



North London
Grammar School

Assessment without Levels Policy



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1. How is assessment at Key Stage 3 changing from September 2017?

In September 2014, the government announced that National Curriculum Levels were to be abolished and not replaced. Instead, from September 2016, all secondary schools in England and Wales are required to publish their own 11-16 assessment policies, detailing how progress and attainment across Key Stages 3-4 will be assessed and reported. This guide explains how North London Grammar School plans to assess and report student achievement from September 2017 across Years 7-11, with a particular focus on the changes at Key Stage 3.

2. Why have National Curriculum Levels been abolished?

Levels were first introduced alongside the National Curriculum in 1988. For almost 30 years, they have provided schools, students and parents or carers with a universal language around assessment across Key Stages 1-3, as well as a common criteria against which achievement in individual subjects could be benchmarked, tracked and monitored.

From 2016, levels were also used to report the results of Key Stage 1 and 2 statutory assessments (SATS) in Years 2 and 6. Following the abolition of levels, for the first time this summer, SATS results will not be reported in the form of levels but rather as a scaled score in the range of 80-130. At KS2, the government's expectation is that 85% of all students meet the new 'secondary ready' score of 100 (roughly equivalent to a Level 4b at present).

The government's decision to remove levels from the National Curriculum was motivated by a number of different factors. The main reasons were:

a) Accuracy and consistency

Levels were originally intended to be used as broad end-of-unit, end-of-year descriptors, providing students and parents with a best-fit summary of how well learners had mastered the knowledge and skills associated with individual subjects. In practise however, the increasingly widespread use of levels to assess individual tasks and assignments, distorted this purpose.

b) Clarity and coherence

The introduction of sub-Levels (e.g. 4a, 4b, 4c), whilst enabling schools to demonstrate progress at shorter, more regular intervals, has further undermined the usefulness of levels. Government research suggested that many students and parents or carers did not fully understand and could not clearly explain the difference between specific levels or sub-Levels in relation to different subjects.

c) Fixed v. growth mindset

Where levels were the main focus of conversations with students and parents or carers, learners understandably often focused more on the level or sub-Level awarded, than on the specific guidance and feedback provided. Removing levels therefore has the potential to accelerate learning and student progress by focusing feedback on those aspects of the curriculum where their knowledge and understanding is secure and those areas where there are gaps.

Linked to this, evidence also suggests that removing levels and the label associated with them, emphasises to learners that there is no ceiling on achievement and helps to promote a positive growth mind-set.

3. Assessment principles

North London Grammar Schools’ new assessment framework seeks to address these concerns and capitalise on the opportunity presented by the removal of levels, to introduce an assessment system that:

- Is simple and easy to understand - for staff, students and parents
- Is based on high expectations and challenge for all
- Is closely linked to the curriculum and focused on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for success at Key Stage 4
- Improves learning and encourages a growth mindset by providing students and parents with high quality next-steps feedback focused on specific objectives
- Tracks pupil progress in relation to an aspirational target across Key Stages 3 and 4
- Allows all students to experience success, by focusing on the progress they make from their starting point
- Differentiates between pupils of different abilities, giving early recognition of pupils who are falling behind and those who are excelling

4. The mastery curriculum and student trackers

From September 2016, the level ladder, which currently provides the basis for assessment and reporting at KS3, will be replaced by the **mastery curriculum**. Instead of using levels or sub-levels to assess achievement and inform feedback, the core knowledge, concepts and skills that underpin each subject will be assigned to six broad **thresholds**. These thresholds correspond broadly to the old National Curriculum Levels 3-8, but have been updated to reflect recent changes both to KS2 and GCSE.

