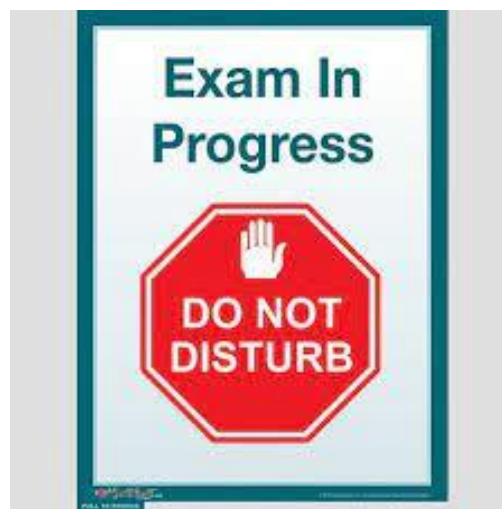




Inspire, Challenge, Achieve

KESTEVEN & GRANTHAM GIRLS' SCHOOL



EXAM OFFICE REVIEW

September 2020 – August 2021

Miss K Edwards
Examinations Manager

INTRODUCTION

This is a review of the academic year 2020-2021 with regard to exam management and administration.

Throughout the year, I have attended local network meetings (via Teams) and am a member of TEO (The Exams Office). The conferences I attended run by TEO have made sure that I have up to date information from the awarding bodies, Ofqual and JCQ. This includes information on modifications to qualifications, future plans for the education system and changes to exam administration (these meetings were virtual and vital due to the pandemic and ongoing problems with the spread of Covid19)

Below gives details of what tasks I would normally carry out during the exam year cycle. Unfortunately, this past academic year was troubled with a Covid19 lockdown in January that ultimately led to cancellation of the summer exam season, so not all of these tasks took place

EXAM YEAR - IN BRIEF

August

- Results download
- Results days and “mopping” up sessions
- Downloading of grade boundaries and moderators reports for faculty heads
- Processing student EAR (enquiries about results) applications after results - **this is normal practice but there were no such applications due centre assessed grades**
- ICE (JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations) booklet changes and reporting updates/changes at the invigilator debrief meeting

August/September/October

- Processing and managing all EAR applications - **did not happen due to centre assessed grades**
- Begin preparation of Exam Review document
- Completing the results checking exercise from DfE - any grade changes after EAR to be reported for performance tables - **did not happen due to centre assessed grades**
- Meeting with SENCo to process extra time applications and to discuss any special exam arrangements for access arrangements students
- Updating all other access arrangements with SENCo for the new academic year for Year 7 through to Year 13 - informing faculty heads of who has extra time for tests
- Submitting required estimated entries to the all awarding bodies
- Emailing important updated JCQ exam information booklets to all faculty heads and Senior Leadership Team
- Exam specific information emailed out to exam students (Year 11 and 13)
- Distribution of the Year 11 exam handbook
- Preparing Y10 exam booklets for mocks
- Review and update all exam policies
- Attended TEO conference for experienced Exams Officers - **this was via online presentations**

- Complete invigilator performance management paperwork for signing - **these were completed but did not involve summer 2021 exams as they did not go ahead**
- Obtaining invigilator availabilities for mocks and speaking tests
- Updating exam noticeboards in school with up to date exam board information for students
- Meetings with Heads of Year 10, 11 and 6th form to discuss exam arrangements for specific students
- Begin preparation for Year 11 mocks - requesting exam info from faculty heads
- Process any university entrance exam applications and begin preparations
- Prepare exam photo cards for Year 9 & Year 12
- Preparation of an annual exam plan showing exam jobs on a month by month basis

I took over the arrangements for the CATs testing from Andrea Clayton as she was due to retire. I organised and ran these tests for all of Year 7 (due to lack of data from primary schools). This involved drawing up a timetable, meeting with staff to inform them of how these were to run, drawing up seating plans and prep of all the paperwork. I personally undertook these tests for the extra timers and catch-up sessions for absentees.

