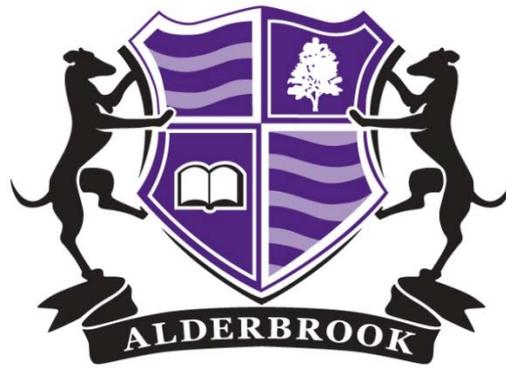


# Assessment at Key Stage 3

## Alderbrook School

‘If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning. That way their children don’t have to be slaves to praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence’.

Carol Dweck



Assessment at Key Stage 3.

National Curriculum numerical levels for assessment have been removed, and schools are developing their own unique ways of assessing and reporting with a greater emphasis on embedding learning and progress.

We have used this flexibility to develop a system that focuses on and celebrates how much progress a student has made from their individual starting point. A key part of this involves encouraging students to recognise that progress can be achieved through hard work and commitment, and by taking time to respond to feedback.

The main purposes behind our assessment system are:

- Informing students and parents about their progress relative to starting points.
- Not to limit what students think they can achieve by setting 'targets' but encouraging all students to work towards making the best progress possible.
- To be clear about how a student's overall attainment and progress compares to national standards, so that parents and students can make informed decisions about their future.

### **Placing students onto a threshold starting point**

In year 7, students are placed onto their starting threshold. These are subject specific criteria which indicate the skills and understanding a student needs within each subject.

We use assessments and information gathered from Key Stage 2, and our own internal baseline assessment, to place students onto one of 5 thresholds:

**Excellence** – working well above national standard in the subject

**Secure** – working above national standard in the subject

**Developing** – working at national standard in the subject

**Emerging** – working towards national standard in the subject

**Foundation** – working below national standard in the subject

As students have different strengths across the curriculum, we arrive at baseline thresholds for different subjects for each student. One of these will be English, one for Maths and then an overall combined threshold used by all other subjects. Current year 7s will also be assigned a threshold for some of their practical subjects.

### **How will we measure progress?**

One of the criticisms of national curriculum levels was that it put pressure on students and teachers to rush through the different levels as fast as they could rather than spending time embedding their learning thoroughly.

The threshold criteria have been written by staff based on new GCSE assessment objectives, and will become increasingly challenging as the academic year develops, so 'developing' in year 8 is more difficult than 'developing' in year 7. Your child's progress may fluctuate report to report and this is often because topic skills vary and the type of content can change significantly, even within a subject. Expected, good or exceptional progress means that a student is moving forward.

On each progress report, you will be told how much progress your son/daughter is making in each of their subjects as below:

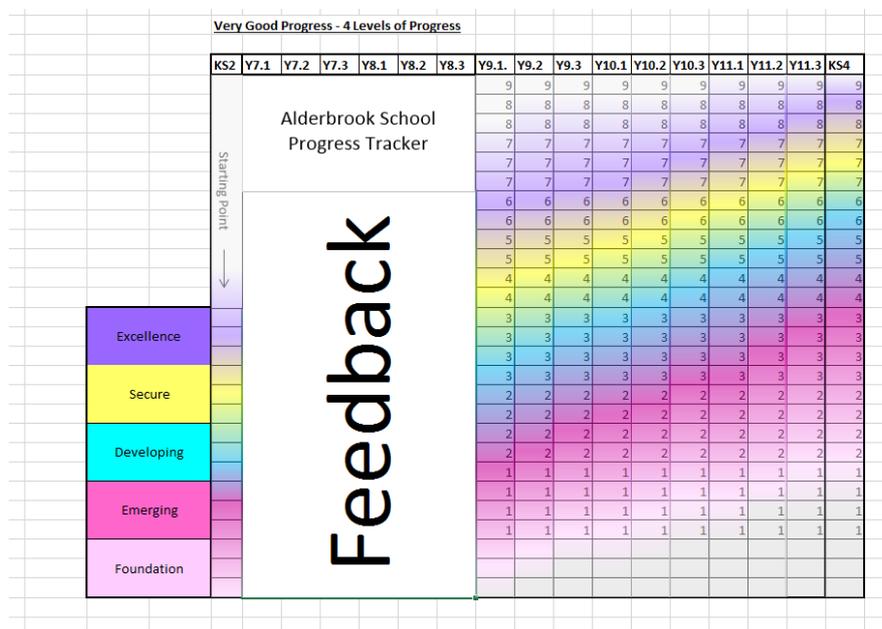
**Exceptional progress** is awarded if a student is working well above their starting point.