In Years 7-9, in most subjects, student achievement is assessed in relation to four of the six thresholds. The descriptors attached to each threshold – **emerging, developing, securing, mastering** - provide students with a clear indication of how well they are progressing. Very simply, each student’s target is to ‘master’ the knowledge, concepts and skills delivered in each year of the programme of study.

| Old Level | New Threshold | New Year 7 Thresholds | New Year 8 Thresholds | New Year 9 Thresholds |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | EP |
| 8 | 6.5 | | EP | Mastery |
| | 6.0 | | | |
| 7 | 5.5 | EP | Mastery | Secure |
| | 5.0 | | | |
| 6 | 4.5 | Mastery | Secure | Developing |
| | 4.0 | | | |
| 5 | 3.5 | Secure | Developing | Emerging |
| | 3.0 | | | |
| 4 | 2.5 | Developing | Emerging | |
| | 2.0 | | | |
| 3 | 1.5 | Emerging | | |
| | 1.0 | | | |

As the diagram above illustrates, the thresholds are progressive and build year-on-year throughout the programme of study. What, for example, constitutes 'securing' in Year 7, would only count as 'developing' in Year 8 and 'emerging' in Year 9. At the top end, where students are demonstrating knowledge, understanding and skills above and beyond those specified in that year of the programme of study, they are deemed to making **'exceptional progress' (EP)**. Examples of this might include problem-solving, applying the knowledge and skills they have gained to new and unfamiliar contexts, adapting their work for different audiences or conducting their own research and shaping their own lines of enquiry.

Student-friendly trackers, like the Year History exemplar that follow, provide learners with a clear breakdown of what each descriptor means, detailing precisely what knowledge, understanding and skills are required to attain each new threshold. For each subject, trackers for each year group (or set for those subjects that set students by ability), together with a progression map for the whole of Key Stage 3 and a curriculum map outlining course content are available to view on the curriculum area of the school website.



Year 7: History Tracker: Key Concepts and Skills

To succeed in History at North London Grammar School there are a range of **key concepts** and **key skills** that you must master as your progress through Key Stage 3. Refer to this sheet often and use it to help you with your home learning and assessments: it is your guide to becoming a master historian!

| Key Concepts and Skills | Emerging | Developing | Secure | Mastery |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Before and after 1066</p> <p>Change and continuity Historians explain and analyse change and continuity over time.</p> | <p>You can identify examples of change between two different periods. You make accurate statements but do not development them with examples.</p> | <p>You can describe examples of change between two periods or over time.</p> <p>You make limited use of examples. Your descriptions lack development.</p> | <p>You can make simple explanations of change and continuity.</p> <p>You include some basic examples and write in paragraphs.</p> | <p>You can make developed explanations of change and continuity.</p> <p>You include some detailed examples and write in clear SPEED paragraphs.</p> |
| <p>The Magna Carta</p> <p>Significance Historians can make judgements about the relative important of events and individuals.</p> | <p>You can identify important people, events, and developments. You make accurate statements but do not development them with examples</p> | <p>You can describe the importance of people and their actions, events, and developments.</p> <p>You make limited use of examples. Your descriptions lack development</p> | <p>You can explain how / why people and their actions, events, and developments are important.</p> <p>You include some basic examples and write in paragraphs.</p> | <p>You can make developed explanations of how significant events, individuals, or developments led to change.</p> <p>You include some examples of significance (e.g. impact or legacy/ GREAT).</p> |
| <p>Black Death</p> <p>Cause and consequence Historians explain and analyse the causes and consequences of events</p> | <p>You can describe historical events through story or narrative. You make accurate statements but do not development them with examples.</p> | <p>You can identify and describe the long-term and short-term causes of events.</p> <p>You make limited use of examples. Your descriptions lack development.</p> | <p>You can identify and explain the long-term and short-term causes of events briefly.</p> <p>You include some basic examples and write in paragraphs.</p> | <p>You can explain a range of different causes (for example short and long term)</p> <p>You include some detailed examples and write in clear SPEED paragraphs.</p> |
| <p>Measly Middle Ages</p> <p>Using historical evidence Historians use evidence to support their views and analyse sources for usefulness and reliability.</p> | <p>You can use evidence to extract information to learn about the past. You mainly summarise the source or select quotations without inference.</p> | <p>You can use evidence to make basic suggestions ('inferences') about the past.</p> <p>You select quotations from the text to support your ideas. You do not yet consider the provenance.</p> | <p>You can use the provenance to make developed inferences and basic judgements concerning usefulness and reliability.</p> <p>You include quotations / extracts and make accurate inferences. You make some limited use of the provenance.</p> | <p>You can analyse the sources using elements of the provenance to judge usefulness and reliability.</p> <p>You include quotations / extracts and make accurate inferences. You make good use of the provenance.</p> |
| <p>Islamic Conquest/ Ottoman Empire</p> <p>Understanding interpretations Historians understand that there are different interpretations of the past and explain why people have different views.</p> | <p>You can identify what other people have said about the past. You mainly summarise the source or select quotations without inference.</p> | <p>You can describe the opinion of an author or historian based on reading source material.</p> <p>You select quotations from the text to support your ideas. You do not yet consider the provenance</p> | <p>You can explain the differences in opinion between two or more different authors based on reading source material.</p> <p>You include quotations / extracts and make accurate inferences. You make some limited use of the provenance.</p> | <p>You can explain the opinion (interpretation) of an author based on reading source material and considering the provenance.</p> <p>You include quotations / extracts and make accurate inferences. You make good use of the provenance.</p> |

