

Assessment without Levels

Introduction

As part of the national curriculum review, the Secretary of State has removed the official use of national curriculum levels and level descriptors at KS3. The Department for Education (DfE) decided that the use of national curriculum levels had changed since they were first introduced and that schools should develop their own assessment models. All school either have developed or are developing their own Assessment Without Levels model. (AWL)

Alongside this change at KS3, GCSE grades are changing from A*, A, B, C to numerical grades where 9 is the highest grade and 1 is the lowest grade.

Our Assessment model is based on developing the key knowledge and skills required for success in KS4.

- It is based on our high expectations of students
- Supports staff in developing a curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning which support outstanding outcomes through key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4
- Adopts the principle of a 'flight path' though Key Stage 3 identifying what current performance means in terms of outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4
- Builds on our work on marking and feedback

How is it different from levels?

- Students are not initially assigned a target level – they are all expected to aspire to excellence as they move through the Key Stage. This is linked to the concept of Growth Mindsets. 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.
- Our teachers set the standard of excellence expected – this reinforces our high expectations
- Students are not given feedback such as 'you are a 4a' – but have feedback that makes students think about how to develop their understanding. This is called formative feedback.
- Progress is seen through what is taught and the skills that students develop rather than movement through levels. In this model students will often stay within the same flight path throughout Key Stage 3 because they are developing the skills and knowledge to achieve their expected GCSE grades.

Our model starts at KS3 by treating different types of subject slightly differently. Every subject is unique and has different criteria for success. At GCSE level, good Literacy and Numeracy skills are needed for academic success but for some subjects such as PE or Art or Music, an element of

talent or creativity or physical fitness is needed as well. We have split our KS3 subjects into “ebacc” subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate suite at GCSE level and “non-ebacc” subjects.

Ebacc subjects

English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Modern Languages.


When students join King Edwards’ their KS2 English and Maths scores and levels and teacher assessments will be used to assign them to a ‘Flight Path’ based on their prior attainment. This flight path will give an indication of what they should then go on to achieve at GCSE, using the new grading system.

Flight Path 4 (FP4)	GCSE grades 6 and above
Flight Path 3 (FP3)	GCSE grades 5 and above
Flight Path 2 (FP2)	GCSE grades 4 and above
Flight Path 1 (FP1)	GCSE grades 3 and above

Assessment

During the term, students will be assessed against a set of published criteria. The criteria have been written for each Flightpath. It identifies the key knowledge and skills students need in order to be successful in KS4 and has been created by working backwards from GCSE and thinking about what students need to have mastered in KS3 to be successful in KS4. Each subject has a set of criteria and these can be found on the school website alongside an overview of the topics being taught each half term.

An example of the criteria can be seen below

 KS3 Assessment Criteria: Geography				
	Flight Path 1: GCSE grades 3 and above	Flight Path 2: GCSE grades 4 and above	Flight Path 3: GCSE grades 5 and above	Flight Path 4: GCSE grades 6 and above
Year 7	Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With guidance recognizes basic features on a map and photograph to investigate places. With help can use some basic map skills including 4 figure grid references. SPaG errors throughout writing. Location and place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes a basic description about a place using simple key words. Knows the difference between human and physical features. Can recognise some of the continents and oceans. 	Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises basic features on a map and photograph to investigate places. With help can use some basic map skills including 4/5 figure grid references. Partial PEE with limited understanding. Makes frequent SPaG errors. Location and place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes a description about a place using simple key words. Can categorise different human and physical features. Names/identifies all of the continents and oceans. 	Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to describe features on a map and photograph to investigate places. With help can use some basic map skills including 4/5 figure grid references. Use both primary and secondary sources. PEE with guidance with linking ideas. Makes occasional SPaG errors. Location and place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes a basic description about a place using simple key words. Understands that places have changed over time and may change in the future Is aware of where important places are in the 	Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes features on a map and photograph to investigate places and start to use my own words/key words. Uses PEE with guidance. Selects which skills and types of evidence to use. Presents work in suitable ways (writing, maps, charts etc.). Reaches simple conclusion based upon my findings. Uses 6 figure grid references, interpret relief maps, follow routes and describe features on O.S. maps and has a basic understanding of thematic maps.

Each time students are assessed they will be marked as “Developing”, “Secure” or “Mastered”.

It is entirely possible for a student to be on Flight Path 1 (aiming towards GCSE grades 3 and above) and “Mastering” the content they are being taught or a student to be on Flight Path 4 (aiming towards GCSE grades 6 and above) and be “Developing” in their learning.

Each term, progress reports will be completed for each student to show how well the student has performed on their own flight path. Students who make repeatedly exceptional progress over time will be reviewed and could

possibly be moved up a flight path. However, underperforming students will only be moved down in exceptional circumstances.

Diagram to show the Ebacc flight paths and the corresponding GCSE grades.

