



Bristol Free School
Concorde Drive
Bristol BS10 6NJ

Tel: 0117 959 7200
admin@bristolreeschool.org.uk
www.bristolreeschool.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs S. King

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Dear Parent/Carer

Changes to Key Stage 3 Progress Monitoring and Assessment

I am writing to you to outline some changes we are making to the ways in which we assess students' work and monitor and report on their progress throughout Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 and 9). These changes are taking effect across the five schools of the Russell Education Trust.

What is our current system?

As you will know our current system for assessing in Key Stage 3 is centered on subject 'Level Ladders' which were drawn up, based largely on GCSE grade descriptors, when the government announced the change away from National Curriculum levels and allowed schools to assess at Key Stage 3 in different ways. Our current system has its advantages but Parents/ Carers have fed back that they find it confusing, and that they can struggle to interpret school reports and get a clear understanding of how their child is progressing academically. We have also encountered some problems with the current system's link to GCSE grades, which does not suit all subjects at Key Stage 3, and which can be misleading for Students and Parents, especially towards the end of Year 9.

What system are we moving to?

We are therefore moving away from using Level Ladders in Key Stage 3, to using **Key Stage 3 Stage Ladders**. Subject leaders across the Russell Education Trust have worked collaboratively to draw up these Stage Ladders which set out clear descriptors for what students know and can do at each stage. The Stage Ladders describe progress in attainment in seven stages from Stage 1 (still working towards Year 6 expectations) to Stage 7 (well above end of Year 9 expectation).

There is one Stage Ladder per subject, although there may be multiple strands within the Ladder in some subjects (e.g. in Modern Foreign Languages where students are assessed on their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills). These Ladders are available on our website and via this link, to reference as required. [Assessment in KS3](#)

How will we set targets for students using the new system?

Students will be allocated to a particular Stage in each subject on entry to the school. For most new Year 7 students this will be "Stage 2" which is closely linked to end of Year 6 expected attainment. Some who are still working towards this will be "Stage 1" and some who are working well above that level will be "Stage 3".

In a normal year we will use Students' Key Stage 2 SATs results, and other transfer information from Primary Schools, to allocate them to stages on entry in Year 7. For some practical subjects though, where the SATs data is less relevant, we will assess Students' attainment and learning through the Autumn Term to assign them to appropriate stages at the end of December.



This academic year, with teacher assessed SATs due to the ongoing pandemic, we are taking a term to get to know our Year 7 Students, and see multiple examples of their work, before assessing their Stage by Christmas 2021. For Students in our current Year 8 and Year 9 we have assessed their Stage in each subject based on our knowledge of their work and progress to date.

What progress will students be expected to make under the new system?

We would expect Students to make **one Stage of progress per academic year** (e.g. if they start at Stage 1 in Year 7 they should reach Stage 2 by the end of the academic year). We will communicate to Parents/Carers what a 'standard' age related expectation is for each year group, though we of course recognise that targets are highly individual.

This means that Students will be progressing well if they move from Stage 2 on entry to Stage 3 at the end of Year 7, Stage 4 in Year 8 and Stage 5 at the end of Year 9. The attainment described in Stage 5 of the ladders represents good progress for most Students in Key Stage 3 and readiness to continue the subject to a good GCSE pass in Key Stage 4.

As I mentioned above, our Stages do describe attainment at higher levels than this (up to Stage 7) and many of our Students will make more than one stage of progress in some years and move into Key Stage 4 having reached Stage 6 or 7. These Students will be well placed to achieve very high grades in their GCSEs.

How will we report to parents/carers on their child's progress under the new system?

Teachers will be formatively assessing Students' work throughout the year and making a summative assessment of Students in all Key Stage 3 year groups, in each subject, towards the end of the academic year. As you would expect, Teachers keep mark-books recording Students' attainment through the year. In the January of each academic year we will have a formal review process in school where Teachers will review their mark-books and state whether each Student in their subject is on track to meet their end of year target, exceed their target, or is at risk of not meeting their target.

Parents/Carers of KS3 students will receive three written reports per academic year.

- An interim report will be sent before the February half term. This will contain your child's target Stage in each subject, their progress indicator in each subject (i.e. whether they are on track, above track, or in danger of not meeting their target) and their current attitude to learning/homework grade.
- You will receive a full written report at an appropriate point in the academic year. This will contain your child's target Stage and written comments for each subject, focusing on your child's strengths within the subject and what they need to do in order to improve in that subject. It will also contain their most recent attitude to learning/homework grade.
- You will then receive an end of year short report containing your child's target Stage, summative assessment result (given as a Stage), and holistic Stage for the academic year, as well as your child's most recent attitude to learning/homework grade in each subject. We will report on summative assessment stages and holistic stages as we recognise that some Students find summative assessments more challenging and that the stages they attain in these assessments may not always give the full picture of their attainment and progress through the year.

How will we move students from our Key Stage 3 system to GCSE?

Our GCSE systems will not change. Students will be assigned GCSE target grades at the start of Year 10 and we will report to you on their progress against these targets through Key Stage 4. When we formulate Students' targets we consider their end of Key Stage 2 starting points and their progress and attainment through Key Stage 3.

How will students be informed of these changes?

Students will be informed of these changes through year group assemblies and Tutor sessions in school. Their target stages for this academic year will be communicated to them by Tutors and will also be communicated to you in a letter before Christmas.

Where can I go if I have questions about these changes?

School staff want to help you with any questions you might have about these changes. You may find it helpful to view the video I have recorded explaining the changes which can be accessed [here](#). Please also feel free to contact us at any time with your questions via admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk. Please mark emails for the attention of 'KS3 Assessment Coordinator'.

We are confident that these changes will lead to simplified reporting to parents/carers, enabling us to continue to work together in partnership to ensure that your child receives the best possible secondary education with us at BFS.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs S King
Headteacher