5. Learning Journeys and aspirational targets

In order to provide students, parents and carers with a measurable indicator of how well learners are progressing and what they are currently on track to achieve at the end of Key Stage 4, student achievement in each subject area will be reported in relation to their current 'Learning Journey'.

At the beginning of Year 7, students will be assigned one of the seven Learning Journeys outlined below for each of their subjects, based on KS2 prior attainment and CATs data. In the practical and language subjects, baseline assessment is also used to ensure that students are matched to a Learning Journey that accurately reflects their ability in that subject. For this reason, it is likely that students will be assigned to different Learning Journeys for different subjects. From September 2017, students currently in Year 7 to 9 will also be mapped to a Learning Journey for each of their subjects, using their prior and current attainment data.

| KS2 SATS Level | Year 7 Target | Year 8 Target | Year 9 Target | Learning Journey across Key Stage 3 | KS4 Target Range | KS4 9-1 Target | KS4 A*G Target |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| >6 | >6A | 7B-7A | 8C-8A | | 7-9 | 9 | A* |
| 5B-5A | 6B-6A | 7C-7A | 8C-8A | | 7-9 | 8 | |
| 5C-5B | 6C-6B | 6A-7C | 7A-8C | | 6-8 | 7 | A |
| 4B-4A | 5C-5A | 5A-6A | 6A-7B | | 5-7 | 6 | B |
| 4C-4B | 4A-5C | 5B-6C | 5A-6B | | 4-6 | 5 | C |
| 3B-3A | 4C-4B | 4B-5C | 4A-5B | | 3-5 | 4 | |
| <3B | <4C | <4A | <5B | | 2-5 | 3 | D |
| | | | | | | 2 | E |
| | | | | | | 1 | F/G |

At the end of each Learning Journey, the **KS4 Target Range** indicates what outcomes students are on track to achieve if they continue to work hard towards their aspirational target. Once students formally begin to study GCSEs towards the end of Year 9 or start of Year 10, this KS4 target range will be replaced with a single aspirational **KS4 Target Grade**. Please note that GCSE targets are expressed using the new 9-1 grading system that replaces the old A*-G grades for all subjects from this year.

One clear advantage of this approach is greater coherence and continuity across Key Stages 3 and 4. Instead of using levels to report progress at Key Stage 3 and GCSE grades to report progress at Key Stage 4, moving forward, there will be a common language around assessment across Years 7-11 and greater clarity around expected outcomes at each stage of a student's school career.

Using a KS4 estimated target range instead of a single target grade at KS3 emphasises that outcomes are not fixed or pre-determined. To reinforce the school's high expectations and the idea that there is no cap or limit on what students can achieve, Learning Journeys will be reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year. Where a student is consistently working at the upper end of their Learning Journey KS4 target range or exceeding it, they will be moved up to the next Learning Journey.

