

# Assessment in Years 7 and 8: A guide for parents.

This year we have made some changes to the way we assess and report student achievement in years 7 and 8. The main change is that we are now reporting attainment (how students have achieved on a particular assessment) rather than progress (students' achievement relative to their KS2 data).

## How do we now assess students?

We assess the learning of students in two ways, **formative** and **summative**:

### Formative Assessment

Formative Assessment is the ongoing process of assessing students and using this knowledge to evolve subsequent lesson design and teaching. Formative assessment incorporates peer and self-assessment to activate student ownership of their learning. Moreover, formative assessments are planned to inform progression toward summative assessment.

Feedback may be given to students in writing, orally, using techniques such as stickers or stamps or via other methods such as self or peer assessment. There is no expectation that every page or piece of work needs to show teacher marking however we encourage students' efforts and successes to be recognised to ensure pupils repeat these successes and are motivated to continue to learn. Progress will be celebrated via the school rewards system and this should extend to effort as well as attainment.

Some departments may separate class notes from written work for assessment (a 'notes' book versus a 'best' book or folder). Notes do not need to be marked, but should be monitored to ensure quality and take appropriate actions if notes have gaps or errors.

The formative assessment is what we want teachers to focus on most. This is because research evidence tells us that this has the greatest impact on learning. It does not involve the grading of work but instead the teacher identifying students' strengths and weaknesses and then adapting their teaching to help students improve.

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessments give students, teachers and parents/carers a guide to how they are performing in that subject at that time. In each subject a grade will be awarded three times per year and the assessment may take the form of a test, an assessed piece of writing or practical work as appropriate to the subject.

Grades awarded for summative assessments are based on the key knowledge, concepts and skills that each department has identified as being the most important in Years 7 and 8. These are called Subject Key Indicators of Performance (SKIPS) and they increase in challenge across the two years.

### Summative Assessment Grades

Grade	Description
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Outstanding	The highest level of attainment. Students achieving this grade would be aiming for a 9 at GCSE
Exceeding	Students achieving this grade would aim for grade 7 and above at GCSE
Secure	Students achieving this grade would aim for grade 5 and above at GCSE
Developing	Students achieving this grade would aim for grade 4 and above at GCSE
Foundation	Students achieving this grade would aim for grade 3 and above at GCSE.

## Starting Points

We do not assign targets for students in KS3 as we do not wish to place limits on their aspirations. We do use their KS2 data to assign each student a **starting point**. We compare this starting point with the student's grade in a subject and use this to highlight when assessments are reported home which subjects the student should focus on. We also use this data to monitor progress of the students.

## IPMs and Reports

Each term the assessments will be reported home as an IPM (Individual Pupil Monitoring) or a more detailed Report. This will be colour coded to indicate how the achievement compares with their starting points. Subjects where the student has performed significantly better than their starting point are highlighted as are 'areas of focus' - subjects where they have not performed as well as their starting point would have indicated. An example is given below:

	Autumn Assessments
Maths	Secure
English	Secure
Science	Secure
Art	Outstanding
RE	Outstanding
French	Exceeding
CS	Developing
Tech	Secure
Drama	Outstanding
History	Outstanding
Geography	Exceeding

Example 1:

The Student has achieved **Secure** in Maths in the Autumn Assessments. The student's **Starting Point** was also **Secure** and so this has not been highlighted as an **area of focus**

Example 2:

The Student has achieved **Secure** in Science in the Autumn Assessments. The student's **Starting Point** was significantly above this and so this has been highlighted as an **area of focus**.

Example 3:

The Student has achieved **Outstanding** in History in the Autumn Assessments. The student's **Starting Point** was significantly below this and so this has been highlighted as an **area of success**.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why are students not given a target grade?

Whilst we can use data to look at how students with particular starting points usually perform at GCSE, we don't want to use this to set them targets. The main reason is that we don't want to put a ceiling on their expectations of themselves – we want all students to believe that with the right effort, we can all get that little bit better. Just because most students with a particular KS2 starting point end up getting grade 5 at GCSE, that doesn't mean that has to be the case for everybody.

### What does the assessment grade mean?

This is a guide to your child's current attainment based on the assessment of all their learning up to this point. This may have been assigned through a single test which examined their knowledge of what they have learnt up to that point, or in some more practical subjects such as art, the threshold may have been attained through on-going assessment. The hierarchy of six thresholds gives students, teachers and you as parents/carers a guide as to their relative learning and performance in each subject.

### What GCSE grade is each assessment grade equivalent to?

It is extremely difficult to predict GCSE grades during KS3 due to the amount of learning that has to take place before students eventually sit their exams at the end of year 11. As a result we have designed a KS3 assessment system that deliberately avoids connecting our thresholds too closely to GCSE grades. We feel to do so would be misleading and may lead to unnecessary anxiety for our students. We want our students to focus on getting better in every subject during KS3 rather than their eventual GCSE grades.