



St Martin's School

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Mr L Jarvis

Monday 20th February 2017

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey to help us with planning for our new curriculum at St. Martin's School.

The results of the student and parent survey show very strong support for a move to a new structure for the delivery of our subjects at St. Martin's. It is pleasing to see that for the vast majority this is seen as a very popular development.

In seeking input from stakeholders on this development, a number of extremely valuable comments and questions have been raised. To maintain transparency, all comments have been shared within this letter together with a short response from the school leadership team.

Our open evening on the 16th of March for Parents of year 8 students will be used to outline the new model in more detail. Parents and students will also be able to speak with subject teachers to help with guidance on option choices and future career pathways.

We will also use this evening to outline the programme of events to enable a smooth transition to the new curriculum model. This will include taster sessions for the subjects on offer at GCSE level.

We look forward to meeting with you at this event.

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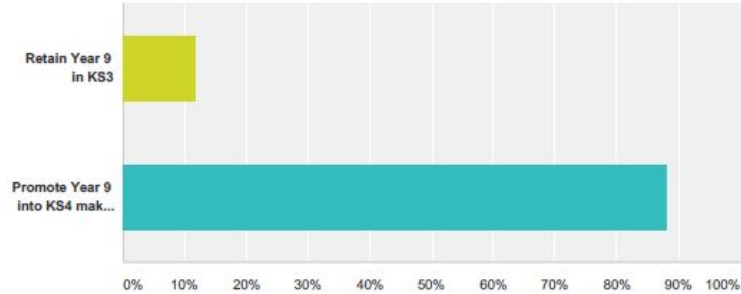


Survey Results

Parent & Student Curriculum Review 2017

Q4 Which is your preferred model for Year 9?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 15

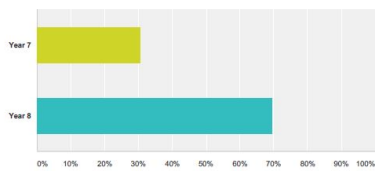


| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|------------|
| Retain Year 9 in KS3 | 11.82% 13 |
| Promote Year 9 into KS4 making this the start of GCSE courses | 88.18% 97 |
| Total | 110 |

Parent & Student Curriculum Review 2017

Q3 I am currently studying in/ linked to a student in

Answered: 125 Skipped: 0

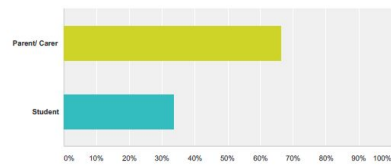


| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|------------|
| Year 7 | 30.40% 38 |
| Year 8 | 69.60% 87 |
| Total | 125 |

Parent & Student Curriculum Review 2017

Q2 I am a

Answered: 125 Skipped: 0



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|----------------|------------|
| Parent/Carer | 66.40% 83 |
| Student | 33.60% 42 |
| Total | 125 |

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Survey Comments (& responses)