Learning journeys will be issued three times a year, Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 2 terms in addition to scheduled reporting cycle for KS3 students.

6. How will student progress in relation to their Learning Journeys be reported?

Student Learning Journeys provide a clear, consistent and measurable benchmark against which achievement in different subjects can be assessed and reported. In place of a level or sub-level on student target stickers and reports, symbols will instead be used to indicate how well students are progressing towards their aspirational target.

| | |
|---|--|
| > | Making better than expected progress. On track to achieve or exceed aspirational target. |
| < | Making less than expected progress. Not currently on track to achieve aspirational target. More effort needed. |
| = | Making expected progress. On track to achieve aspirational target |

It is important to note that the upper end of North London Grammar School's aspirational KS4 target range, places students in the top 10% of outcomes for students nationally in terms of progress across Key Stages 2-4. As such, making 'expected progress' towards these aspirational targets is a significant achievement in itself and something that students should be proud of.

Joe Bloggs 8S

| Subjects | Learning Journey | Autumn | Spring | Summer |
|------------------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| English | 5-7 | < | > | > |
| Maths | 6-8 | = | > | > |
| Science | 7-9 | < | = | > |
| Geography | 5-7 | = | > | > |
| History | 5-7 | = | > | > |
| RE | 5-7 | = | > | = |
| PE | 6-8 | < | < | = |
| Computer Science | 6-8 | = | = | < |
| Art | 6-8 | = | = | > |
| Music | 4-6 | < | > | = |
| Spanish | 5-7 | = | < | = |
| Drama | 4-6 | < | = | > |

The sample target sticker above, taken from a Year 8 student's planner and populated with the first round of autumn achievement data, shows that Joe Bloggs has been placed on to the same 4-6 Learning Journey for 2 of his 12 subjects, for the 5-7 Learning Journey 5 of his 12 subjects are on the same path, for the 6-8 Learning Journey 4 of his 12 subjects are on the same path and lastly there is one subject on the 7-9 Learning Journey.

With the exception of Computer Science, where he is working towards the bottom end of the target range, Joe is either making 'expected' or 'better than expected' progress towards his aspirational target in these 11 subjects. Joe is performing more highly in Drama, Art, History, Geography and Science, and to reflect this he has been assigned to the higher 7-9 learning journey a subject. Music and Drama is his weakest subjects in relative terms, although he is making 'expected' and 'better than expected' progress towards the 5-7 target range. In English and Mathematics, Joe is making 'better than expected' progress and working towards the top end of the target range. If he can sustain this high level of achievement, he may be moved up a Learning Journey in these subjects.



| Subjects | Staff Name | NLGS Pathway | Current Attainment | | | | Attitude to Learning | | | | Current Teacher Comments | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | | October 2017 | December 2017 | February 2017 | April 2017 | October 2017 | December 2017 | February 2017 | April 2017 | Aspect of Praise | Worthy of Development | Areas of Concern | Cause for Concern |
| Art & Design | ST | S | M | | | | | | | | CREATIVE | EVALUATION | | |
| Citizenship | BS | S | S | | | | | | | | BEHAVIOUR | COLLABORATION | | |
| Computing | OS | S | M | | | | | | | | APPLICATION | EVALUATION | | |
| English | MS | M | M | | | | | | | | DETERMINATION | CURIOSITY | | |
| Geography | MF | S | M | | | | | | | | WRITTEN WORK | DISCUSSION | | |
| History | SB | S | S | | | | | | | | APPLICATION | EVALUATION | | |
| Maths | KG | M | M | | | | | | | | DETERMINATION | CURIOSITY | | |
| Music | AH | D | S | | | | | | | | WRITTEN WORK | DISCUSSION | | |
| PE | GC | D | D | | | | | | | | BEHAVIOUR | EVALUATION | | |
| RE | SB | S | S | | | | | | | | APPLICATION | COLLABORATION | | |
| Science | NF | S | S | | | | | | | | CREATIVE | EVALUATION | | |
| Spanish | LC | E | D | | | | | | | | CREATIVE | CURIOSITY | | |

