

# A Guide to Assessment and



# Learning without Levels

### What national changes have been made?

The use of National Curriculum levels, which schools had previously used to measure a students' learning and report to parents, has been removed from September 2014. It is now up to schools to decide how they assess pupils' progress. This is because a number of issues were identified with using levels, such as:

- Students labelling themselves as a number, often resulting in their learning being held back. A need to re-focus upon exactly what has been learnt, and what the student still needs to learn is now given greater emphasis.
- Differences in the use of levels: Levels were seen as a nationally recognised language of progress and attainment, but some teachers across some different schools and departments used them differently.
- Levels were not always being used to adequately show the progress that students were making in specific areas within subjects.
- Learning was sometimes being structured to move students on to new areas of learning before knowledge and understanding was really secure.

### What changes have the government made to the GCSEs?

Students who sit their GCSEs in English and Maths from Summer 2017 onwards will receive a numerical grade, rather than an A\* - G grade. This will be the same for other subjects from Summer 2018 onwards.

Old GCSE	G	F	E	D	C		B	A	A* and additional	
New GCSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

The new GCSE grades do not map neatly onto the old GCSE grading system. One of the aims of the new system is to be able to differentiate between the students achieving higher levels, which is why 6 grades (4-9) now represent what used to be 4 grades (C-A\*) at the top end.

The new grade 9 will be more difficult to get than a current A\*, to reward 'really exceptional performance.'

The new 'benchmark grade' will be grade 4 (equivalent to a C) which will be accepted by employers and colleges as a "standard pass". However, schools will also be asked to publish the number of students achieving a 'higher pass' grade which will be grade 5. This is harder to get than the old benchmark grade C. This has been done to try and drive up standards.

### How have we responded?

The CCfL has seen the removal of levels as an exciting opportunity to develop a learning and assessment model that is focused on the individual learning needs of all students, to make sure that they achieve the best possible Key Stage 4 outcomes. We want to create a new assessment system that:

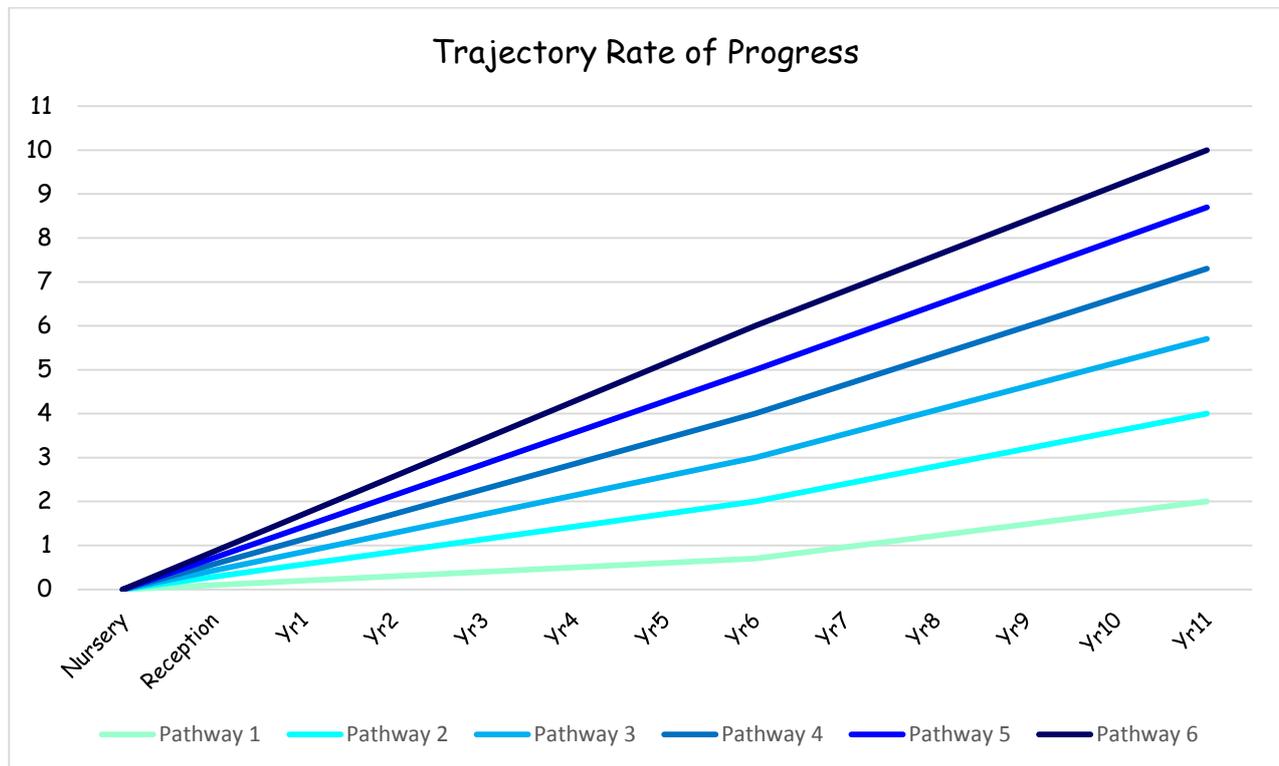
- Highlights and celebrates what the students have achieved, and informs students how they can improve even more;
- Focuses on accurate assessment and step-by-step feedback;
- Has aspirational expectations of each student, but still caters to individual needs;
- Builds the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in exams at the end of KS4;
- Helps parents to support learning at home.

