

Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: The future for GCSEs - structure, content and implementation

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 21st November 2013

Venue: Banqueting Hall, Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London SE1 9DD

Agenda subject to change



- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Andrew Turner MP
- 9.05 - 9.20 **The changing shape of GCSEs: 1986 to the present**
Dr Tina Isaacs, Programme Director, MA in Educational Assessment, Institute of Education, University of London
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.20 - 9.50 **Introducing the new GCSEs**
Anna Paige, Deputy Director, Qualifications and Assessment Division, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.50 - 10.00 **GCSEs in arts subjects**
Laura Gander-Howe, Director, Children & Young People, Learning and Skills Strategy, Arts Council England
- 10.00 - 10.55 **Reforming GCSEs - structure, content and rigour**
How well will the new GCSEs succeed in preparing pupils for the combinations of academic education, vocational training and employment that are increasingly available? What contribution will increasing the difficulty of GCSEs make to raising educational standards; how will they compare to the equivalent examinations taken at 16 in high performing competitor countries like Singapore? Are the new GCSEs likely to encourage greater uptake by independent and non-maintained schools currently offering iGCSEs or the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme? Is the proposed reduction in controlled assessment likely to succeed in Government's aims of maintaining high examination standards and freeing up teaching time; how suitable is this structure for subjects with a practical element, such as the sciences? How will the decision to only count the grade of the first attempt at sitting an exam in league tables affect early entries and measuring school performance; how valid are concerns over the move's impact on highly-able pupils? What will be the impact of the reduction of tiering and removal of modular GCSE courses upon pupil engagement and performance? Following Government's acknowledgement that the GCSE reforms will impact upon the performance of pupils with SEND, how can this be addressed?
Leora Cruddas, Head of Policy, ASCL
Peter Hamilton, Headmaster, The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School, Hertfordshire and Chair, Academic Policy Committee, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference
Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive, WJEC
Ian Toone, Principal Officer (Education), Voice
Mana Muhthar, Member, StudentVoice
Questions and comments from the floor with **Laura Gander-Howe**, Director, Children & Young People, Learning and Skills Strategy, Arts Council England
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Andrew Turner MP
- 11.00 - 11.30 Coffee
- 11.30 - 11.35 **Chair's opening remarks**
Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment and Director, Centre for Educational Assessment, University of Oxford
- 11.35 - 12.25 **The new GCSEs - challenges for implementation**
What are the leadership and CPD challenges for secondary schools implementing a new National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and new examination system at Key Stage 4 from 2015? How far will the introduction of a new curriculum and examination system impact upon schools' performance in the league tables; at what level should floor standards be set when the new examinations are introduced? Will the proposed reforms to GCSEs help reduce concerns around 'grade inflation'? How will introducing the new GCSEs at different times for different subjects affect the transition period between old and new qualifications? What is the expected impact of the reforms upon relative uptake of the reformed and unreformed subjects; how can Government encourage pupils during the transitional phase to choose subjects that best facilitate further study and employment? What steps will need to be taken to ensure employers, pupils and parents are aware of and understand the changes to GCSE formats and grading; what will be the challenges around the increasing differences that the reforms in England will give rise to compared to other parts of the UK? Will the closer regulation of exam board seminars, as proposed by Ofqual, succeed in ensuring all schools are equally informed about how to prepare students for their examinations? What steps, if any, should Ofqual take to address the Education Select Committee's concerns that close links between awarding bodies and publishers are restricting market competition?
Lis Tribe, Managing Director, Hodder Education
Paul Dodd, Head, GCSE and A-level Reform, OCR
Jeremy Waxman, Headteacher, Kingsbury High School, London
Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment and Director, Centre for Educational Assessment, University of Oxford
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 - 12.55 **Implementing reform: impact and implications**
Jeremy Benson, Director of Policy, Ofqual
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment and Director, Centre for Educational Assessment, University of Oxford
Jonny Roberts, Associate Editor, Westminster Education Forum

Seminar supported by WJEC