| Attendance | Punctuality | Rewards | Behaviour |
|------------|-------------|--|--|
| 99% | 100% | Achievement Points (September to date) 120 | Behaviour Points (September to date) 2 |

| Grade | Attitude to Learning Grades |
|-------|---|
| 1 | An excellent student who applies themselves consistently to all tasks both in school and at home regardless of outcome. |
| 2 | A good student who applies themselves well in most class and home learning tasks completing them to the best of their ability. |
| 3 | A student who can work well and complete tasks to the expected standard. Greater consistency in effort, concentration and organisation may be required. |
| 4 | A student who does not show sufficient commitment in this subject which has an impact on their own learning and possibly that of their peers. They may give up easily, and lack the discipline to complete all tasks. An improvement in effort is required. |

| KS3 & KS4 Progress Information | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| Current Progress | Key | What does this mean? |
| Emerging | E | Students beginning to grasp some of the ideas and skills in a unit of work. |
| Developing | D | Students have begun to grasp the concept of show some competency with skill but it is not secure i.e. the skill is not consistently applied or the students demonstrates some misunderstanding still. |
| Securing | S | The students understanding with the skills is secure i.e. they make few or no mistakes when applying the skills and show a solid understanding of the content covered (but not extensive). |
| Mastering | M | Students demonstrate complete competency with a skill. A full understanding of content i.e. they make no mistakes and demonstrate a skill regularly, their understanding is detailed and accurate (it is likely to demonstrate mastery with a skill which a student will have evidenced competency in more than once). |
| Exceptional Progress | EP | Students have mastered a skill and are now applying it and testing in numerous situations and contexts. They are showing a flair beyond simply knowing, understanding, applying and are now going beyond expectations. Knowledge will be detailed and be beyond what is required to simply understand a topic. |

| For Key Stage 3 | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Old Level | New Threshold | New Year 7 Thresholds | New Year 8 Thresholds | New Year 9 Thresholds |
| | | | | EP |
| 8 | 6.5 | | EP | Mastery |
| | 6.0 | | | |
| 7 | 5.5 | EP | Mastery | Secure |
| | 5.0 | | | |
| 6 | 4.5 | Mastery | Secure | Developing |
| | 4.0 | | | |
| 5 | 3.5 | Secure | Developing | Emerging |
| | 3.0 | | | |
| 4 | 2.5 | Developing | Emerging | |
| | 2.0 | | | |
| 3 | 1.5 | Emerging | | |
| | 1.0 | | | |

Ofqual

Grading new GCSEs from 2017

| New grading structure | Current grading structure |
|---|---------------------------|
| 9 | |
| 8 | A* |
| 7 | A |
| 6 | B |
| 5 | |
| 4 | C |
| <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed #00a6c9;"/> | |
| 3 | D |
| 2 | E |
| 1 | F |
| | G |
| U | U |

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/639602/Grading_poster.pdf

| Current Progress | Key | What does this mean? | Flight Path to KS4 |
|----------------------|-----|--|--|
| Emerging | E | Students beginning to grasp some of the ideas and skills in a unit of work. | |
| Developing | D | Students have begun to grasp the concept of show some competency with skill but it is not secure i.e. the skill is not consistently applied or the students demonstrates some misunderstanding still. | Students working at this level in year 7 will be demonstrating the potential to achieve F-E at GCSE (1 and 2) and will working below GCSE grade level. |
| Securing | S | The students understanding with the skills is secure i.e. they make few or no mistakes when applying the skills and show a solid understanding of the content covered (but not extensive). | Students working the level in Year 7 will be demonstrating the potential to go on and achieve D-C at GCSE (3, 4 and 5) and will be working at around G-F grade GCSE. |
| Mastering | M | Students demonstrate complete competency with a skill. A full understanding of content i.e. they make no mistakes and demonstrate a skill regularly, their understanding is detailed and accurate (it is likely to demonstrate mastery with a skill which a student will have evidenced competency in more than once). | Students working at this level in Year 7 will be demonstrating the potential to go on and achieve B-A at GCSE (6, 7 and 8) and will already be working at around E grade GCSE level (ranging slightly and above) |
| Exceptional Progress | EP | Students have mastered a skill and are now applying it and testing in numerous situations and contexts. They are showing a flair beyond simply knowing, understanding, applying and are now going beyond expectations. Knowledge will be detailed and be beyond what is required to simply understand a topic. | Students working at this level in year 7 will be demonstrating the potential to go on and achieve A-A* at GCSE (8 and 9) and will already be working at D grade GCSE level and above. |