| Pt | Parent Comment | Response |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Don't see why year 8 students need options put on them so young. They are still learning the ropes of study and research in year 8 and having extra study pressures are not necessary At the stage. Even my child said to me that they didn't want to choose just yet. I do wonder if you're doing it to make the school look good on paper instead of the well being of the students!! (There's a thought!!) sometimes it's best to leave things as they are. It's done no harm so why change. | <p>The principle to start GCSE will provide less pressure at the end of Year 11 to improve overall wellbeing. By starting earlier it will provide more time to explore in detail the chosen subject. It is acknowledged selection options is a difficult time.</p> <p>The stronger the outcome for individual students the better it is for their future chances. Good results will indicate the school is doing well.</p> <p>The school went through a period of limited change during a time of curriculum and examination change; which took over three years to catch up; therefore ongoing development with the time is vital.</p> <p>The survey indicates the vast majority wish to change to a three year GCSE study. It is essential we ensure there is a process where by students if change their mind they can explore another option.</p> |
| 2 | I feel PE should be three lessons a fortnight instead of just two as pupils need to stay healthy and fit in order to concentrate during lessons. In addition the hours of Welsh has been reduced however I thought it would have more hours as it is a compulsory subject. The same goes for RE which has been renamed to Ethics. | <p>PE has two compulsory lesson in KS4, adding more would reduce time in the core subjects or an option. Students can select GCSE PE giving an additional five hours for Year 9 this can be reviewed further and will be taken to the Governing Body Curriculum Sub Committee)</p> <p>The Welsh department have delivered GCSE full course for most learners for the past two years successfully. In 2016 the school had the strongest Welsh results for both full and short course GCSE.</p> <p>RE has been renamed Ethics and will not be an examined course and therefore reduce the pressure on students at KS4. RE GCSE will be an option for students.</p> |
| 3 | As long as adequate assistance is given to pupils in helping them choose wisely as they will be quite young to be making these choices. | <p>Student and parent will be given advice at an options evening, access to a careers advisor on the night and a meeting if requested during school hours and PSE careers sessions.</p> <p>There will also be a mechanism to allow children to change course if they change their mind.</p> |
| 4 | Overall a good idea to allow more exam prep and to enable students to immerse themselves into specific subjects. However a few concerns need to be addressed: 1. Can parents be assured that the new model won't lead to more pupils being put in for exams early in more subjects? 2. Will there be an opportunity for students to switch subjects? As students are choosing options earlier some students might not fully appreciate the choices they have made until entering year 9. We don't want students having their options limited by choices they make at a younger age. 3. Will staff have enough data from just year 7 & 8 to tell if | <p>Currently students sit some of their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10 (Year 10 outline), this will continue but not any earlier.</p> <p>When student start GCSEs there is a two week window to switch subjects; as a result of moving option a year earlier, this will have to be significantly longer, possibly ½ term. This is always dependant on a space available in the new class. Staff will have enough information on a student to make a Judgment on a National Curriculum Level for KS3. The assessment approach will change in the next two years as a result of the Donaldson</p> |

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| | <p>students are suitable to study a subject? Would students have reached their full potential in a subject? 4. From the proposed timetable there is a concern that less time is being given to Welsh which is a compulsory subject. I'm not convinced the current teaching methods are strong.</p> <p>5. PE should continue to be allocated 3 hours, which is not much over 2 weeks. With Caerphilly having the highest levels of obesity in Wales and with many girls being disengaged from physical activity St Martin's has a role in helping students become healthy adults. 6. Students are not currently studying for the Welsh Bacc so why allocate 3 hours? Parents have had no explanation of the Welsh Bacc in order to assess place in new model.</p> <p>7. Is Ethics replacing RE? Is there overlap with content in Welsh Bacc and PSE? 8. Will GCSE science be allocated 9 hours for those students choosing triple science? 9. Will the advantage of greater time for exam prep include core sessions on revision? Students sit many tests before GCSEs but are not given guidance on revision strategies until quite late in ks4. This needs to be a key element early on.</p> | <p>review http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-succesful-futures-en.pdf</p> <p>The maximum potential in a subject should switch from should focus on KS4 outcomes with additional time as there are the qualification that students need for future career pathways.</p> <p>Points 5 and 6 will be taken back to the Governing Body Curriculum Committee for further review.</p> <p>There will be no overlap with RE, PSE and WBQ. WBQ implementation can be reviewed with the Governing Body alongside PE for Year 9 student..</p> <p>There will be a fast track science option for separate sciences. Student who wish to do separate science will be reviewed during the option selection process.</p> <p>Examination techniques and revision strategies will be a key element to build into subject schemes of work. This is certainly a key area of development and agree the earlier the better.</p> |
| 5 | <p>I want my children to have a rounded knowledge and understanding of different subjects. I don't think giving children a year and a half of a lesson gives them long enough to decide if they want to take the subject further. I also think it's turning into lessons on how to pass exams and about the number of children who pass with A/A star grades. Children of 12 are far too young to make these type of decisions.</p> | <p>The new curriculum as a result of the Donaldson review will reduce the number of individual subjects.</p> <p>Student will start courses a year earlier, but this will give them more time to focus in selected options and core subjects.</p> <p>For the vast majority of learners the potential to reach A/ A* grades has been built on earlier foundations. We aim for all student to get the best grades at GCSE to increase their future opportunities.</p> |
| 6 | <p>I think overall GCSEs in yr9 is a good idea. I feel a bit uncomfortable narrowing down from many subjects in the current curriculum to the GCSE curriculum.</p> | <p>There is a reduction in subjects, however the KS4 model would allow chosen subject to be studied in greater detail. The education value and purpose for having a broad curriculum does not reward the students at the end of Year 11.</p> |
| 7 | <p>I can see the advantages but find it interesting that the disadvantages haven't been pointed out. I worry that breadth of education during formative years would be lost and that my son would be taking options at a young age. What happens if during year 9 he loses interest in one of the subjects he has chosen? Under the current system he makes choices at the end of year 9 when he has more experience of each subject and so is better placed to make decisions which may shape his whole future. From a school improvement perspective I can see the appeal of a 3 year KS4 but feel this may be to the detriment of a significant number of pupils. However, it would be useful to know, if a 2 year KS4 is retained, what the KS4 curriculum offer would</p> | <p>The key issues is that students will select their option a year earlier than previous students. Reducing the breath of the curriculum is less on issue with the development of skills. The third factor is levels may not be as strong at the end of KS3, however these do not impact on the students, only the school. If a student loses interest in a subject there will be a process to change subject for an extended period of time as outlined. The first part of teaching all courses will require an approach which inform students of the full course and not just the 'interesting' parts so a balanced view is shared.</p> <p>The subject experience will be reduced by a year, the first two years will provide an experience for students to understand the subject fully.</p> |

