



St. Mary's R.C. High School
A Specialist Science and Applied Learning College

Assessment booklet Assessment without levels and new GCSE's

Dear Parent/Carer

There is much change going on in education, including a new National Curriculum, and new, more challenging GCSE's. along with new style A Levels. Most of this is happening over the next few years and your son/daughter will experience these changes.

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 which we have all become familiar with.

These developments provide us with opportunities to develop a more appropriate Key Stage 3 curriculum which builds the important foundations for Key Stage 4. We should no longer view KS3 and KS4 as separate courses, but rather as a continuum. The new curriculum will also allow us to develop better assessments which highlight specific strengths and areas for development within those 'big ideas', rather than a vague overall level which can often be meaningless.

We hope to develop a curriculum and assessment model which:

1. Is focused on developing key concepts, knowledge and skills needed for success in KS4.
2. Is based on high expectations and challenge for all.
3. Uses mindset principles in its 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 required to tackle GCSE examination questions
6. Data from assessments reliably identifies what students understand and informs future teaching and learning, including intervention needs.

The new GCSE's will be more demanding and require higher levels of literacy and numeracy to access the top grades.

The new GCSE's

From September 2015 (for assessment in 2017) new GCSE's will be taught in English Language, English literature and Mathematics.

From September 2016 (for assessment in 2018) new GCSE's will be taught in Art and Design, Biology, Chemistry, Computer science, Drama, Food and Nutrition, French, Geography, German, History, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Science, Spanish, Religious Education.

From September 2017 (for assessment in 2019) new GCSE's will also be taught in Business studies and Design Technology .

Other changes include:

- A new grading scale that uses the numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade. The 9 will be awarded by the exam board to the highest achieving performers (approx. 3%)
- A structure where all assessment happens at the end of the course and content is not divided into modules
- Exams as the default method of assessment, except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills required.

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

This is most easily represented by the following graphic:

Ofqual

New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

Students will not lose out as a result of the changes.

We will use a statistical method (known as comparable outcomes) in 2017 so that:

- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above
- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve a grade A and above
- the bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G
- grade 5 will be awarded to around the top third of students gaining the equivalent of a grade C and bottom third of a grade B.
- This has been defined as a good pass by the Department for Education.

There will be a combination of Assessment for Learning (AfL) tasks and Summative Assessments.

Assessment for learning (AfL)

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and as such, AfL will be present in lessons as an on-going and continuous process. Some AfL assessments will be extended tasks. These can be thought of as 'checking progress' activities. Following an assessment of this type there will be detailed marking and feedback and the student will be expected to reflect and act upon that feedback. This provides opportunities for students to develop further their knowledge, skills and understanding before the summative assessment.

Summative assessments

Summative assessments take place at the end of a unit of work.

They will take a variety of forms, depending on the nature of each subject and they should

- 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

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

How will Summative assessments be graded?

A new grading system is being introduced which indicates how well the students have understood that particular unit of work, based on their performance in the final assessment. This fits in with our aim to **master** their understanding of the key ideas needed for successful performance at KS4. The scale is :

Mastering	Demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of all concepts and skills in a unit of work.
Developing	Has a secure understanding of the main concepts and skills when applied to familiar contexts.
Emerging	Grasped some of the main ideas and skills in a unit of work, others require development.

Whatever the nature of the assessment, the outcomes will generate a grade on this scale that maps onto the GCSE scales.

How will Targets be set?

The prior attainment of students (from FFT aspire) and baseline testing will be used to set long term GCSE targets and shorter term summative assessment targets.

Band	Typical prior attainment
GCSE 2	5a 6c
GCSE 1	5c 5b 5a
FOUNDATION 3	4b 4a 5c
FOUNDATION 2	3b 3a 4c
FOUNDATION 1	3c 3b

The GCSE targets will be based on the new GCSE grading scale of 1—9 and we have included foundation levels for Key Stage 3.

How will progress be judged and tracked?

Students will be expected to perform at an assessment grade which is consistent with their prior attainment. It is important to note that assessments gradually become more challenging as students move from year to year.

(A word of caution here: The new GCSE's and their examinations are in development. It is impossible to foresee the potential effect of national grading methods.)

It is important to remember that pupil progress is not linear.

Teaching staff will enter assessment data to eportal at six points in the year.

The data will be made available online to parents and students termly.

This is an online, password protected, portal.

Printouts will be produced for those who do not have internet access.

Target setting and measuring progress.

As in all target setting methods, prior attainment guides the expected outcomes. All pupils will be expected to make the same progress from their starting points. It is important to note that assessments become more challenging as students move from year to year.

GRADE on entry	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11
9 Mastering					
9 Developing					
9 Emerging					
8 Mastering					
8 Developing					
8 Emerging					
7 Mastering					
7 Developing					
7 Emerging					
6 Mastering					
6 Developing					
6 Emerging					
5 Mastering					
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2 Developing					
2 Emerging					
1 Mastering					
1 Developing					
1 Emerging					
F3 Mastering					
F3 Developing					
F3 Emerging					
F2 Mastering					
F2 Developing					
F2 Emerging					
F1 Mastering					
F1 Developing					
F1 Emerging					

This table is for illustrative purposes only.

It is unlikely that progression through GCSE will be as linear as this, but it is our intention that the curriculum and assessments are mapped to GCSE grades.

Pupils below GCSE grading are at Foundation level.

For further information about your child's progress contact:

The school office who will pass you on the most appropriate member of staff.