

## Parental Guide to assessment in Y7,8 and 9

From September we have made some changes to the way we assess and report student achievement in years 7,8 and 9. The main change is that we are going to be reporting attainment (how students have achieved in a particular assessment/term) rather than progress (students' achievement relative to their KS2 data). We have made the change due to feedback from students that they found Steps lacked the information they need to know exactly what to improve on to make progress and they wanted greater clarity regarding their knowledge and skills in each subject.

### How do we now assess students?

Essentially, we assess the learning of students in two ways, which act as two separate layers of assessment. These are as follows

**Layer 1: Formative assessment**– This is the ongoing day to day assessment in class. Teachers are continually assessing your child's work in order to help them to improve. For example, verbal feedback, lesson starters and mini quizzes. Formative assessment is where we want teachers to focus the most, supporting progress day to day in classrooms. This is because research evidence tells us that formative feedback has the greatest impact on learning. Formative assessment does not always involve the marking and grading of work but instead the teacher identifying students' strengths and weaknesses and then adapting their teaching to help students improve.

**Layer 2: Summative assessment** – When we do summatively assess students (which for most subjects will be three times per year) we will assign students a threshold band. These bands, and the knowledge and skills checklists in their books, will give students guidance on how they are performing in that subject area / topic at that time. This summative assessment may take the form of a test, an assessed piece of writing or practical work as appropriate to the subject. Staff will then assign students a threshold band which will be reported home.

### Student threshold bands

Threshold band	Description
<b>Above</b>	The student is working beyond the essential skills and knowledge needed for that topic
<b>At</b>	The student has acquired the essential skills and knowledge for that topic
<b>Working towards</b>	The student is developing the essential skills and knowledge for that topic

For a detailed list of the areas your child needs to improve please see the essential knowledge and skills checklist at the start of each topic in your child's book/folder. You can also view the curriculum maps on the school website for each subject area.

<https://www.keswick.cumbria.sch.uk/curriculum/academic-life>

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Why can't my son/daughter be given a GCSE target in KS3?**

Whilst we can use data to look at how students with particular starting points usually perform at GCSE, we don't want to use this to set them targets. The main reason is that we don't want to put a ceiling on their expectations of themselves – we want all students to believe that with the right effort, they can achieve the highest grades and make progress. We want to focus on knowledge and skills and not what a typical student of that starting point would achieve.

### **What does the threshold band mean?**

We want all students to be *Working At* the required knowledge and skills for each topic in each subject that they study. This means that for this topic they have fulfilled the requirements of that topic in terms of the required knowledge and skills. If the student is *Working Above* then this means that they are working beyond the expected knowledge and skills required for that topic. If the student is *Working Towards* this means that they are developing the essential skills and knowledge for that topic.

### **How do assessment bands relate to GCSE?**

KS3 (Year 7,8 and 9) is all about building a foundation for GCSE study. However, it is also important to ensure that students have access to a broad and challenging curriculum no matter what their ability is. In KS3 we want the emphasis to be on gaining skills in a knowledge rich curriculum not being on any flightpath to GCSE.

### **How do I know what my son/daughter needs to do in maths to make progress ?**

At the start of every topic in every term your son/ daughter will have an essential knowledge checklist in their book. When they are assessed at the end of the topic, the teacher will ensure that they know what knowledge/skills they have acquired and the areas for development. .

### **Last term my son/daughter was achieving *Working Above* in geography, this term it has changed to *Working At*. Are they 'getting worse'?**

Firstly the challenge will increase year on year so it may be a reflection of an adjustment to this higher level of challenge. Secondly, each topic will be based on different subject knowledge and skills so a student could have weaknesses and strengths in different areas of study. The new banding system per topic gives a clear indication of where their strengths and weaknesses lie.