



16 October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to share our plans for Year 9 assessments this academic year.

As students progress through Year 9, we want to support their transition toward Key Stage 4 and ensure they feel confident and fully prepared for GCSE study. With this in mind, we have updated how we conduct our termly assessments.

Rather than holding a single assessment week at the end of the summer term as we did last year, we are introducing a short series of hall-based assessments for English and Maths in November and sciences in April. All other subjects will continue to carry out their routine assessments in normal classroom settings throughout the year.

Why these subjects in the hall?

English, Maths, and Science are subjects that all students will take at GCSE. For many young people, entering an exam hall for the first time can feel unfamiliar. By offering students a calm, low-stakes experience of hall assessments now, we want to demystify the environment, helping to build their confidence, reduce unnecessary anxiety, and make future hall-based GCSE exams feel more familiar and manageable.

We want to reassure you that these assessments are not high-stakes exams and there is no need for your daughter to feel worried or under pressure about the outcomes:

- These hall assessments simply take the place of the standard end-of-unit tasks that usually happen during regular lessons.
- They count in the exact same way as any standard class assessment.
- Their primary purpose is to act as a helpful check-point to show us how students are progressing, where they are excelling, and where we can offer extra help. Results will be used alongside everyday classwork and homework to inform your daughter's termly progress data.
- The English assessment is longer than a normal lesson assessment; this is to support students to develop the extended writing stamina needed ahead of GCSE study.

To support both students and parents, we have put together an Assessment and Revision Booklet, [linked here](#). This guide details what each assessment will involve and, based on our AHS-designed UPGRADE programme, offers practical tips on how to prepare without feeling overwhelmed.

Our goal is always to build good study habits, build confidence, and ensure every student feels supported.

Thank you, as always, for your partnership and support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at office@ahs.bucks.sch.uk .

Yours faithfully

Ms O Raven

Deputy Head Academic