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| | <p>look like, how many options would my son have? If a 2 year KS4 is retained at the cost of having 3 option lines then I would prefer my son to make his option choices at the end of year 8 and have more option lines. I don't feel I have had enough information to make a truly informed choice.</p> <p>I believe that children shouldn't get too much pressure for GCSE too young and it may affect their decisions when they are younger.</p> | <p>There will be three options for students to select if a 2 year or 3 year GCSE model is adopted.</p> <p>Currently Year 11 students are under a great deal of pressure and this is a concern that Year 11 student share and request more time for their subjects.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Having had a daughter previously at St Martins I think it would have been of benefit to her education if she had started KS4 in year 9 so I very much support this option.</p> | |
| 9 | <p>I think this would be a positive change as it will allow an extra year of focus for the students on their chosen subjects.</p> <p>More time spent on maths and science rather than subjects which will be dropped anyway the following year.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>I think it would be good as it gives us students more time to prepare for GCSE's.</p> | |
| 11 | <p>I can't consider this. I need to know what the drawbacks are. To what extent will the student be assessed in year 9? Is it too much pressure to start on the course that early? Is it fair to make the students specialise this soon? What if they change their mind in the options? I am undecided.</p> | <p>Reduction in breadth of subjects and possible lowered National Curriculum levels at the end of KS3 for some subjects are two of the drawbacks. However, the levels will only impact on the school and not the students.</p> <p>Some subject already cover GCSE content in KS3 and most use GCSE questions to prepare student in Years 8 and 9; therefore it will not be a jump. Focus would be on content of the individual course specifications.</p> <p>The pressure of selecting subjects early is far less than the pressure during the course according to current Year 11 students.</p> <p>Student will have an opportunity to change courses if unhappy, for example an eight week window. if room is available on a new course.</p> |
| 12 | <p>We feel children have enough pressure without adding another year of gcse time to them. Also they can change, develop a lot in a year, any work done in that year could be greatly improved the following. We think it should be left as it is.</p> | <p>The main issue with GCSE courses is the content that has to be delivered along with skills and controlled assessment tasks. The additional year is a way to reduce pressure by allowing time to consolidate learning through different teaching and learning approaches. Selecting options can be a difficult time for students; therefore an opportunity to change options will be implemented.</p> |
| 13 | <p>I think key stage 4 gives my daughter more hours to study in the core subjects.</p> | |

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Raising Standards – Extending Opportunities



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| 14 | Will triple science be one of my options or part of the science GCSE? | There will be a fast track science option for separate sciences. Student who wish to do separate science will be reviewed during the option selection process. It will depend on the interest by each cohort. |
| 15 | I think it will be better as we will have more time to prepare for GCSE's | |
| 16 | Do you plan to run triple Science over the 3 years, rather than the accelerated plan this year | See above |
| 17 | Children are under enough pressure as it is. The breadth of education at ks3 is much more broad and balanced in its current format. | The curriculum will change as a result of the Donaldson report. http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf Reducing the breadth and allowing more time for chosen subjects is aimed to reduce pressure. |
| 18 | I believe this option will help students to prepare better for their GCSEs. | |

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