At the Teams invigilator update and training session we discussed the exams undertaken in 2019-2020, those that were up and coming, arrangements for the Autumn 2020 season and Covid19 precautions in relation to this. Also discussed child protection and safeguarding

Arranged for the invigilation team to undertake the Safeguarding and Child Protection: The Essentials 2020/21 online course to update their knowledge and obtain a certificate of completion

I had 5 invigilators decide to “retire” during the academic year, so in September 2021 I will be recruiting replacements to join the invigilation team

October/November

- Completing the English and Maths prior attainment and English proficiency for the school census
- Downloading new QAN codes to Bromcom ready for the school census
- Obtaining ULNs for all Year 9 students
- Assisting the Data Manager with the school census
- Planning Year 11 mock timetable and invigilation
- Preparation and administration of the Autumn retakes
- Organise and administer the university entrance exams
- Meetings with new staff and NQTs to explain my role in centre and exams admin
- Meeting with MFL Head to discuss arrangements for new GCSE MFL speaking tests
- Preparation of the invigilation rota for the “practice” Year 11 speaking tests - **these were postponed**
- Requesting info from faculty heads for 6th form interims
- Check in and collate the summer exam certificates

Arranged for the invigilation team to undertake the Invigilators Digital Accreditation qualification with TEO - not compulsory - and most completed this and received certificates. This was a chance for them to test their current knowledge and changes to the JCQ ICE booklet

Preparations made for the new Autumn exam series. I made entries and administered the GCSE and GCE exam resits requested. We had 14 Y13 leavers register to do retakes with four of these withdrawing before exams began. We also had two GCSE girls who entered to retake English Language and DT respectively. There were also two Year 10 girls who sat GCSE Spanish early. An invigilation rota was drawn up and distributed to the team. These exams ran well with very little problems taking into account the restrictions in place.

Attended on a Zoom virtual JCQ Inspection during the Autumn exam session - this lasted for 45 mins with the Inspector questioning all exam aspects and “viewing” the exam safe, exam room/s being used, access arrangements and all the exam policies. As all JCQ rules and regulations were being observed KG received a clean and clear inspection

University entrance exams were ran differently this year - they were over 2 mornings instead of just one. We had 14 entries - no external students due to Covid19. Some of the tests were changed from paper to computer based. This involved more work for the IT team to make sure that these ran well. Had to use a computer room to house these exams. All ran well with no problems

Changes when applying for special consideration during external exams came into effect - a member of the SLT now has to support any application made and this evidence has to be held on file until the publication of results. I have put together a statement form that can be used for future exams.

The TEO conference in Leeds was cancelled due to Covid19. I instead received a delegate's pack with all the information and received slides/PowerPoint of the presentations that would have taken place. I reported back information from this virtual conference to all relevant staff and updated everything that was needed.

Preparation of the Year 11 mock timetable - very different this year due to Covid19 restrictions - 90 seated in the Gym (socially distanced). This meant for the bigger mocks (English, Maths, Science and RE) swapping between 11A, 11R and 11P for one sitting then 11Bg, 11Bt and 11E for the other. All students managed to have the experience of being in the gym in preparation for their summer exam season. The rest were in classrooms with teaching staff administering the tests.

November/December

- Preparation of the Year 12 & 13 interim exam timetable for approval
- Preparation of the invigilation rota for 6th form mocks
- Managed the MFL Year 11 practice speaking tests - these were postponed
- Exam briefing for Year 11 before their mocks began - was prepared remotely by Head of Year due to the number of Year 11 Covid19 cases

- Administered Year 11 mocks - these ran smoothly
- Start of the summer 2021 entry process - downloading basedata, making entries and creating marksheets

January - lockdown came into effect

- Preparation of the invigilation rota for the Year 10 “practice” speaking tests in March - these did not go ahead
- Meeting with Head of MFL to discuss how speaking tests were to run - this did not go ahead

February/March - usual tasks but lockdown occurred and summer exams were cancelled

- Finalising all entries and submitting to the exam boards - this was completed
- Ran Year 12/13 interim exams - all was prepared but these did not go ahead
- Providing students (Y11 and Y13) with their exam timetables and any exam timetable clash sheets in plenty of time to plan revision - this would have happened but exams were cancelled although students did receive a copy of their entries to check
- Preparing and distributing summer exam timetable - displayed on noticeboards in school and on the school website
- Organising checking-in schedule ready for delivery of exam papers - this was completed
- Booking all exam rooms required for summer exams Arranging IT requirements with the IT Manager so he could advance plan
- Finalising invigilation rota for summer exams
- Begin preparation for the Year 10 mock exams in March - this did not happen due to assessments taking place for Y11 and Y13 students to prepare teacher assessed grades (Year 10 tests took place in lesson time instead)
- Begin the preparation of the invigilation rota for the “proper” Year 11 GCSE speaking tests in April/May - did not go ahead
- Begin preparation of invigilation rota for A level speaking tests in May - did not go ahead
- Exam audit forms sent to faculty heads requesting exam information for next academic year
- Collating and sending summer 2022 provisional timetable to staff for them to send comments to JCQ - this was late due to late publishing of dates by exam boards
- Preparation of all envelopes and paperwork for results days
- A booklet for Y11 and Y13s will be handed out with their summer timetables. This gives the students reminders of the JCQ rules and regulations together with malpractice information - these were prepared but not used
- Preparing Agenda and March meeting notes and booklets for Invigilation summer 2021 meeting - this was prepared as required by JCQ but there were no summer exams so this meeting did not go ahead

