



May 2021

Dear Parent

On Friday I spoke to all students in years 10, 11 and 13 about the next and final steps in the process of awarding Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). It seems unreal that we are now entering the final stages and I want to thank you sincerely for the support you have shown both the school and your young people.

As we finalise the assessment and quality assurance processes and start examining evidence portfolios in order to award final grades, I want to talk you through our processes in detail.

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

Two teachers in each subject area must sign to say that they are satisfied that the grades that will be awarded are being done so fairly and without bias and are in line with the JCQ grade descriptors and exam board mark schemes. They must be sure that students were not overprepared for assessments and that the evidence we enter in to portfolios is the student's own work.

When we began this process, we worked closely with our colleagues in the Redhill Trust and followed National guidelines rigorously in the knowledge that all assessments were subject to a rigorous quality assurance process from the start. All departments have moderated all assessments between class teachers and analysed how students have been prepared for assessments. In some cases, this has necessarily led to amendments in the teaching and preparation process or to a change in the number or type of assessments planned, in order to demonstrate competence in the subject.

We are also able to change the level of control to reflect the amount of weight to give each assessment. For example, if we have found that our preparation for any given assessment was too close to the actual questions, we will still give students credit for that piece of work, but we may lower the level of control to medium or low to ensure its weighting is fair when we look holistically at all the evidence.

After Easter, we looked at all the evidence we have gathered so far and scrutinised every single grade. I met with each Head of Department and the Senior Lead in that area, to analyse the assessment data. We put together action plans for the second stage of assessment and agreed a timeline for external moderation of work in every department. We are doing this moderation with our colleagues in the Trust.

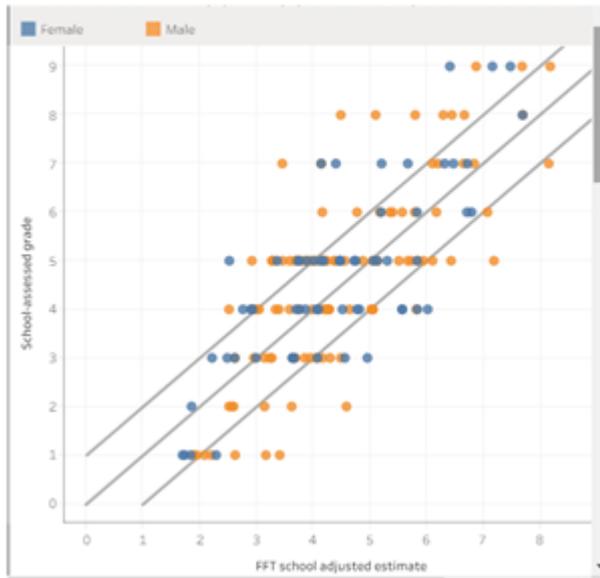
### **External Quality Assurance**

As well as external moderation that we arrange between schools, all schools are going to be very closely scrutinised by exam boards who will ask us for samples in at least two subject areas. They will ask for samples in more subject areas if they believe a set of results stands out as being high or low compared to what our school normally achieves, or what they expect this group of students to achieve, based on their prior attainment.

Exam boards recognise that some students exceed targets and others fall short of them and they take this into account when they look at our data. This is very important in ensuring that every student has the chance to work really hard and make more progress than the 'data' might expect them to. We have made sure that every student has the best chance to add value to their grades throughout this process, as they would do in preparation for final exams.

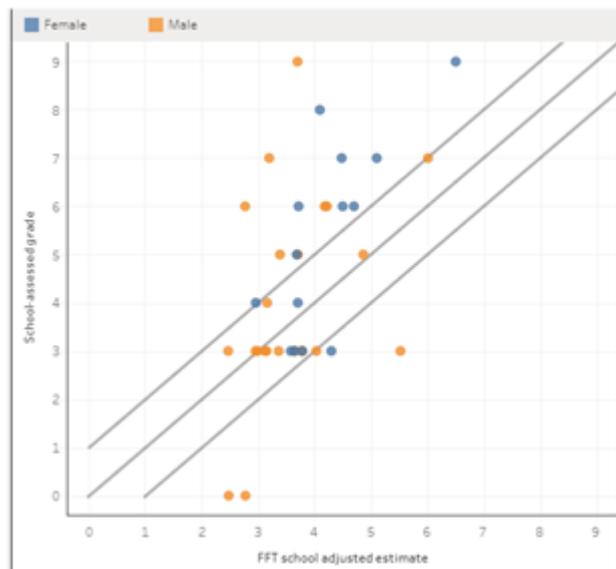


These grades are about right according to FFT data, as they fall broadly within the expected pattern of achievement for our school and our students.



All schools work with a national data base called The Fisher Family Trust (FFT), that holds historic data of all students from all schools. Schools use this data base to analyse exam results compared to what might be expected of a certain cohort of students. This year, we have been able to use it, for year 11 only, to help us work out if we have got the balance and spread of grades about right. This is a vital step in the process of quality assuring our grades, and exam boards will use FFT data to decide whether they need to check our evidence in certain areas as in the examples below.

These grades are too high according to FFT data, as they fall above the expected pattern of achievement for our school and our students.



All subject areas have used this external data to go back over all the evidence portfolios and to take certain actions. These might include:

- Additional unseen assessments to ensure we have students in the correct order of merit
- Alterations to the grade boundaries to reflect the right pattern of achievement for our students
- Scrutiny of borderline grades to ensure we have the right students at the right grades

Where additional scrutiny of evidence shows that we have grades right even if they don't follow an expected pattern, we will award those grades. We are very confident in our teachers and in the rigour of our standardisation processes and we have no concerns at all about sending our evidence in to exam boards for scrutiny upon request.

### **Evidence Portfolios**

Schools must ensure that both students and their parents know what is in the evidence portfolio that has contributed to a student's final award. Next week each student will be shown their contents sheet and any variations that apply to them will be outlined. For example, if a student missed an assessment due to isolation and did this at home, this will be detailed on their own contents sheet and will be marked as 'low' rather than 'high' control.

The contents sheets will not be finalised until the week after half term once all the assessments are completed. These will then be handed out to students who will take a copy home for parents to see and keep.

### **Appeals**

We have made every effort to ensure that the results we award are an accurate reflection of what students have achieved. We believe our process of quality assuring the evidence is robust and as water tight as it can possibly be.

If you believe that a result has been awarded incorrectly, you have a right to appeal. If you think we have made an error in our calculation of the result, we will look at it again and if we agree, we will ask the exam board to alter the grade. If you believe that the work has not been correctly assessed, the evidence portfolio in question will be sent to the exam board in full, and they will remark it all. **This may result in the grade staying the same, going up or being brought down.** An appeal about how the work has been marked will be dealt with entirely externally.

### **Year 10**

Year 10 students will be promoted into their year 11 timetables the second week back after half term to ensure that the six hours they currently have in their two early entry subjects is utilised fully by the subject areas they are taking into year 11. Students will have a full set of mock examinations in the middle of June, we will confirm exact dates and share the timetable with you before half term in order that students have plenty of time to prepare for these.

I do hope you find this information useful. I shared all of this information with students last Friday. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have.

Kind regards

Jo Mora

**Assistant Head teacher - Achievement**