



# Backwell School

An Ofsted Outstanding School  
A National Teaching School

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Dear Parents/Carers

## Science in Year 9

I am writing to advise you how we ensure students are placed onto the Science GCSE pathway that best enables them to secure the highest possible grades in their future exams. The two pathways we offer are Triple Science (Separate Science) and Combined Science (Double Science).

Due to the recent curriculum changes, we are now able to offer a common first year of GCSE Science to all students in Year 9 and then carry out pathway selection as they commence Year 10, rather than having to make that decision at the end of Year 8. This allows Year 9 students the opportunity to grow into and adjust to the rigour of the new and more demanding GCSE before pathway selection has to be decided.

Both pathways through Science GCSEs still offer unrestricted access to the full range of Further and Higher Education Courses, including pure Science A-Levels and Degree courses, including Medicine and Veterinary Science, providing students attain suitable grades.

All students will have regular progress assessments throughout Year 9. This will provide an opportunity to assess whether they are working in line with their Target Grade and coping with the demands of the new Science course. Students' overall progress throughout the year in conjunction with the results of these formal assessments will be used to determine whether it is appropriate for them to follow the Triple Science route or Combined Science Route in Year 10. We expect students who will follow the Triple Science route in Year 10 to be working at a minimum of a Grade 6 (a B grade under the old system) in Year 9.

Please note that in the new GCSE curriculum there is no longer a coursework element and it is therefore 100% exam assessed at the end of the course (end of Year 11).

Please could you support the school by ensuring that your son/daughter is made fully aware of how important their Science GCSEs are and how working to their best ability throughout Year 9 will help ensure they are placed onto the most appropriate pathway in Year 10. It is our aim that all students are able to move on to a Level 3 course either here at Backwell Sixth Form or an alternative college of their choice. Gaining a strong grade in Science GCSEs can be pivotal to securing a place in a Sixth Form College or our own Sixth Form.

Yours sincerely

M Lake  
Director of Science