All GCSE and A level entries were made by the February deadline. School went into lockdown in January after the Christmas holiday. Staff needed to make sure all entries were correct due to no summer exams taking place, as they would be providing

teacher assessed grades. Working from home, I prepared all the exam entries and these were sent to faculty heads and students (statement of entries) for checking. I came into school to submit these to the awarding bodies after thorough checking had taken place

March/July

- Exam reminder booklets distributed to all Year 10 in preparation for mocks that should have taken place in the Gym - **these were prepared but not used**
- Preparation of all internal exam timetables for years 7, 8, 9 and 10 together with room changes and IT requirements would have taken place - **these end of year exams took place in classrooms in lesson time**
- Invigilator training session should have taken place
- Exam briefing Year 10 before mocks would have gone ahead
- A level MFL speaking tests taking place and invigilated by my team - **these did not go ahead**
- Exam briefings for Year 10, 11 and 6th form - **these did not go ahead**
- Year 10 internal exams to arrange and administer - these were classroom lesson based
- Administering the whole summer exam season - **this did not go ahead**
- Preparation of results day posters
- Preparing updated review of marking and access to script forms for results days - **not needed as teacher assessed grades**
- Create a KGS key dates calendar for next academic year
- Organising estimated entry information for exam boards
- Planning the exam budget for next year
- Sorting exam cupboards and boxes for September
- Replenishing exam stationery
- Reviewing, updating and copying the Year 11 exam handbook to distribute in September
- Updating and copying the exam reminder book for Year 10
- Collating post-exam evaluation forms from the invigilation team
- Creating an agenda and notes ready for invigilator meeting in September
- Updated the Invigilator Handbook
- Sending new ICE (Instructions for Conducting Examinations) booklet to invigilators to read through ready for September meeting
- Making notes on changes to the new ICE booklet for invigilator meeting
- Assembling notes for meetings with Heads of Year for September
- Downloading all JCQ information for staff and students for new academic year
- Download university entrance exam information

As summer exams did not go ahead, we had to plan an assessment series so that each student in Year 11 and Year 13 had tests for all subjects to provide teaching staff with evidence on which to base their teacher assessment grades. Paul Smith drew up the timetables and I dealt with the IT requirements for both year groups and scheduling a rota for invigilators who came in over the 6 weeks.

I organised a Year 12 interim exam session for the end of June (these should have happened in February but we were in lockdown) - I obtained exam info from faculty heads, prepared the timetable, clash schedule, IT requirement list, room change/cover schedule and prepared the invigilation rota. These exams ran smoothly

Another Autumn retake exam session is planned for October/November 2021. I pulled together a timetable, drawn up from awarding body information, and sent to faculty heads along with email addresses of the boards so that they could comment on the scheduling of their tests. This gave faculty heads an idea of when retakes (if applied for) would take place after coming back in September

SUMMER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS these went ahead even though no “proper” summer exams

- Collecting correct information required from faculty heads so that no late fees are incurred
- Timely return of marksheets given to staff for them to confirm accuracy of entries
- Statement of Entry forms given to student to confirm their own exam entries and personal details are correct
- Entries submitted to the examination boards well in advance of the deadline date
- Staff are aware they must inform me of any changes - amendments or withdrawals - so their department does not incur late fees

SUMMER EXAMINATION PREPARATION these tasks could have gone ahead if exams had taken place

