

## 4. OUR ROLE IN EXAMINATIONS REFORM

*In the 1850s HMC schools were heavily involved in the introduction of public examinations in England.*

*In 2012-2013 HMC was also prominent in focusing attention across the UK on problems with the quality of marking and the conduct of appeals against results experienced by all types of school and college.*

*HMC schools are well placed to teach 'linear' GCSEs and A levels effectively when these are introduced in 2015.*

### Heritage

- Heads and staff in **HMC schools** were **widely consulted** when universities first devised school-level examinations in the 1850s.
- Thirty years later, in the 1880s, HMC schools **adapted** existing examination procedures especially **to help candidates** in need of financial assistance.

### Influence over reform in 2012-2013

- In September 2012 HMC published an enquiry into the **quality of marking** and **conduct of appeals** about examination results.
- This report was described by a leading parliamentarian as 'chilling reading'; the DfE found it **'persuasive and the conclusions shocking'**.
- Discussions with the English exams regulator have led to it pledging to undertake **enquiries into several of HMC's concerns** during 2013-2014 – on behalf of all English exam candidates.

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### HMC, linear GCSEs and linear A levels

- The **current timetable** for introducing linear, two-year courses is as follows.

#### GCSE:

*First teaching in 2015:* English language; English literature; mathematics.

*First teaching in 2016:* the sciences, history; geography; languages (classical and modern).

#### A level:

*First teaching in 2015:* English language and literature, the sciences, history, geography, psychology, art and design, sociology, business studies, economics and computing.

*First teaching in 2016:* mathematics and languages.

- HMC is **confident** that these **new courses will be taught very effectively** in our schools. Many of our staff will relish the depth of teaching and study involved.
- The **high level of subject expertise** among our staff will be a major asset to pupils in our schools: **19%** of recent entrants to independent school teaching have a **first class honours** degree.
- Staff in our schools will be able to **network actively** – via existing subject groupings and through our formal **professional development** courses – to plan the effective teaching of linear courses.