

What the new GCSEs mean

A guide for parents and carers

About this guide

This year, our Year 11 students sitting GCSEs in the summer term 2017 were the first group to sit the new GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, and maths.

This guide is intended to help make sense of the changes for these students' parents, carers and families.

What are the changes?

In 2013, the Government announced that it was making major changes to the curriculum that students are expected to follow.

This year's Year 11 were the first group to sit any of the new GCSEs, studying for the new qualifications in English Literature, English Language and maths – whilst sitting 'old' GCSEs in all other subjects.

The main three changes to the new GCSEs are:

- 'Harder' and more rigorous content, in line with the best education systems globally
- A change of grading scale from A*-G to 9-1 (with 9 the highest)
- Less coursework with a greater focus on end of course exams.

What does this mean?

This year, students will receive a number grade from 9-1 in the following subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Maths

For all other subjects, they will receive a letter grade (A*-G).

This is the same across the country, and all Year 11 students will receive the same mixed set of results.

Please be mindful that **all students nationally** are in the same position.

What does 9-1 mean?

The new GCSEs are ranked from grades 9-1 with grade 9 being the highest and grade 1 the lowest – with an ungraded GCSE still being a U.

It is important to remember that the new exams are harder **and** only about half the number of students nationally that used to achieve an A* will achieve a new Grade 9 (the highest possible grade).

The table opposite shows how the old grading system relates to the new one.

The achievement of all our young people is incredibly important and well deserved, and of course GCSE grades represent only a small amount of your child's experiences at Moseley Park.

New Grading structure	Old Grading structure
9	Highest possible grade
8	A+
7	A
6	B
5	Good GCSE Pass (Strong grade C/ low grade B)
4	Low grade C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

If the new GCSEs are harder, are the results fair?

Although the actual content of the new GCSEs is harder, the way this year's results have been calculated means that no student will lose out.

The exam boards do this by setting the grade boundaries after the exams have been marked, meaning that students will not be unfairly punished by the harder qualifications.

Nationally, roughly the same proportion of students will achieve the new grade 7 or higher, as used to achieve the old grade A and higher.

Although we are able to broadly compare the old and new grades in this way, it's important to remember that the new GCSEs are considerably different from the old qualifications.

What will happen in 2018 and 2019?

In summer 2018, more subjects will be examined by the new GCSEs – so students may still receive a mixture of letter grades and number grades.

However, by 2019, **all** subjects will be examined by the new GCSEs, so students will receive only number-grades.

How does this affect how Moseley Park is measured nationally?

Up until last year, every secondary school was judged by the percentage of students who achieved five GCSEs graded C or above, including English and maths.

Since 2016, all secondary schools are now measured in a new way. The main measurement is **Progress 8** – which measures the average progress of students from their primary school SATs to GCSEs across **eight subjects**.

Progress 8 score	Definition
-0.5	Students secure half a grade less in the school, compared to other schools nationally.
0	Students secure the same grades that other schools secure on average nationally.
0.5	Students secure half a grade better in the school, compared to other schools nationally.

The vast majority of schools will have Progress 8 score of between -0.5 and 0.5.

Progress 8 scores are not confirmed until January, so unlike the old system, we will not know our overall Progress 8 score on results day, due to the need to compare all students' progress nationally.