- When exam papers are delivered they are logged in and signed for at Reception as per JCQ rules and regulations
- Exam papers are delivered to the exam office in the Gym and unpacked by Exams Manager. They are checked-in to make sure we have a sufficient number of papers for students entered for exams and these are then put into the exam safe/s in date order. There are numerous reshuffles during the exam season in the exam safe/s to accommodate the sheer number of exam papers received
- Pre-release materials are booked in and stored in the exam safe until they are issued to staff - a record is kept and these are signed for when distributed to staff
- I created excel spreadsheets for faculty heads to provide centre mark information which I then submitted to the awarding bodies via our MIS system or the exam boards secure websites
- Individual exam timetables are sent out to all students early so they are aware of their exam dates and can plan revision accordingly
- Exam clashes (there would have been many of these to organise) were resolved well in advance of the exam season and students informed of the arrangements I put in place for them
- IT equipment/expertise is booked well in advance of the exam season and a timetable given to the IT Manager so he can plan
- Extra exam rooms required are booked well in advance
- March training with my invigilators for up to date information in readiness for the summer exams

- Gym and other exam rooms were set up in accordance with JCQ rules and regulations and double checked before each exam begins
- Comprehensive seating plans were prepared giving invigilators all details required for the smooth running of each day's exams
- Thoroughly prepared exam wallets containing all relevant information for the invigilators for each exam session and room used
- Exam Record Book is completed - a page is used for each day and this is where I give detailed information for invigilators for each exam day so they are all aware of what is taking place in the main exam hall - clashes, extra timers, medical/panic students etc. Anything that happens on the day can also be written in this book so it can be seen by all invigilators in the Gym and also the invigilators can detail any report of problems they encountered during the exams sessions to enable me to deal with any special consideration applications or reports that may need to be made to the awarding bodies
- Site team were given copies of the seating plans to ensure accurate exam room set up

The extra rooms are used for a number of reasons - exams that could not take place in the gym due to use of a CD as part of the exam, overspill due to large numbers involved, students who required either a laptop, reader or for lunchtime supervision for students with exam clashes or for those students who just could not take their exams with everyone else

I deploy a large number of invigilators (to abide by the JCQ ratio of 1:30) to accommodate all the rooms we use and for lunchtime supervision.

Due to the advanced planning I undertake before exams start, I am able to make sure we had:-

- a sufficient number of invigilators to cover the exam rooms being used
- extra rooms for exams were booked well in advance and lessons due to take place in these rooms were relocated to other classrooms
- IT equipment/specialised help was shared with the IT team in advance of the start of exams so that they were aware of what I required for each student or group of students and when
- preparation of all the seating plans for each room used - ***these would have had to be comprehensive due to the number of clashes involved and rooms used***

All JCQ rules and regulations were adhered to and no problems occurred with their implementation

No JCQ inspection during summer 2021

[ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS DETAILS](#)

There would have been:-

- 43 in year 11
- 44 in year 13

These would have required some form of special arrangements for their exams - these included extra time, sitting in certain seats in the exam hall, computer reader or laptop.

Access arrangements have now become very complicated to administer with growing numbers of extra time applications with additional requirements of a word processor, rest breaks or computer reader/reader pens. This has led to an impact on planning for mocks and external exams with the added pressure of rooming and allocation of invigilators to abide by the JCQ rules and regulations.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION APPLICATIONS

There were no actual applications made this year due to cancellation of exams but these were taken into consideration in the teacher assessment grading

MALPRACTICE

There were no instances of malpractice involving KGS students or staff.

PRE-RESULTS, RESULTS DAYS AND FINALLY POST RESULTS (EARs) there were no post results this year due to cancellation of exams

After exams have finished one of the jobs to do is to prepare all the results day paperwork:-

- Boxes for each year group are labelled and have form groups signature lists ready together with an envelope for each student due to receive results
- Any completed permission slips for collection of results or stamped addressed envelopes are put with the form group lists
- EAR information sheets are prepared and to put into every results envelope - **not required**
- Results/Post Results posters showing release and deadline dates are displayed on exam noticeboards near the main exam hall and in Harrowby House - also on school website and VLE - and were emailed to all form tutors to display in form rooms - **not required**
- Information is sent to parents via Bromcom and students via email of what options are open to them after results - **not required although information sent to them about appeals**
- I attend school in August to download all the results and to deal with any anomalies. I print off all student's statement of results
- I restrict access to the exam board websites so that staff cannot see results before the students
- Results spreadsheets were provided to Director of 6th Form, Headteacher and Mr Smith for analysis
- Student's statement of results are enveloped ready for the following day
- Teaching groups results were also printed off for faculty heads
- Grade boundaries are downloaded and emailed to all faculty heads ready for results days
- Any moderator reports are also downloaded to give to faculty heads on results days

REVIEW OF MARKING AND GRADE CHANGES

These were not required due to exams being cancelled

Normally any applications I receive on results day for an EAR are processed using the exam board online secure website. I keep a spreadsheet of requests so that I can track the status of each application made.

