

**A student and parent guide to
Assessment and Reporting
2021/22 at Kingsdale Foundation School**

Assessment and Progress Reporting at Kingsdale

This guide provides you with further information regarding our Lower School (Year 7 and Year 8) assessment grading system that was implemented in the 2016/17 academic year and is currently used by all departments at Kingsdale Foundation School.

As part of the government's educational reforms in 2014, the National Curriculum and assessment systems used in all schools in England and Wales underwent a number of major changes.

There are now new and more challenging linear GCSEs and A levels, coursework has been completely removed in the vast majority of subjects and there is now a much greater focus on skill development within the new curriculum. At GCSE, the A-U grading system has also been replaced by a number 9-1 grading system. These grades are currently being phased in at for Year 11 students, with the majority of examined subjects this academic year, now being based on the 9-1 grading system.

Another reform introduced for Key Stages 1-3 (KS1-3), was the permanent removal of the 'level' assessment system (e.g. 6a, 6b etc). No replacement system was advised by the government; instead, schools were given greater flexibility and the freedom to choose an assessment system that best suited the key skills and knowledge that needed to be assessed.

After an extensive consultation period, we selected a Key Stage 3 curriculum which we believe equips our students with the skills and knowledge needed for the new, tougher Key Stage 4 curriculum. We no longer see Key Stages 3 & 4 as separate courses; the Kingsdale Key Stage 3 curriculum and assessment system will begin to develop the same skills required for Key Stage 4.

We have also improved the quality of our assessments; they now focus more on building key skills and highlighting specific strengths and areas for development.

Our aims for the Key Stage 3 curriculum and assessment system are:

- To allow students to start developing the key concepts, knowledge and skills needed for success at Key Stage 4
- To give all students the chance to excel in all subject areas
- To use high quality, regular assessments in the classroom and at home which aims to stretch and challenge each pupil
- To provide effective feedback (both summative and formative) which informs students, parents and teachers of areas of strength and development
- To provide data from assessments which identifies the students who have or have not understood the topic and informs future teaching and learning, including intervention needs.

"KS3 and KS4 at Kingsdale are no longer seen as two separate courses..."

The New GCSEs (taken by students at the end of Key Stage 4 in Year 11)

In September 2017, new GCSEs commenced in the following subjects:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, Geography, History, Design & Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Business, ICT, Media Studies and Modern Languages.

These GCSEs are more demanding and require higher levels of literacy and numeracy to access the top grades.


Other changes include:

- A new grading scale that uses the numbers 9-1 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade and 1 being the lowest
- A new linear structure where all exams are sat at the end of the course and content is not divided into modules
- Exams are the default method of assessment (coursework has been largely phased out or reduced in importance), except where examinations cannot provide a valid assessment of the skills required

How does the 9-1 grading compare with the current A* to G grading? This is most easily represented by the following graphic:

As can be seen from the information above, in the new GCSE grading system 9-1, there are now more grades at the top of the scale and fewer grades at the lower end which, coupled with more topics being transferred to GCSE from the A Level specifications, makes GCSE level work now much more challenging for students.

Please note that for examinations taken in the 2018



Grading new GCSEs from 2017

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Interested in finding out more about changes to Year 11 examinations?

These useful guides provided by the exams regulator Ofqual, are good places to start:

Handy Postcard References for all changes at GCSE & A Level

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537143/Postcard - The Reforms.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537143/Postcard_-_The_Reforms.pdf)

More information about GCSE grading changes

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638308/Grading_new_GCSEs_from_2017.pdf

examination series (results published in August 2018), a 'strong pass', i.e. the government benchmark, is now considered to be a Grade 5. This equates to a C+ grade in the old A*-G grading system.

Lower School (Years 7-8) Assessment at Kingsdale

We are using a combination of Assessment for Learning (AfL) tasks (student-led tasks) and Summative Assessments (assessments to show progress at a point in time).

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment is an essential part of the learning process at Kingsdale and as such, AfL is present in lessons as an on-going and continuous process. Most of the AfL assessments assess skills rather than content and can be in the form of extended tasks. For example in Science, students are expected to plan, carry out and evaluate an investigation which can be carried out over a number of lessons and also completed at home.

Following an assessment of this type, detailed marking and feedback is carried out, and the student is expected to record their progress, reflect and act upon that feedback. Each department provides assessment criteria (grade descriptors) so each student is aware of what they need to do to achieve or exceed their target.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments take place at the end of a unit or topic and are usually in the form of a test or major piece of work.

Each department at Kingsdale has developed an assessment framework for the entire academic year, detailing which skill will be assessed and when the assessment will be carried out.

Information regarding the assessments used by the different departments at Kingsdale can be located on our website www.kingsdalefoundationschool.org.uk in the section marked 'Curriculum'.

The Grading System for Lower School (Years 7 and 8)

To further develop the link between Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4, and to ensure continuity across the school, Kingsdale have adopted a 9-1 grading system for Lower School. Please note that while the format of this system is the same as that seen at GCSE level, i.e. 9-1, the grades do not equate. Therefore a Grade 9 at Lower School would not be the same as a Grade 9 at GCSE.

Lower School assessment is based on a system of 9 stages (referred to as grades) which describe assessment outcomes in the range 9-1, with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. All of these grades can be shown as a + or – to allow 'fine' grades to be awarded. For instance a student might be assessed at Grade 5- which means they are working just below a full Grade 5.

The full range of grades is available within the year, e.g. a Lower School student can attain anywhere between a Grade 1 and a Grade 9.

Progress Indicators – Working Towards, Developing, Secure, Excelling

In formative assessment (ongoing class-based assessment) students in **all Year Groups** also receive written feedback using the key words **Working Towards, Developing, Secure** and **Excelling**. These phrases are used by staff in verbal feedback to the students in class and also in written feedback on marked work as appropriate.

Excelling	The student has exceeded the assessment objectives including understanding at greater depth.
Secure	The student has achieved the assessment objectives and should now look to develop the depth of their understanding.
Developing	The student has made some progress towards reaching the assessment objectives but has further areas of development to reach all aspects.
Working Towards (WT)	The student has been taught the skills and content linked with the assessment objectives but not always able to apply the skill independently.

These key terms (Working Towards, Developing, Secure and Excelling) are also referred to in the Full Reports & Short Reports in the Kingsdale Progress Tracker attribute. The tracker indicates the progress residual by comparing the Current Grade to the End of Year target grade. It is aligned with the view that students make progress by three sub-levels on average during the course of the academic year. They are able to demonstrate the progress in the subject over the course of the year (e.g. students can move from Developing to Secure by achieving the levels of progress and the end of the Year Target). The reviewed approach is applied to progress tracking from January 2022.