



CHENEY SCHOOL
Think for yourself, act for others

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Louise Marsh – Deputy Headteacher

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Dear Parents and Carers,

GCSE Options from 2021

You may be aware that students at Cheney have traditionally started their GCSE Options courses in Year 9. This meant that students followed two years of Key Stage 3 and three years of Key Stage 4. Current Year 9, 10 and 11 students follow this curriculum.

We are changing the structure of our curriculum for students in Years 7 and 8 so that they continue to follow a Key Stage 3 curriculum until the end of Year 9. They will choose their GCSE Options during Year 9, rather than Year 8.

Why have we decided to make this change?

- We want to give our students longer to enjoy a wider range of subjects.
- We have spent a long time reviewing and enhancing our Key Stage Three curriculum so that it is engaging, relevant and educates the 'whole child'. This means that every subject has had to map out how it teaches different skills which are relevant to our students' future, whichever path they decide to take at GCSE.
- We found some students were not ready, or found it difficult, to choose exactly what they wanted to study up to the age of 16 when they were still in Year 8.
- Some students regretted or wanted to change their choices later on when it was too late to do so.
- We think starting GCSE courses in Year 10 (which is normal in many schools) will help to ensure that students have the necessary maturity to manage a formally assessed course.

What does this mean for students in Years 7 and 8?

- In reality, they won't notice anything is different.
- There is no change at all to subjects such as English, Maths, Science and PE.
- Students will continue to study 'Options' subjects such as Music, Art, Humanities, languages and DT subjects into Year 9. They can use this time to think carefully about which subjects they enjoy, find interesting and want to commit their Year 10 and 11 time to studying.
- Their 'Options' process will take place in Year 9.

You can find details of our curriculum planning on [our website](#). Curriculum development is an important and interesting part of the school's work and is always in progress. Please do use opportunities such as Parents' Evenings to discuss curriculum content with your child's teachers.

If you have any questions, please contact me using the following email address:
lma@cheney.oxon.sch.uk

Yours faithfully,

Louise Marsh,
Deputy Head