

Life After Levels Assessment

September 2016

Dear Parent

Key Stage 3 Assessment

A number of changes to education have recently been made by the Government. You may be aware that GCSEs will be assessed in future using a 9-1 scale. Other changes have affected Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and the use of levels for assessment has now ended:

“National Curriculum levels do not give a meaningful assessment of what pupils know or can do nor what their next steps are.” DfE Guidance, 2014

Since 2015 we have been working on a new scheme of assessment to replace levels. We have consulted a number of primary schools and have adopted a new assessment scheme which should be familiar with many parents of Year 7 pupils.

KS3 Assessment Areas

The new assessment scheme will enable teachers to assess the progress of pupils much more effectively than was previously the case. Rather than producing one overall assessment for each subject the curriculum has been broken down into a number of assessment areas as shown below:

Subject	Assessment Areas	Subject	Assessment Areas
Art	Knowledge and Application Presentation Target setting/ Self Evaluation	Maths	Developing Fluency Mathematical Reasoning Problem Solving
Drama	Creating Performing Evaluating	Music	Performing Composing Musical Understanding
English	Reading Writing Spoken Language	PE	Team Activities Individual Skill Based Activities Outdoor & Adventurous Activities Analysis & Understanding
French/ German	Listening Speaking Reading Writing Translation	RE	RE Knowledge RE Skills
Geography	Geography Knowledge Geography Skills	Science	Scientific skills Biology Chemistry Physics
History	History Knowledge History Skills	Design and Technology	Designing Making
Computing	IT Skills Outcome		

Parents can find further details about the assessment areas listed above on the school’s website. These details will also be shared with pupils in lessons. Teachers will now be measuring progress

in each of these assessment areas. To help them to do this they will use a series of statements outlining what is to be taught to pupils in each year at KS3 and therefore, what they should know or be able to do by the end of each year (end-of-year expectations). Again details of these end-of-year expectations can be found on the school website. Please contact the school if you are unable to access this information online.

In place of the old levels (5c, 5b etc) teachers will use the following scale:

Description	Descriptor
Exceeding	The pupil is consistently exceeding the end-of-year expectations with little need for support and guidance
Securely Meeting	The pupil is consistently meeting the end-of-year expectations and/or occasionally exceeding with support and guidance
Developing	The pupil is making progress towards the end-of-year expectations but sometimes requires support and guidance
Emerging	The pupil is starting to make progress towards the end-of-year expectations but requires continued support and guidance

All pupils should aim to make progress towards the end-of-year expectations in all subjects. Some pupils will require more support and guidance from teachers in order to meet the end-of-year expectations. Some pupils should strive to exceed the end-of-year expectations.

We understand that changing to a new assessment scheme will take pupils, parents and teachers some getting used to. You will have further opportunity to discuss the new assessment scheme during the Parents' Information Evenings which have been arranged for each year group. In addition, the formal Parents' Consultation Evening will also provide an opportunity to discuss the new assessment scheme with subject teachers.

We intend to evaluate the new assessment scheme towards the end of the Autumn Term. However, we would welcome feedback via email to office@testvalley.hants.sch.uk, marking your email "For the attention of Mr Page".

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your support as we encourage your child to achieve personal excellence.

Mr A Page
Deputy Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

Will levels be used in future?

No. The use of levels at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 has finished. Schools have been asked to replace levels with something else.

Are all schools using the same assessment scheme?

No. The Government decided to give all schools the freedom to decide how to assess pupils. At Test Valley we have chosen to use an assessment scheme which we believe will work well to help pupils to make a successful transition from primary school and prepare them for their GCSE courses.

Will Year 8 and 9 be assessed using levels?

No. The Government has instructed schools that the use of levels as a means to assess pupils is no longer appropriate. Therefore the new Test Valley assessment scheme will be introduced to all Key Stage 3 pupils from September 2016.

How will I know if my child is making progress?

Initially, the amount of progress made by pupils will be assessed as “emerging”. As they make more progress and start to achieve some of the end-of-year expectations their progress will be judged as “developing”, “securely meeting” and ultimately “exceeding”. Most progress will be made by pupils who are “exceeding” the end-of-year expectations.

Should I worry if my child's progress is assessed as “Emerging”?

No. Pupils should be learning new topics each year and so it is expected that all pupils will be assessed as “Emerging” to begin with. Most pupils should move to “Developing” during the year with some “Securely Meeting” end of year expectations. A few pupils will be assessed as “Exceeding” end of year expectations by the end of the year.

Will I receive more information about my child's progress than previously?

Yes. Previously you received one piece of assessment information about your child's attainment in the form of a level (e.g., 5c). This was an extremely difficult level for teachers to judge due to the complexity of each subject. For example, some pupils had achieved well in one aspect of a subject but struggled in another aspect of the same subject. It was not possible to report this difference using one level per subject. The new assessment scheme will allow teachers to break each subject down into a number of areas and report on the progress being made in each.

What will happen if my child moves to another school because we have to relocate?

The new school is probably using a different assessment scheme. We will share our assessment information with the new school as we would do currently. We will also share this guidance with the other school so that they can use our assessment information to support your child appropriately.

Can I let the school know what I think about the new assessment scheme?

Yes. We always welcome feedback. Please see the information above for the best way to give us your feedback.

Will this new assessment scheme affect my child's chances of succeeding at KS4?

Yes, we believe that the new assessment scheme will help you and your child understand their strengths better and therefore what they need to do to improve in each subject.