

Life After Levels

A Guide for Parents

Find the value of x

Diagram: Triangle ABC with side AB = 8cm, side AC = 12cm, and angle A = 20° . Side BC is labeled x .

Equation: $a^2 = b^2 + c^2 - 2bc \cos A$

Calculation: $x^2 = 12^2 + 8^2 - 2 \times 12 \times 8 \times \cos 20$

Result: $x^2 = 44 + 64 - (24 \times 8 \times \cos 20)$

Final step: $x^2 = 708$

Additional diagram on the right: A right-angled triangle with a vertical side of 6cm and an angle of θ .

What is changing – at national level?

- National curriculum levels (e.g. 5b) are being phased out by the Government.

These are being replaced by 'Age-related Expectations', measured through national tests in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. New Y6 students have already done these tests!

- GCSE qualifications are being reviewed and alphabetical grades (G-A*) phased out by the Government.

These are being replaced by new specifications and numerical grades (1-9), phased in over a period of 3 years.

What is changing – at academy level?

- Students will no longer study a separate curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Instead, they will follow a Year 7-11 curriculum, designed to develop and master the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to succeed at GCSE in each subject area.
- Students will be assessed using a uniform system of numerical grades across all five years (years 7-11). This will be reported using the 1-9 format and so will enable students, parents and the academy to track individual progress towards final GCSE grades.

What is changing – at subject level?

- 2015-16: English and Mathematics move to a Year 7-11 curriculum. English and Mathematics begin their new GCSE specifications. This is happening already for current Y10
- 2016-17: Science, History, Geography, Languages, Art, RE, PE, Design and Technology, Music, Drama move to a Year 7-11 curriculum. Science, History, Geography, Languages, Art, RE, PE, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Music, begin their new GCSE specifications.
- 2017-18: Design Technology, Business, Sociology and Child Development begin their new GCSE specifications.

What is changing – at student level?

- Students will still be given an individual benchmark and aspirational grade at the beginning of Year 7, Year 8 Year 9 and Year 10.
- Students will continue to be assessed regularly in lessons, using the uniform 1-9 grading system across all five years (years 7-11).
- Parents will continue to receive regular progress reports throughout the academic year.
- Progress will still be reported in terms of Current Attainment, however, students, parents and the school will now be able to track individual progress towards final GCSE grades from the start of Year 7.

Key terms explained

Specifications – Documents produced by the examination boards that detail what content should be taught within a subject area and how the qualification will be accredited.

Current attainment – The actual grade an individual student is considered to be working at. This will take into consideration assessments undertaken, classwork and homework completed.

Predicted grades – The grade a student is forecast to achieve based on performance in assessments, classwork and homework.

Benchmark grades – These grades are based on conversion rates from Key Stage 2 to GCSE. A student's benchmark grade will remain static throughout the year. Progress towards a benchmark grade is not always linear and it is possible for attainment grades to rise and fall over an academic year. Parents should therefore be looking for overall progress to be made.

Aspirational grades – Aspirational grades are set 1 (sub) grade above the benchmark. Where a student exceeds their benchmark grade, the aspirational grade will be increased.

What if I'm still unsure?

- For further information or to make an individual appointment please make contact with either:
- Mr Moore – Head of Lower School (smoore@kirkbalkacademy.org)
- Mr Gilder – Head of Upper School (bgilder2@kirkbalkacademy.org)