The importance of consistency is key to the effectiveness of the system and therefore we have attempted to illustrate where the key words sit in terms of what GCSE grade equivalent students will be working at during Year 7, 8 and 9. Again this is a guide and is intended to support subject areas in ensuring the right challenge when setting assessment tasks. It is also worth noting that students will fluctuate between different levels against the various skills and subjects, which is to be expected.

| Year 7 | | | Year 8 | | | Year 9 | | | KS4 (10 &11) | | |
|--------|---|----------------------|--------|---|----------------------|--------|---|----------------------|--------------|---|----------------------|
| A* | 9 | Exceptional Progress | A* | 9 | Exceptional Progress | A* | 9 | Exceptional Progress | A* | 9 | Exceptional Progress |
| A | 7 | | A | 7 | | A | 7 | | A | 7 | |
| B | 6 | | B | 6 | | B | 6 | | B | 6 | |
| C | 4 | | C | 4 | | C | 4 | | C | 4 | |
| D | 3 | | D | 3 | | D | 3 | | D | 3 | |
| E | 2 | | E | 2 | | E | 2 | | E | 2 | |
| F | 1 | | F | 1 | | F | 1 | | F | 1 | |
| G | | G | | G | | G | | | | | |
| | | Developing | | | Emerging | | | | | | |
| | | Emerging | | | | | | | | | |

KS4 Reports

The new GCSE level 9-1 will be used in conjunction with a + symbol that represents secure pass at that level and an insecure pass at that level represented with a - e.g. 7+ represents a Secure Pass at Level 7. KS4 targets will only be represented as 9-1.

University Foundation Programme (UFP) Reports

Target and attainment grades will be represented in Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*.

7. Assessment

Summative assessments will be reported in **KS3 to UFP per reporting cycle**. Percentages recorded in teacher's book/departmental trackers.

KS3: Attainment will be based summative assessment/tests. Reports will indicate only the AWL path instead of the actual percentage as the attainment for each reporting cycle. However the following will be used across all subjects to standardise the outcomes of tests into AWL paths:

| Assessment without Levels (AwL) Paths | Code | Band |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Exceptional | EP | 95-100% |
| Mastery | M | 81-94% |
| Secure | S | 55-80% |
| Developing | D | 26-54% |
| Emerging | E | 0-25% |

Emphasis on using AwL for KS3 for describing progress e.g. *Joe Bloggs achieved a **Secure** pass in Binary Conversions test but in order to move onto the **Mastery** level, he needs to...*

KS4: Attainment will be based summative assessment/tests. The new GCSE levels will be entered based on subject specific grade boundaries from the exam boards. Teachers may report to parents/guardians on the progress of pupils based on both formative and summative assessment to reflect progress over time in formal and informal feedback to students and parents or guardians.

UFP: Attainment will be based summative assessment/tests. Teachers may report to parents/guardians on the progress of pupils based on both formative and summative assessment to reflect progress over time in formal and informal feedback to students and parents or guardians. The UFP grades will be entered based on a standardised NLGS grade boundary which is in line with the majority of University class structures:

| Grade | Grade Boundary | Equivalent to University Class System |
|--------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Distinction* | 79-100% | 1 |
| Distinction | 60-79% | 2:1 |
| Merit | 50-59% | 2:2 |
| Pass | 40-49% | 3 |
| Fail | 0-39% | Fail |



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