### What will the new assessment system look like in practice?

- On students' arrival at CCfL, (and at the beginning of each year for existing students) departmental staff meet with students, parents, and other key staff to determine the 'Pathway' that the student should be placed on for the next academic year.
- There are 6 Pathways in total, and a student's placement is calculated based upon a number of factors, for example their age, their prior attainment data and their cognitive abilities and reading levels.
- The learning descriptors for each pathway are age-dependent, and act as stepping stones throughout a student's school-life towards a projected GCSE grade.
- Pathway 4 is aligned with national expectations (end of KS2 and KS3 expectations towards GCSE grades 4 and 5, the new benchmark grades. This allows us to calculate how many of our students are on course to reach the new end of Key Stage expectations.



CCfL, along with many other schools, have chosen to base their expectations of each student's progress on the student's prior rate of progress. This is deemed to be a much fairer measure of student performance, as it takes into account each individual's needs and barriers to learning. Our assessment system is also based upon this principle:



The expected progress within each of our Pathways is at least as rapid as the rate of progress that students have made before joining CCfL (in actual fact, the upward turn in the trajectories after the Year 6 point on the x axis demonstrates that we are actually expecting slightly more progress from students than they have achieved before.)

It is also worth noting that most of the subject curriculums have now been broadened considerably. This means that the rate of progress we are expecting is actually harder for students to achieve than it used to be.

### **Baselining and Tracking Progress:**

Curriculum Leads and subject teachers will determine the baseline for each student at the beginning of each academic year, or on entry, based on the cumulative prior attainment data and Pathway from the end of the Summer Term. If a student has consistently made above expected progress for much of the previous year, it is likely that the Curriculum Lead would recommend that a student is moved into a higher pathway. However, it would be anticipated, that if the baseline is correct, then the student would remain in the same pathway.

### **How should teachers track and evidence progress?**

An assessment tracking sheet, with key skills clearly outlined, will be given to each student in each subject at the beginning of each Scheme of Learning. The 'I Can' statements that they need to achieve each term varies depending upon their Pathway, age, and the unit that they are studying.

This should be visible in the front of students' books or folders at the start of a Scheme of Learning and skills must be dated as they are evidenced throughout the course of the unit. The evidence of the skill being learned must be clearly evidenced and referenced in the students' books as well. On completion of the SoL, the completed Assessment Tracking Sheet must be handed in to the respective Curriculum Lead and Heads of KS3 and 4 Teaching and Learning.

For example, the Assessment Tracking Sheet below would be given to a Year 10 English student, studying a writing topic:

NAME:	FORM:	TERM:
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## ENGLISH - YEAR 10 WRITING

**Assessment Objectives - W1:** Writing imaginative, interesting, and thoughtful texts. **W2:** Writing appropriately for my task, audience, and purpose. **W3:** Structuring and organising my writing. **W4:** Writing using varied vocabulary and sentences. **W5:** Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and handwriting.

