

28 November 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

We wish to consult with you as families about the curriculum offer for Year 8 children. We want to ensure that we continue to offer a high quality curriculum that inspires and engages whilst being broad and balanced.

The majority of Year 8 students are telling us that they would like some **choice** over the subjects that they study in Year 9. In addition, we know some families would like us to find a way to return to offering four option subjects, but without increasing the pressure in Year 11. (Current Year 10 follow three option subjects, and those wanting to follow a fourth option study History after school.) We believe that the proposed model outlined below provides a solution to these considerations.

Currently, Year 9 students study ten subjects (listed below) **in addition** to the core curriculum (maths, science, English, RE and PE):

A language – either French, German, Spanish or Mandarin
Geography
History
Art
Dance
Drama
Music
Computing
Food
Technology

The proposal is to choose five subjects **from this list** to continue to study in Year 9, which will allow more lesson time in each subject before students take their option choices for Year 10.

By giving you and your child choice about what they study in Year 9, we can give more time to those subjects which your child finds engaging, therefore deepening knowledge and understanding in subjects they might later go on to take at GCSE. It also means that we can reinstate the FOUR options for GCSE with some/most students able to take one GCSE early at the end of Year 10. This is designed to spread the pressure on students and avoid the intensity of doing everything in Year 11 whilst still giving them the breadth and choice they have wanted.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to give your views. It is important that we balance the views of as many parents as possible and your feedback will determine the curriculum for future children at The Castle School.

The diagram and explanation illustrates the proposed model over the three years.

Curriculum Model - Choose 5 subjects to follow in Year 9						
CHOICES			OPTIONS			
CHOICES	Year 9	Hours per week	Year 10	Hours per week	Year 11	Hours per week
1	National Expectation	3	2		3	
2	First GCSE	3	3			
3	Three more choices in Year 9.	2	2		3	
4	Then select options in 2 of these for Years 10 and 11.	2	2		3	
5		2				

Choice 1 National Expectation.

All students need to take at least one of these subjects through to GCSE in Year 11.

Many students will wish to choose more than one; this can be through choices 2, 3, 4 and 5.

French
German
Spanish
Mandarin
Geography
History
Computing (Suited to maths sets 1 , 2 and 3 only)

Choice 2 First GCSE. To be taken at the end of Year 10 if this is right for your child.

Select one subject from the table below. Students will study this for 3 hours a week in Year 9, and 3 hours a week in Year 10.

Most students will take the actual GCSE for this subject at the end of Year 10.

FIRST GCSE TO BE TAKEN END OF YEAR 10	Numbers will be limited in some of these subjects. All subjects will be available to take in Year 10 as well.
Art and Design - Art, Craft and Design	
BTEC Music	
Child Care	
Computing	Suited to maths sets one or two only
Food Preparation & Nutrition	
Geography	
History	
PE	
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
Philosophy & Ethics	
Technology	

Choices 3, 4 & 5

Select three subjects from the table below.

		Students will then opt to take GCSEs in two of these subjects as they progress into Year 10.
MFL	French	For those wanting to study two languages only. The majority of linguists will need to take the language as choice one allowing three hours per week.
	German	
	Spanish	
	Mandarin	
Humanities	Geography	
	History	
The Arts	Art	Can lead to GCSEs in Fine Art or Textiles and /or Photography.
	Music	Can lead to GCSE Music or BTEC Music
	Dance	
	Drama	
	Computing	Leading to GCSEs in either Computing or ICT
	Food	
	Technology	

I will be explaining the model to Year 8 students on Friday morning. There are then two opportunities for parental consultation on Tuesday 4 December 5.30pm – 6.30pm, and Monday 10 December 6pm – 7pm. Please let us know if you will be attending in order for us to plan the most appropriate venue.

I hope that you feel as enthusiastic about this proposal as we do. Consultations with governors and colleagues have been very positive. Feedback from these has been extremely encouraging in that we feel we can provide a rich, engaging curriculum whilst addressing the issues that have been apparent with the introduction of the new GCSE specifications.

If the consultation finds in favour of this model we would then ensure that families have up to date subject reports alongside a Choices Evening in January in order to provide advice and guidance.

Thank you again and best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Mrs F Gormley
Head of School

Year 8 Subject Choices – Please return slips to Main Reception

Student's name: Form group:

I/we agree in favour of the proposed curriculum model – Yes

I/we are concerned about the curriculum model. Please detail concerns below.

I/we would like to attend on either:

Tuesday 4 December, 5.30-6.30pm

Or Monday 10 December, 6.00-7.00pm

Number of seats required

Signed (Parent/Carer)..... Date: