some of the common concerns below and some responses to them. These come from all those who were consulted:

It is too early to start GCSE in year 8

This may be the case for some, but it is also the case for some in year 9 also. Exams will come no earlier but there will be more time to complete the content, which might make the GCSE process less stressful than it is now. It has proved to be successful in the schools that have moved this way already.

Year 8 are not ready for these choices yet

Our role is to help them understand what these choices are and what they mean – just as the school does for year 9. This might mean taster sessions, information in assemblies and the year 8 Options Evening marketplace exercise. As one teacher commented in the consultation – “most year 8s already know what they will take”.

What about pupils' literacy or numeracy levels in year 8?

It is expected that staff will adjust the curriculum commensurate with pupil need, as they do now. As changes regarding the new curriculum in Wales continue, there is the possibility that there will be further changes to years 7 and 8 to support greater skills development.

What about the potential impact on wellbeing for year 8?

It is hoped that a longer run-in to GCSE will support a less rushed approach that will help pupils deal with the inevitable stresses of GCSE more. The school has an excellent reputation for supporting pupils' wellbeing and this will not change.

What about the time needed to develop the changed courses?

This is a genuine concern, but would always be the case when changes like this are made. We will investigate the possibility of some additional staff time to support the changes to the current GCSE curriculum.



MARY IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL

Caerau Lane, Wenvoe, Cardiff CF5 5QZ

Headteacher Huw Powell B.D (Hons) M.A NPQH

YSGOL UWCHRADD Y FAIR DDIHALOG

Lôn Caerau, Gwenfô, Caerdydd CF5 5QZ

T 029 20593465

F 029 20672750

E admin@maryimmaculate.cardiff.sch.uk

W www.maryimmaculate.org.uk

Is it more pragmatic to leave this for another year?

We would likely face the same time-scales next year as we would need to run year 8 and 9 concurrently. It is a tight window but we feel it can be completed successfully.

Overall, the feeling is a positive one and will help support pupils with the challenges of GCSE as well as providing greater breath of GCSE courses, including support for either vocational courses or higher level courses for more able pupils.

I want to thank all of those who contributed and I ask for your ongoing support as we support year 8 with option choices in the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely,

H.Powell
Headteacher