



KS3 Assessment

Information Booklet for Parents

September 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

There is much change going on in education, including a new National Curriculum, new and more challenging GCSEs and, also, new style A levels. Most of this is happening over the next few years and your son/daughter will experience these changes. Another key

The new National Curriculum has a greater focus on knowledge development, along with the opportunity to study the 'big ideas' of a subject in greater depth. Another key change is the removal of assessment levels, something with which students and parents have become familiar.

Overall, we feel that these developments provide opportunities to create a more appropriate Key Stage 3 (KS3) curriculum which builds the important foundations for Key Stage 4 (KS4). We should no longer see KS3 and KS4 as separate courses, but rather as a continuum. The new National Curriculum also gives us the chance to further improve assessments which highlight specific strengths and areas for development within those 'big ideas', rather than a vague overall level which can often fail to give the detail needed.

What we hope to achieve

A KS3 curriculum and assessment model which:

1. Is focused on developing the key concepts, knowledge and skills needed for success in KS4.
2. Is based on high expectations and challenge for all.
3. Adopts a mastery approach to teaching and learning, and uses proven, effective teaching methods.
4. Uses regular assessment and feedback which gives all students the chance to develop a secure understanding of the key ideas.
5. Incorporates high quality end of topic assessments which help students develop the skills needed to tackle GCSE examination questions.
6. Provides data from assessments that reliably identifies what students have/have not understood and informs future teaching and learning, including intervention needs.

We are committed to doing all we can to prepare our students for the challenges that lie ahead.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Parr
Deputy Headteacher

The New GCSEs

From September 2016 new GCSEs will be taught in the following subjects:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Double Science, Geography, History, Modern Languages, Religious Studies, Art and Design, Drama, Dance, Music, Physical Education, Computer Science, Citizenship Studies, Food Studies

(More subjects will be added to this list in September 2017)

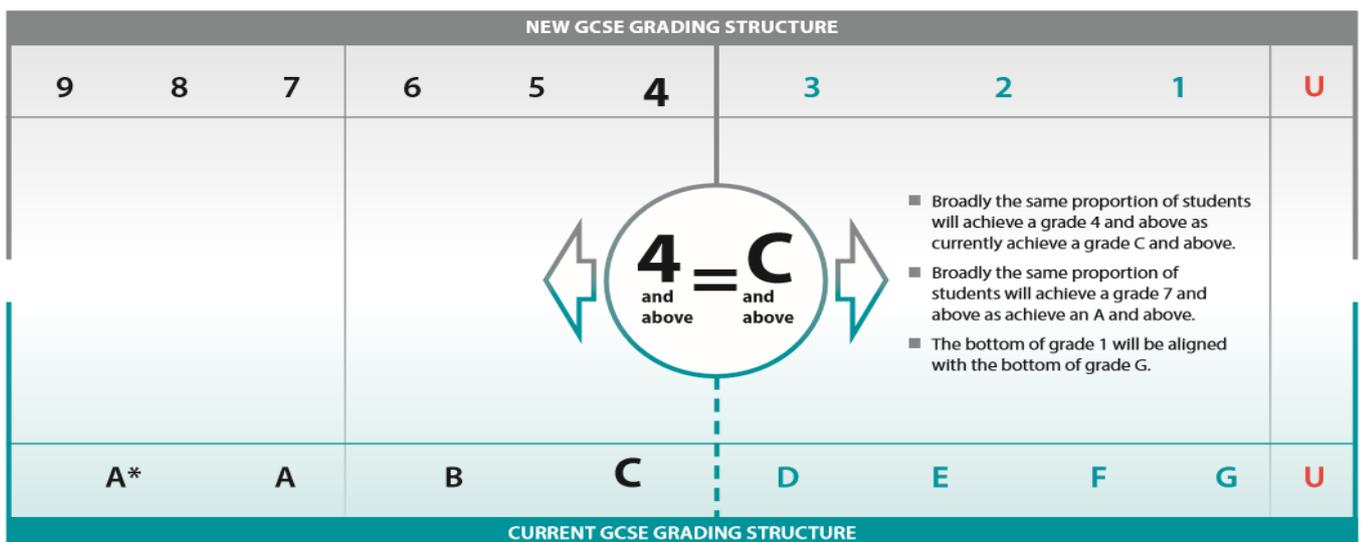
These new GCSEs will be more demanding and require higher levels of literacy and numeracy to access the top grades.

Other changes include:

- a new grading scale that uses the numbers 9 to 1 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade (See page 7 for more information)
- a structure where external assessment will mainly be by exam, at the end of the two year course
- exams as the default method of assessment, except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills required
- the removal of coursework as an assessment method from most subjects

How does the 9 to 1 grading compare with the current A* to G grading?

This is most easily represented by the following graphic:



Whilst an old grade C is roughly equivalent to a new grade 4, from July 2018 the Government has decided a good GCSE pass (previously an old grade C) will be a grade 5.

The Key Stage 3 Curriculum

In order to prepare students for the new GCSEs we have focussed our Key Stage 3 curriculum on the development of the skills and knowledge that students will need. The skills and knowledge that each subject will be concentrating on are identified in subject checklists for each subject in each year group that we are trialling this year. The students and teachers are using these checklists to track the students' progress through the year and identify strengths and areas where extra support may be needed. The skills and knowledge listed in each checklist are identified either as core, or extended. We expect the majority of students to demonstrate mastery of the core skills and knowledge in each subject by the end of the year. All students should aspire to master the extended skills and knowledge which are intended to stretch and challenge students.

All the checklists are available in the Key Stage 3 section of each subject, under the Curriculum tab, on the school website.

