



Serenity School

Academic Assessment Policy

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Introduction

For many years, schools have assessed the work and achievement of students using National Curriculum Levels. The criteria was nationally produced for each level for each National Curriculum subject.

From September 2014 the Government ceased the expectation and requirement to assess students using National Curriculum Levels. As an independent school we will support the use of a skills curriculum to measure progress.

All schools are now expected to implement their own assessment system to suit their own circumstances and requirements.

We have been looking at a number of systems in order to select the one which we think will work best for our students to ensure maximum progress and success.

Our philosophy as an education provider is to aim high and work hard to achieve the very best results. We believe that students can work and achieve well beyond expected levels based on prior attainment. We also believe that ability is not fixed but can be developed with the right attitudes to learning and approaches to work. As such, we wish to avoid a system of assessment that seeks to 'label' a student and limit expectations.

We want students to believe in the possibility of achieving beyond what might be expected based on their prior attainment. Time and again, as school leaders, we have examples of students with the right attitudes, who have gone on to exceed all expectations. We, therefore, wish to develop these attitudes in all our students through how we report progress.

We believe that students need to know how to improve their work in specific ways and that good assessment should inform them what to do next to improve. We wish to avoid a focus on numbers or letters, but rather ensure that students are focused on their own progress and how to improve their own work and outcomes.

We feel that the Growth and Threshold assessment model is best fit for the needs of our school.

This will be implemented for all assessment activities within KS3 and some of the principles will be used throughout KS4.

Rationale

The Growth and Threshold assessment model (GT):

- based on developing the key knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in KS4 and beyond
- based on our high expectations for all students based heavily on formative feedback, supporting all students to succeed – and so develops a “growth mindset” (belief that they can improve)
- Incorporates periodic summative assessment to support this ongoing formative feedback
- Simple and easy to understand – for staff, parents and students
- Has consistent principles, to be used across subjects, but the flexibility to be suitable for all subjects

Principles

- Students are not assigned a target level, but are assigned to a Threshold Band (see appendix 1). All students are expected to aspire to excellence –*Growth Mindset*. Rather than focusing on a pre-determined (and limiting) end point, we are focusing on their starting point and building from there.
- Assessment is based on *progress* made – so celebrates effort of all students, with different starting points.
- Students are not given feedback relating to levels or thresholds but the focus is on formative feedback that makes students think about how to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills to progress further.
- Threshold rubrics developed within school by subject departments are used for planning, assessment and intervention and not for labelling students. These rubrics aid formative assessment, planning and marking so that students are challenged to improve their work in appropriate ways.
- Thresholds are used internally to track and monitor progress of students so that we ensure all students are making progress in line with expectations from their starting point.
- Threshold rubrics used by teachers in year 6, 7, 8 and 9 have increasing levels of demand to ensure that students maintain the correct trajectory towards their potential/minimum expected GCSE outcomes.
- Parents and students receive formative feedback about strengths and areas for improvement to aid progress.
- Parents are informed about progress in relation to school and when appropriate national expectations.

Formative Assessment

Students will be regularly assessed during lessons and homework tasks through appropriate formative assessment methods and the professional judgments of their teachers (who will have appropriate minimum expectations for each student based on Threshold Bands). A range of information from primary schools and internal baseline tests/assessments will inform the school and minimum (national) expectation (Threshold Band) for each student.

Banded thresholds of knowledge, skills and understanding will be used to give students ongoing and personalised formative feedback on their day to day work, focusing on how to improve towards excellence.

In order to support a “growth mindset”, the feedback will be aimed at moving students through the thresholds and aspiring towards excellence.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments will be used to assess how well students are doing towards the end of a unit of work. Based on their performance on these tests or assessments they could be awarded a summative assessment statement.

Summative assessments at the end of a unit of work or in a report to parents will be phrased as below:

- Working **below** their threshold band (expectations) – ***Making less than expected progress (Beginning or Novice)***
- Working **within** their threshold band – ***Making expected progress (Developing)***
- Working **towards the top end** of their threshold band or **beyond** the excellence threshold – ***Making good progress (Secure)/Making exceptional progress (Secure+)***

Reporting to parents

So, rather than reporting a level to students and parents, we are reporting the progress students are making in relation to expectations set for them personally whilst working towards national expectations.

This is what the report that goes home to parents will look like:

Student X				
Subject	Current Progress	School Expectations	Attitude to Learning	Successes and areas to improve
English Miss Smith	Good	Meeting	Good	These boxes will have clear statements to support improvement from the appropriate assessment rubric.
Maths Mr Jones	Expected	Not yet meeting	Good	These boxes will have clear statements to support improvement from the appropriate assessment rubric.
Music Mrs Black	Exceptional	Exceeding	Outstanding	These boxes will have clear statements to support improvement from the appropriate assessment rubric.

Explanation of current progress statements

Exceptional Progress – currently making excellent progress and will exceed threshold band expectations by the end of key stage 2/3/4.

Good Progress – currently progressing well and as a result could exceed threshold band expectations by the end of key stage 2/3/4.

Expected Progress – on track to achieve in line with threshold band expectations by the end of key stage 2/3/4.

Less Than Expected Progress - currently not achieving in line with their threshold band expectations.

Explanation of national expectation statements

(All national expectations are based on the Developing Threshold which is at the national expectation of grades 9-1 at GCSE).

Exceeding – student is currently on track to exceed the new GCSE grade from predicted flight path. (Meeting expectations above the Developing Threshold Band).

Meeting – student is currently on track to meet the new GCSE 9-1 standard. (Meeting expectations at the top end of Developing Threshold Band as per flight path).

Not yet meeting – student is not currently on track to achieve the new GCSE 9-1 standard as suggested from flight path. (Meeting expectations at the bottom end of Developing Threshold Band or below).

Not applicable – This statement will be used for a very small number of students identified by the SENCO.

This information will help students and parents understand what a student's likely outcomes will be at the end of key stage 4 at GCSE if they continue to work and progress in the way that they have been doing.

Appendix 1

As a guide, the table below outlines the progress expectations for students arriving at the school in year 6/7 based on their prior attainment.

You will notice that the GCSE forecast has a minimum grade but does not limit the expectation in the belief and hope that many students will exceed minimum expectations based on their prior attainment.

KS2 Level Standardised score/2015 Levels	KS3 Threshold	GCSE Current progress expectation	GCSE (New)	GCSE Growth Model Forecast Band
5a, 6+	Excellence	A, A*	8-9 (A* - A**)	8 -9
5c, 5b, 5a	Secure	B	6-7 (B - A)	6 -9
4c, 4b, 4a	Developing	C	4-5 (C - B-)	4 -9
2, 3c, 3b, 3a	Foundation	E, D	1-3 (G - D+)	1 - 9