APPEALS

15 appeals were made:-

- 3 of these were due to the incorrect grades awarded by the exam boards and corrections were applied for - grades changed
- 4 of these were due to procedural errors where either special consideration had not been applied correctly or a calculation error had been identified- these were approved and grades changed
- 2 were escalated to stage 2 appeals with the exam board due to students requesting the exam boards to scrutinise the grades awarded by the centre further. Neither of these appeals were upheld by the exam board and no grades were changed.
- The remaining 6 were stage 1 appeals, were not upheld after a centre review had been completed, grades remained the same and completed at this stage.

EXAM BUDGET

After receiving the completed exam audit forms from faculty heads, I collate an exam fee schedule (showing the predicted exam fees for each subject) on the approximate numbers given by staff after downloading the exam fees booklet from each awarding body. I then discuss in a meeting with the school Bursar in order to set my budget for the forthcoming academic year. This has to be prepared in September when the exam boards release their new exam fees booklets.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

My targets for 2020-2021 were as follows:-

1) Complete the Safeguarding and Radicalisation courses

These were completed in September 2020 and certificates printed off as proof

2) Undertake the administration of the CATs tests for all Year 7s

I had a discussion with both Andrea Clayton and Paul Smith beforehand. I arranged all the sessions for all Y7 forms to be undertaken in the Gym with a seating plan, specific folders for each form and boxes with test booklets. Instructions for staff undertaking the sessions were handed out prior to the tests and a face-to-face meeting organised to lay out the arrangements for test days. Attend on the test days to help get tests up and running. Arranged and undertook all tests with extra timers and the catch-up tests with absent students

3) Undertake the online Exams Officer Digital Accreditation with The Exams Office

I will endeavour to complete this as soon as it is available and download the certificate (this will be a yearly undertaking)

CONCLUSION

Summer 2021 turned out to be a very different exam season than initially planned. Originally, there was a proposed summer exam season and this was to start later, running from June to July to take into account the amount of schooling students in the country had missed. Eventually though, all exams were cancelled for the summer due to another lockdown at the beginning of 2021. Ofqual, JCQ and the awarding bodies decided that schools instead would submit teacher assessed grades for all students for all subjects

A timetable of tests for Year 11 and Year 13 was drawn up to be prepared in school lesson times and the majority of the tests were administered by teaching staff in classrooms. I arranged a rota for my invigilation team who came in to administer the tests for those requiring IT, cover in classrooms when there were insufficient teaching staff available or who could not sit in the exam room. All of these tests were marked by teaching staff and pieces of evidence collated for each student as proof of the assessed grade. Paul Smith and I had to input the entire assessed grades and endorsements required by the boards for all subjects. We also had to arrange to scan and submit evidence of grades for 15 students to AQA as proof of the grades awarded at GCSE for English Language and D&T plus Psychology at A level.

Both GCSE and A level results days were scheduled to take place during the second week in August and the preparation for these days ran well

Had the original summer exam timetable gone ahead I think this would have been the most challenging and difficult summer exam season to plan and administer since I took on the EM role (more so than last year, which was looking tough). There has been a massive increase in student demands, especially with the requirement for the use of PCs/laptops. This was in addition to the large number of exam clashes to manage and plan, the use of rooms required to seat all students and IT to organise.

I held a de-brief session for the invigilation team in September 2020 via Teams which was very useful. I assembled the agenda from up to date JCQ information and my own observations. We discussed both the internal and external exams that we managed to do before Covid19 and lockdown. We talked about the preparation for the newly organised Autumn 2020 exam season for any student wishing to retake any subject to enhance their grade and the precautions (contingency plans) that needed to be in place. We also reviewed and talked about child protection and safeguarding in schools – the team undertook the online course for this. The invigilators confirmed their pleasure (and they feel proud) of being part of the KG examination team. I believe they are a huge asset as they are a knowledgeable and well-organised team who make sure that the exams run effortlessly. They all work incredibly hard and can adapt easily to the ever-changing circumstances that can occur on a daily basis during all of our exam seasons. They were brilliant during the assessments and helped out in both the classrooms and in the Gym.

I have confidence that all the advanced preparation I normally do ensures that every contingency is covered and that all the exam practices I have in place work professionally, efficiently, and more importantly, in accordance with the rules and regulations set down by JCQ. In conclusion, I think I can say that the students at KGGS are provided with a positive exam experience in order for them to perform to their very best ability and produce excellent exam results year on year