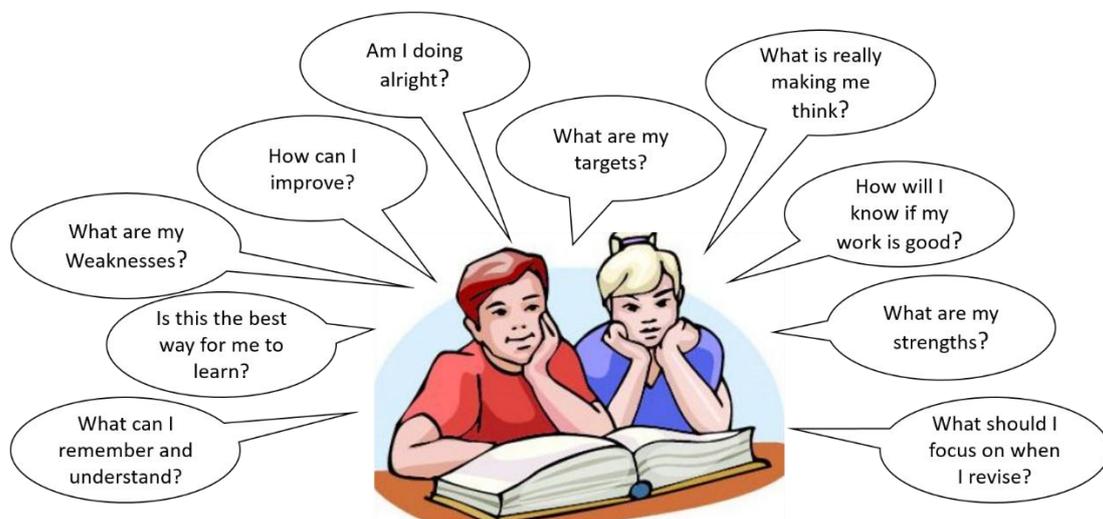
<http://www.helsbyhigh.org.uk/subjects/>

Assessment at Key Stage 3

There will be a combination of internal on going assessments being made by the teacher including verbal and written checks and topic assessments.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and, as such, AfL has and will continue to be present in lessons as an on-going and continuous process. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own (or sometimes a peer's) work and progress and consider what is going well and what can help them improve further.



Summative Assessments

Summative assessments will take a variety of forms, depending on the nature of each subject. However, they are all intended to:

- Provide a summary judgement about what has been learned by each student at a specific point in time
- Show what students can achieve without support
- Inform any subsequent intervention activities

For example, in Maths and Science they are most likely to be tests. In History and English, extended writing will be prominent, whilst in Design and Technology, assessments will be based around design and make processes. In Drama and PE, teachers will often rate the performance of students against set criteria.

Towards the end of the academic year, there will also be an examination in most subjects.

Reporting Student Progress to Parents

Each student will be given an end of year target, in the form of the new GCSE grades, that is the minimum that we expect the student to achieve in that subject, by the end of the year, called the minimum expected grade, MEG. This grade is what students nationally with similar KS2 scores are expected to achieve.

During the year, you will receive four report cards, issued in November, January, April and July. These are known as the Student Profile and will be made available via SIMS Learning Gateway. The Student Profile will give you the following information:

- Your child's minimum expected grade (MEG) for the year, in each subject (in the November profile for Years 8 and 9 and the January profile for Year 7 students)
- A statement that tells you whether, based on current performance, your child is
 - expected to exceed their minimum expected grade by the end of the year
 - achieve their minimum expected grade by the end of the year, or
 - is currently working below their minimum expected grade
- A behaviour grade
- An effort grade
- Areas for improvement where they are working below their minimum expected grade.

Action Planning for Students

After each set of profiles, students will have an extended registration period, in which they will review their progress to date and set a personal action plan. This is done with guidance from tutors and gives students the opportunity to look at their progress as a whole and set targets for improvement. This action plan will be kept in student planners, so that you can encourage your child to engage with their targets at home too.

Contact details

We hope the information in this booklet answers many of the questions you might have about assessment and monitoring of student progress.

Should you have any further questions, please contact your child's year leader:

Year 7	Mr Eaton	Year7admin@helsbyhigh.org.uk
Year 8	Mrs Jones	Year8admin@helsbyhigh.org.uk
Year 9	Mrs Turner	Year9admin@helsbyhigh.org.uk

A Guide to the New GCSE Grades for Parents

<i>Old GCSE</i>	<i>New GCSE</i>	
A*+	9.7	
A*+	9.4	
A*+	9	
A1*	8.7	
A2*	8.4	
A3*	8	
A1	7.7	
A2	7.4	
A3	7	
B1	6.7	Old NC level
B2	6.4	<i>8a</i>
B2	6	8b
B3	5.7	
B3	5.4	<i>8c</i>
C1	5	7a
C2	4.7	<i>7b</i>
C2	4.4	
C3	4	7c
D1	3.7	<i>6a</i>
D2	3.4	<i>6b</i>
D3	3	6c
E1	2.7	<i>5a</i>
E2	2.4	<i>5b</i>
E3	2	5c
F1	1.7	<i>4a</i>
F2	1.4	<i>4b</i>
F3	1.3	4c
G1	1.2	<i>3a</i>
G2	1.1	<i>3b</i>
G3	1	3c
	0.7	<i>2a</i>
	0.4	<i>2b</i>
U	0	<i>2c</i>

From September 2016, we are setting student's end of year minimum expected grades (MEG) using the new GCSE grades. We are using the same grades that students in Year 7, 8 and 9 had for maths in the academic year 2015/16.

The table shows the approximate equivalence between old National Curriculum levels, old GCSE grades and the new GCSE grades.

Please note that from September 2016 onwards a good GCSE pass, formerly a grade C, is now a grade 5.