Year 8 (2016/17)

Now that the government have removed National Curriculum Levels at KS3 all schools need to adopt a new way of assessing students. Schools need to follow a model from the approved government-funded pilots and the one we have opted for is one of the most popular with schools that was developed at Durrington High School, West Sussex.

The principles behind the approach are as follows:

- It is important to let students and parents/carers know the progress being made, relative to students' starting points from the end of KS2.
- There should be no limit to what students think they can achieve – their aspirations should be high.
- The progress of all students, from all starting points, should be celebrated.
- The approach will support the home-school partnership to better understand where the focus on improvement lies.

How do we assess students?

When students come to secondary school, we routinely make use of their KS2 Maths level and KS2 English (reading) level to determine their starting point from which to measure their progress. Alongside this our school looks at the results from the Cognitive Ability Tests, which highlight strengths and areas for development. Nationally, there is a strong correlation between this data and how students perform at GCSE, as shown in the table below:

Prior ability (KS2 Level)	GCSE (New)	GCSE (Legacy)
5a+	9-8	A*
5	7-6	A-B
4	5-4	B-C
3-2	3-1	D-G

Teachers use this information in their planning, teaching and assessment. When planning their lessons, teachers think about the topic the class will be doing, by breaking it down into four thresholds:

Threshold	Description	Should achieve
Excellence	Aimed at students with a starting point of a high level 5 in KS2	9-8 (A*) at GCSE
Secure	Aimed at students with a starting point of a level 5 in KS2	7-6 (A/B) at GCSE
Developing	Aimed at students with a starting point of level 4 in KS2	5-4 (B/C) at GCSE
Foundation	Aimed at students with a starting point of level 2-3 in KS2	3-1 (D-G) at GCSE

Teachers will use the information they have about the starting point of each student, to help each student move up through the thresholds – with the aspiration being that all students will aim towards excellence.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

A data report will be sent home four times a year. When making judgements on students' progress, teachers will use a variety of pieces of work. This may take the form of a test, an assessed piece of writing or other piece of work. At each assessment point, subject teachers will determine which of the four thresholds the student is currently performing within.

Current Threshold	Expected GCSE outcome based on current performance
Excellence	9-8 (A*)
Secure	7-6 (A/B)
Developing	5-4 (B/C)
Foundation	3-1 (D-G)

In addition to the Current Threshold, teachers will make judgments on students' progress by comparing the Current Threshold to the KS2 starting point. Progress is measured individually for each student in relation to their starting point.

	Colour
Exceptional progress	Blue
Good progress	Dark green
Expected progress	Light green
Less than expected progress	Orange
Cause for concern	Red

Please note that students at each KS2 starting point can be judged to be making exceptional, good, expected or less than expected progress.

Exceptional progress does not necessarily mean that a student will achieve a top GCSE grade. The **Current Threshold** gives an indication of likely outcome at GCSE as described above.

Finally, teachers will make a judgment about students' Attitude to Learning.

Assessment Feedback Sheets

These can be found in students' exercise books and give an overview of the unit or topic completed and the expectations in terms of core knowledge and skills. Feedback is given to each student as follows,
- **W**hat **W**orked **W**ell? (WWW)
- **E**ven **B**etter **I**f (EBI)

This is particularly important where a student is not making expected progress as it shows what action is required to support improvement.

Example

Key Stage 2 Levels

(starting point)

KS2 Maths Test 5	KS2 English Test 5	KS2 Science Assessment 4

Subject	Attitude to Learning	Current Threshold	Current Progress	Teacher
Art	2	Secure	Expected	RDS
Computing	2	Developing	Less than expected	NUY
Drama	1	Secure	Good	HWN
English	2	Secure	Expected	CDY
French	1	Excellence	Exceptional	AFZ
Geography	2	Secure	Good	MFR
History	2	Secure	Expected	MFR
Mathematics	1	Excellence	Exceptional	JPE
Music	2	Secure	Expected	SVA
PHSCE	2	n/a	n/a	GNI
Physical Education	1	Excellence	Exceptional	LPS
Religious Studies	2	Secure	Expected	JPR
Science	2	Secure	Expected	IBN
Spanish	2	Excellence	Exceptional	CTR
Technology	1	Secure	Good	CRY

Attitude to Learning

1   Student is always motivated and takes the lead in their learning. Always engaged in lessons and makes valuable contributions throughout. Class and home learning tasks are always completed on time and to a high standard.
2   Student is motivated, always fully engaged in lessons and sometimes makes valuable contributions. Class and home learning tasks are usually completed on time and to a high standard.
3   Student can contribute well in lessons but is easily distracted. Class and home learning tasks are sometimes completed on time and to a reasonable standard.
4   Student is not committed to their learning and is often distracted in lessons. Class and home learning tasks are often incomplete.