This is used for English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Languages

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	GCSE
Flight Path 4			Mastered	Grade B / A / A*
		Mastered	Secure	Grades 6 and above
	Mastered Secure Developing	Secure Developing	Developing	Grades 7 / 8 / 9
Flight path 3			Mastered	Grade C / B
		Mastered	Secure	Grade 5 and above
	Mastered Secure Developing	Secure Developing	Developing	Grade 5 / 6
Flight path 2			Mastered	Grade D / C
		Mastered	Secure	Grade 4 and above
	Mastered Secure Developing	Secure Developing	Developing	Grades 4 / 5
Flight path 1			Mastered	Grades F / E / D
		Mastered	Secure	Grade 3 and above
	Mastered Secure Developing	Secure Developing	Developing	Grade 3 / 4

Non-Ebacc Subjects

ICT, Computer Studies, RE, Art, Music, PE, Technology

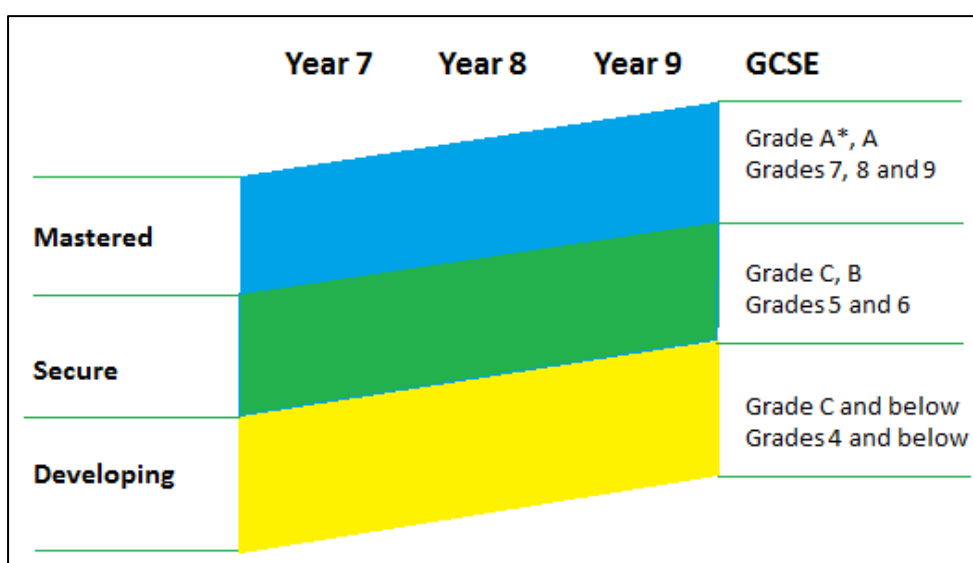
For these subjects an element of talent, creativity or physical fitness is involved as well as important literacy and numeracy skills. There are no Flight Paths for these subjects, instead all students will be assessed as "Developing", "Secure" or "Mastered" against the published criteria for each subject.

As a guide, if a student were to be "developing" they would be heading towards GCSE grades up to grade 4, "secure" would indicate a route heading towards GCSE grades 5 or 6 and "mastered" would indicated GCSE grades of 7, 8 or 9 in key stage 4.

Example of non ebacc assessment criteria

KS3 Assessment Criteria: PE			
	Developing: GCSE grades 4 and below	Secure: GCSE grades 5-6	Mastered: GCSE grades 7,8,9
Year 7	Replicating Ideas and Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can perform a number of agilities, rolls & balances with reasonable control. Can put basic moves such as rolls & balances, shapes and twists in order to make a sequence. Can perform a variety of shapes in the air including tuck, straddle and pike. 	Replicating Ideas and Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can show increased precision, control and fluency in movements. Will be able to link moves together with reasonable precision. Can put small self-designed routines together and then perform these with some precision, control and fluency. 	Replicating Ideas and Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can perform basic techniques on apparatus including agility and balances. Can use style and control some of the times in my sequences/routines that are fluent. Can experiment and plan own sequences and routines and help others with their work. Can perform combination moves such as seat drop.

Diagram to show the flight paths and the corresponding GCSE grades for Non Ebacc subjects: Art, Music, PE, Technology, RE, ICT, Computer Studies



Reporting to parents

The reports to parents are currently being redesigned to reflect our new assessment model. The reports will show how well students are mastering their learning as well as giving an indication of their learning characteristics such as effort in class or homework.

Feedback

When a student's work is marked, a system called SWaNS is used where students are told their Strengths and Weakness in the piece of work and their Next Steps. The Next Step should directly link to the corresponding flight path and should help each student improve their mastery of the topic being taught.

Summative or end of Unit Assessments

We understand that this is a very different system for students, staff and parents alike to get used to. Students have in the past been very aware of what level they are working at and how to move to the next level but we hope that in time students will focus on mastering their learning objectives, regardless of the route or flight path that they are on.

In the summer term, all students in key stage 3 will sit external exams in English, Maths and Science (year 9 only). Each student will have a standardised score from that exam which will show their progress on a year by year basis.

Summary

- National Curriculum Levels no longer exist.
- GCSE grades are changing from A*-G to 9 – 1
- At Key Stage 3 students will be assessed against criteria and will be given feedback to see if they are Developing, Secure or have Mastered their learning objectives.
- For ebacc subjects (English, Maths, Science, History, Geography and Languages) students are placed on a Flight Path that guides them towards GCSE grades.
- For non-ebacc subjects (ICT, Computer studies, Technology, Art, Music PE, RE) there are no flight paths. Developing would suggest a route leading to GCSE grades up to grade 4. Secure would suggest a route leading to GCSE grades of 5 or 6, Mastered would suggest a route leading to GCSE grades of 7, 8 or 9
- In the summer term students will take external tests that will give students a standardised score in English and Maths (and Science in year 9). This summative assessment will show progress on a year by year basis.