AO	PAYHWAY 6- I can...	Date when evidenced
W1	Communicate confidently, presenting interesting ideas in an appropriately sustained way.	
W2	Produce texts with an assured sense of form, audience, and purpose throughout. Clear and accurate use of devices.	
W3	Produce well-constructed and assured whole texts, using organisational devices to clarify and support form and purpose.	
W3	Use a wide range of coherence devices, including discourse markers and connectives, to heighten fluency.	
W4	Use a range sentence types and structures, crafting and varying deliberately for effect.	
W4	Use vocabulary assuredly and confidently, crafting, varying and positioning words deliberately for effect.	
W5	Demonstrate very few spelling lapses. Near misses with some unfamiliar words, but only very occasionally.	
W5	Demonstrate consistent accuracy with a wide range of punctuation and grammatical choices.	
AO	PATHWAY 5- I can...	
W1	Communicate effectively and meaningfully, sustaining the reader's interest skilfully throughout the text.	
W2	Produce purposeful texts, which consistently use effective stylistic devices to meet requirements of form, audience, and purpose.	
W3	Produce well-structured texts that use clear and distinctive paragraphs, which are consistently deployed to clarify form.	
W3	Create coherence between sentences, by using clear and distinctive connectives and discourse markers.	
W4	Vary sentence types and structures deliberately so that they are appropriate to purpose and audience.	
W4	Knowingly employ vocabulary so that it is appropriate to purpose and effect.	
W5	Spell mostly accurately, so that there are few errors. All simple words spelt correctly.	
W5	Use punctuation and grammar mostly accurately, so that there are few errors only with more ambitious sentence structures.	
AO	PATHWAY 4 - I can...	
W1	Communicate with increasing clarity and intent, with some detail to engage the reader.	
W2	Show some attempts to match style and form to audience and purpose.	
W3	Demonstrate a clear grasp of organising sentences into paragraphs. Some sense of whole text structure.	
W3	Demonstrate some clear attempts to create sentence cohesion.	
W4	Use a greater range of sentence forms and structures - mostly simple and compound, with some complex sentences.	
W4	Use vocabulary, normally accurately, with increasing range and purpose.	
W5	Increased accuracy, some successful attempts spelling unfamiliar or difficult words.	
W5	Punctuate increasingly accurately, with secure use of question marks, commas. Grammar increasingly accurate.	
AO	PATHWAY 3 - I can...	
W1	Communicate with increasing intent, offering increasing clarity for the reader.	
W2	Produce texts that demonstrate an increasing awareness of purpose, audience, and form.	
W3	Produce texts that have increasingly deliberate structures, with an awareness of paragraphing.	
W3	Produce texts that contain clear coherence within and between some sentences.	
W4	Produce texts that show an increasing control over sentence structure and form - mainly simple and compound sentences.	
W4	Vary some of my vocabulary deliberately, to show my increasing range.	
W5	Spell simple words correctly, and use spelling rules to occasionally spell new words correctly.	
W5	Use some punctuation, for example full stops and question marks. Use grammar with increasing accuracy.	

AO	PATHWAY 2 - I can...			
W1	Communicate simply, often adding detail to sections of my writing.			
W2	Have a limited awareness of purpose and form, often drawing influence from other examples that I have seen.			
W3	Produce texts that are structured logically (often with the aid of teacher scaffolding)			
W3	Group sentences together that are about related ideas. I show some basic attempts to link these sentences.			
W4	Show basic variance in sentence structure, (e.g. start sentences with adjectives) mostly simple but some compound sentences.			
W4	Show some control over using easier vocabulary to add detail and increase clarity.			
W5	Spell simple spellings correctly, with some basic attempts at more complex words.			
W5	Limited punctuation, but normally use capital letters/full stops. Regular verb forms and tenses often correct.			

CURRENT PATHWAY	TARGET PATHWAY	PROGRESS MADE THIS TERM IS...			
		Substantial	Expected	Limited	None

This 'assessment without levels' approach is already being used by English and Maths. All other subjects will change over to this system during 2016-17.

### How does the school report to parents?

Teachers should use a 'best fit' approach to determine if a student has evidenced enough skills within their Pathway to form the most appropriate progress judgement. All parents are informed of their son/daughters' progress five times a year.

### No Progress

A student is likely to have made no progress if either their attendance at school has become a cause for concern or their behaviour has become a significant barrier to learning. In either of these instances other courses of action would be pursued both by departments, and at wider school level, to ensure that the student is able to begin to make progress again.

### Limited Progress

If a student is making some progress, but is still underachieving within their Pathway and not able to make expected progress as evidenced in 'I Can' statements or on the subject specific assessment matrix, they are making Limited Progress and subject specific in class intervention strategies would need to be identified. **NB. See in bold below for clarification on Limited & Expected progress**

### Expected Progress

Expected Progress indicates that a student is secure in their understanding of skills appropriate for their Pathway. If a student is making Expected Progress this will be evidenced in 'I Can' statements specific to their pathway or on the subject specific assessment matrix. **NB Even if a student has only been on roll for a short amount of time, staff will consider whether the student has made Expected Progress within that**

**time frame. Students will not be penalised for making 'Limited Progress' if they have made the expected progress for them within the time frame.**

### Substantial Progress

If a student has shown independent application of specific skills, including in summative assessments, then a student would be considered to have made Substantial Progress. If this is consistently demonstrated throughout the year the student would be considered to have made 'Above Expected Progress' and may be considered for a move to a higher pathway.

The report will contain information on a number of key areas. These include:

- Attendance;
- Behaviour and Learning points for each lesson;
- Overview of progress across subjects.
- Whether the student is 'On Track' or 'Not on Track' to achieve their end of year grade
- In the case of KS4 students, their predicted end of Year 11 grade.

These reports show parents exactly where the student has made progress, and exactly what they still need to achieve to progress further. Teachers go through these reports with the parents and students on each 'Student Review Day.' The completed assessment tracking sheet will also be shared, as demonstrated above.

The school tracks this progress cumulatively in order to determine the rate at which students are progressing over the year.

### Underachievement

Any student who is underachieving after a data capture, that is they have been identified as making either limited or no progress, will have an in class subject specific differentiated strategy put in place. The strategy will be identified for each student on the Class Context Sheet.

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