



## THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Headmaster: James Priory MA

*jep/dck*

14 January 2011

Dear Parents

### **The introduction of the English Baccalaureate in the Government league tables for January 2011**

As you will have seen reported in the local and national press this week, a new measure has been introduced by the Government to recognise the number of pupils at GCSE who achieve good GCSE passes (A\*-C) in a broader range of subjects, including English, Mathematics, sciences, a language and a humanities subject.

The new measure, called the English Baccalaureate, has been applied retrospectively in the 2010 national league tables published this week. It is not, however, a new qualification but is designed to promote a broader range of academic subjects to age 16 in schools across the country.

The curriculum at Portsmouth Grammar School, recognised for its excellence in our recent ISI inspection, has been developed according to our belief in the importance of marrying breadth with specialism. We offer a wide range of GCSE and International GCSE subjects and, in the Sixth Form, a choice between the International Baccalaureate and A Level. The General Studies programme offers even further enrichment.

Whilst we would applaud the thrust behind the Government's initiative in promoting a more balanced and academically challenging range of GCSE subjects in schools, we would also welcome the resolution of a number of anomalies in this year's tables, not least the delayed accreditation of IGCSE Mathematics and Physics, now very well established at PGS, and IGCSE English and English Literature, newly introduced this year.

We would also like to see resolved the very narrow definition of a humanities subject, which does not currently include Philosophy and Religious Studies for example, as well as the inclusion of a creative subject, as is possible within the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

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Whilst so much remains for clarification and discussion parents can be reassured that there is no suggestion at this stage that universities or employers will be using the EBacc as a discrete qualification.

The school enjoyed very strong, value-added results at GCSE and A Level in 2010 and whilst we continue to observe national league tables, we would never wish these to deter us from our commitment to a rich and broad curriculum throughout the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James King'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, circular initial 'J'.