



The Castle School

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Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AU

Tel: (01823) 274073 Fax: (01823) 274080

E-mail: office@castle.somerset.sch.uk

Website: www.castleschool.co.uk



Mrs S Watson
Headteacher

July 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to you collectively as a group of Headteachers across West Somerset and Taunton.

You will know that the Government introduced new GCSEs this year in English and Maths which are significantly different to those which have been taken in the past. In Maths, for example, the GCSE syllabus now includes some elements of what used to be A Level Maths. In addition to these changes, last year the Government introduced a new mechanism for assessing school performance called Progress 8. GCSEs in English and Maths are no longer scored as letters A*-G but with numbers 9-1. There is no direct comparison between any previous letter and the new numerical system for grading outcomes.

We are writing to you as we are concerned that when GCSE results are published this August there is likely to be a lack of understanding in the local press about how these changes will be understood and reported.

Each school will choose to report their results as they best see fit but this letter is to advise you that it will be almost impossible to be able to draw any conclusions about this year's outcomes compared to previous years. The Government itself will not confirm pass marks/rates until after the exams have all been marked but almost all sources of information are suggesting that headline figures will be lower than in previous years.

We will provide you with a complete and comprehensive assessment of our performance in the autumn term once more details are available to us but we want to advise you that if the press report any direct comparison with past results it will be difficult to draw any accurate conclusions about how well a school has achieved given the huge turbulence we have experienced in the past two years as a result of changes to our examinations system.

All of our schools strive relentlessly to realise the overarching ambition to ensure that every child achieves and I look forward to writing to you about our successes this summer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Watson

On behalf of Mrs J Veal (Taunton Academy), Mr P Hoare (Heathfield School), Ms R Bennett (Court Fields School), Ms K Tonkin (Bishop Fox's School), Mr M Griffin (Kingsmead School) and Mrs Z Stucki (West Somerset College)

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