Attitude to Learning scores with key

Progress in relation to each individual student's starting point

This student arrived with level 5 in KS2 English and Maths. As can be seen she is making expected, good or exceptional progress in most of her subjects. Computing has been highlighted as an area to focus on where less progress has been made. The current threshold column shows that, based on her current work, she is on track to achieve GCSE grades in the range 9-6 (A*-B) in most subjects at the end of Year 11.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. My daughter achieved a level 5 in Maths at KS2 and in her first data report is making 'less than expected progress'. Why is she underachieving?

There is a very strong link between teacher expectation of what students can achieve and then how they achieve. With this is mind, when we reviewed our KS3 curriculum, we raised the bar of expectation across the whole of KS3 as we wanted to stretch and challenge all students. This is in line with the new GCSE specifications that include the new grade 9 at the top end, more rigor and the removal of coursework in some subjects. Students with a high starting point at KS2, will then be assessed relative to this when they join us – so the criteria in the secure and excellence threshold will be deliberately challenging. As a result, you should not be alarmed that your daughter is not yet making expected progress in the first term. What is important is how she responds to the feedback given to her by her teachers and that she continues to progress.

2. When my daughter gets her data report and there is 'less than expected' in some subjects, it's not very motivational is it?

We want to be honest with our assessment of students. For students to move on with their learning they need to know their areas for improvement, so they can address them. It would be unfair to give students a false impression of their performance, as that would not flag up to them what they need to do to improve their progress.

3. In the past, my elder daughter had a target level to aim for in KS3. Why can't my younger daughter be given a target threshold in KS3?

Whilst we can use data (see the table on page 1) to look at how students with particular starting points usually perform at GCSE, we do not want to use this to set them targets at KS3. We do not want to put a ceiling on their expectations of themselves – we want all students to believe that with the right effort, they can make significant steps forwards. Just because most students with a KS2 starting point of a level 4 achieve a grade C (5-4) at GCSE, that is not necessarily the case for everybody.

4. My daughter has mostly 1s for Attitude to Learning, but is still making 'less than expected progress' in some subjects. Why is this?

For most students, there should be a correlation between Attitude to Learning and their progress i.e. if these are all strong (graded 1) we would expect them to be making at least expected progress. However, there may be exceptions to this. For example, a student with a high KS2 starting point in English and Maths may be making good progress in some subjects, but less than expected progress in others. This may be particularly so for practical subjects for example.

If you have any queries/questions about your daughter's progress within a subject, please do not hesitate to contact their subject teacher. If your queries are more general i.e. across a number of subjects, please contact your daughter's Head of Year. Please use the box below to give feedback about the new assessment model or ask questions.

Assessment Without Levels – Feedback and Questions
Student Name: Form:

Please return to the school reception

Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School

Key Stage 3 Assessment sheet

Pupil's name:	Subject: History	Half term:
		1 2 3 4 5 6
Unit Title:	What is History? Assessment – Facts and Explanation	

Task description: Explain 2 features of Victorian schools.
- Write 2 paragraphs identifying and explaining two features of schools in the Victorian period.
- You should use the sources and some additional research.
- Use PEE to structure your paragraphs.
- Use your learning from the unit of work on What is History?

Core knowledge	Core skills	
• Explanation of key features of Victorian schools. • Links between different key features are explained.	• Students provide detailed and specific evidence and identify specific features. • Students make appropriate use of additional researched material. • Students use PEEL to structure their paragraphs.	
• Explanation of the key features of Victorian schools. • Some links between features are shown.	• Students provide specific and accurate evidence and identify clear features. • Students use PEE to structure their paragraphs.	
• Descriptive points made about Victorian schools, with some explanation of key feature/s.	• Students provide accurate evidence and begin to identify key features. • Students begin to use PEE to structure paragraphs.	
• Descriptive statements made about what Victorian schools were like.	• Students provide some accurate pieces of evidence and write in mostly complete sentences.	

The assessment box below is to be completed at the end of the unit by your teacher:				
Overall your progress for this unit of work has been:	**Exceptional progress**	**Good progress**	**Expected progress**	**Less than expected progress**

WWW:	
EBI:	
Identify specific **key features**.	
Write in **full sentences**.	
Explain the key features.	
Use **PEE** to structure paragraphs.	
Use **specific evidence** to support points.	
Explain the **links** between key features.	
Include **additional researched material**.	
Use **Link sentences** to show an argument.	
Take care with **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**.	
Other:	

Date:	Teacher:
Date:	Parent/carer: