

KS3 Assessment at Beechen Cliff School

Following changes to the National Curriculum and the removal of statutory National Curriculum Levels the KS3 assessment system at Beechen Cliff School changed in September 2015. The changes came about after 18 months of work within school, discussion with other schools and consultation with the Beechen Cliff School PTA. The assessment system was reviewed in January 2019 and shared with Senior Leaders of the MNSP as the school prepared to join the MAT. It now fits within both the school's Assessment Policy and the MNSP Assessment Policy.

The model is based on developing the key knowledge and skills required for success in KS4. It is based around a pupil's understanding of the curriculum in a particular year and is linked to the 'old style' GCSE grading system of A*- E which is easy for teachers, pupils and parents to understand.

The document below highlights the key areas:

1. Baseline assessments
2. Assessments throughout KS3
3. What the grades mean
4. Progress
5. Target setting
6. Reporting to parents

1. Baseline assessments

On entry to the school all pupils complete cognitive ability tests (CATs) and the school is also provided with KS2 teacher assessments and KS2 SAT data. This baseline assessment will be used to group pupils into bandings based on their ability and prior attainment.

They will be assigned a banding of

| |
|----|
| A* |
| A |
| B |
| C |
| D |
| E |

in each subject.

For subjects where KS2 data and CAT scores may be less useful in identifying prior skills such as Music, Art and Physical Education pupils will be assessed within lessons on entry to Beechen Cliff School

The aim of this process is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil to enable them to be taught in the most effective way and to make maximum progress. It will also give us a starting point from which to internally track pupil progress.

2. Assessments throughout KS3

All pupils are assessed regularly within lessons and through marking of classwork and homework. Regular verbal and written feedback is also given on how to improve work.

Three times per year teachers are required to formally grade each pupil in each subject. This grade may be based on a piece of project work, an assessed piece of classwork or homework, or a formal assessment.

Assessed work is graded and these grades take the form of a GCSE grade but are relative to the year group e.g. Yr 7 B, Yr 8 C or Yr 9 A.

They are **not** a current GCSE grade, rather give a grading for the work relative to the curriculum for that year group.

3. What do the grades given mean?

| Understanding of the curriculum | Developing | | Secure | | Extending | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---|--------|---|-----------|---|
| | Grade equivalent | E | D | C | B | A |

The table above gives an overview of the meaning of the grades. In particular:

Pupils working at grade D/E are developing their understanding of the core curriculum for that particular year.

Pupils working at grade B/C are secure in their understanding of the core curriculum for that particular year (i.e. working at national expectations).

Pupils working at grade A/A are extending their understanding beyond the core curriculum for that particular year.*

To give more detail to this, each subject has identified the key content and skills required within each year that will lead on to success at GCSE. Further they have produced brief grade descriptors for their subject.

We have produced a KS3 Assessment booklet which gives this information for all KS3 subjects. We hope this will be useful for parents in understanding the skills and knowledge their son is developing and for supporting him with his education. This is available on the School Website.

4. Progress

The table below aims to illustrate how the grades show a pupil is making progress.

| Baseline Assessment | Yr 7 Assessments | Yr 8 Assessments | Yr 9 Assessments | Likely GCSE Outcome |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Grades 9-7 (A*-A) |
| | | | Yr 9 A*/Yr 9 A | Grades 6-4 (B/C) |
| | | Yr 8 A*/Yr 8 A | Yr 9 B/C | Grades 3-2 (D/E) |
| | Yr 7 A*/Yr 7 A | Yr 8 B/C | Yr 9 D/E | Grade 1 (F/G) |
| A/A* | Yr 7 B/C | Yr 8 D/E | Year 9 F/G | |
| B/C | Yr 7 D/E | Year 8 F/G | | |
| D/E | Year 7 F/G | | | |
| <E | | | | |

Rather than following an incremental process, a pupil staying within an attainment band (e.g. Yr 7 C to Yr 8 C) is making good progress. Moving up a band or remaining in the A* band would suggest excellent progress. Moving down a band (e.g. Yr 8 B to Yr 9 C) would mean less than expected progress has been made.

A key part of this is understanding that a Yr 8 C, for example, is a higher grade than a Year 7 C. This is because new content and skills are taught each year. Even within an academic year new content and skills are being learnt and so staying on the same grade throughout the year (e.g. Yr 8 B to Yr 8B) suggests good progress is being made.

The grades give an indication of a pupil's attainment now and are not a prediction for GCSE grades in the future as many things impact on a pupil's success at GCSE a few years down the line. However, if a pupil continues to make good progress year on year the table does give some indication of where this might lead to in terms of GCSE outcomes.

For example a pupil achieving a baseline assessment of a C and making good progress each year could achieve Yr 7C – Yr 8 C – Yr 9 C and go on to achieve a GCSE outcome of around a C grade (grade 4 on the new GCSE grading system).

However, progress is very often not linear and different pupils progress at different rates. Therefore it is likely there will be some movement between bands throughout KS3.

You will notice that the table also refers to the new numerical GCSE grading system, which has been phased in since the summer of 2017.

More information about reformed GCSE grades is also available on the school website.

5. Target setting

Base bandings are not shared with pupils or parents. Instead pupils will be encouraged to aim for the highest grade possible. We want to encourage the mind-set where all pupils strive for excellence and a culture of *'I can't do yet'* rather than *'I can't do.'* Any target setting that takes place will involve aspirational targets only.

However, attainment will be tracked internally against the baseline assessment to ensure that those making excellent progress are commended and intervention is put in place to support pupils where there is a concern over their progress.

6. Reporting to Parents

Three times a year parents will receive reports on pupil attainment and progress. Two of these will be Progress Reports and one will be a Full Report.

Reports will include:

- Current attainment grades (such as Yr 7 C or Yr 8 A)
- Application Scores (effort/conduct)
- Homework grades
- Summer Exam % and Class average % (Summer report only)
- Teacher comment (Full report only)
- Tutor and Head of House Comment (Full report only)

In addition there is one Parents' Evening per year where parents can meet with subject teachers.

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