**Good progress** is recorded if a student is working above their starting point.

**Expected progress** is recorded if a student is working as expected for their starting point.

**Less than expected progress** is recorded if a student is working below their starting point.

Progress can be shown by students moving through the criteria across the key stage, leading into Key Stage 4 courses where students are graded on the new 9-1 scale. You can see on the flight path below, how progress leads towards GCSE grades.



Please note that the GCSE grades 1-9 are new, as are the KS2 scaled scores. We have provided our best estimate of potential progress. Adjustments may be made to this flight path as grade boundaries become clearer.

**The reporting of student behaviour and approach to learning.**

We have spent some time analysing the key skills students need to develop if they are to be effective, lifelong learners. Therefore, at Alderbrook we report effort with two separate grades. Your child will also receive an 'L' grade and a 'B' grade as below:

	<b>L1</b>	<b>L2</b>	<b>L3</b>	<b>L4</b>
				
<b>Approach to learning</b>	Often gives up when learning is perceived to be challenging. Work is usually incomplete and there is an unwillingness to improve work, even when prompted. Needs to be much more organised and motivated. Overall commitment to learning needs much improvement.	Can show resilience but sometimes gives up when learning is perceived as challenging. Needs to be more organised and self-motivated. Work does not always reflect their true ability. Needs to show greater willingness to improve work. Overall commitment to learning could be better.	Usually resilient in the face of challenges. Usually checks work for detail and is keen to make improvements. Is self-motivated and organised. Overall their commitment to learning is good.	Enjoy challenges and is resilient. Constantly checks work for detail and willingly make improvements. Seeks out new information. Is self-motivated, highly organised and committed to their learning. Overall their commitment to learning is outstanding.

	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>B3</b>	<b>B4</b>
				
<b>Behaviour</b>	Needs to be far more respectful to other students or the teacher. They can be disruptive and look to distract others. Sanctions often have to be issued because of their behaviour.	Behaviour could be better. Needs to be respectful to other pupils or the teacher. Lapses in concentration mean they can be easily distracted.	Behaviour is good. Is polite and courteous. Respond well to requests. Works well alone and with other students. Respectful of different beliefs, opinions and attitudes.	Behaviour is exemplary; an excellent role model for the class. Proactively supports teaching and learning. Is very polite and courteous. Works extremely well alone and with other students. Respectful of different beliefs, opinions and attitudes.

The behaviour for learning grade focuses on whether a student displays the ideal behaviour in the classroom to enable them to reach their full potential. It is expected that all pupils should achieve a B3 grade and all should aspire to reach a B4 grade.

The 'approach to learning' grade focuses on the learning skills that pupils need to develop if they are to achieve their full potential in the classroom. It is expected that pupils should achieve a L3 grade and all should aspire to reach a L4 grade.

We hope you will find it useful to have the behaviour and 'approach to learning' grades separated. If your child is well behaved but needs to show more self-motivation or resilience the two separate grades should make it much easier to communicate this.

### **What is a growth mind-set?**

With the shift in emphasis onto progress from starting points, and responding to specific subject feedback, we spend time teaching our students to develop a 'growth mind-set' approach to their learning. This describes a belief that abilities can be grown and developed through hard work and commitment. The impact of self-belief and motivation on learning is widely acknowledged, and instilling this approach to learning in our students is a vital ingredient to their personal success. Ultimately, we want our assessment system to help students see that hard work can result in better progress. To support this at home, we would ask parents/carers to praise effort more than the end result and to help students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes and feel committed to working hard.

### **How can I help my child at home?**

Please refer to the 'Helping your child' part of the website in the parent's area. This will provide you with some guidance as to how to support your child at home for different year groups, including literacy and home learning.

Your child will receive three written reports a year. Teachers will provide a specific subject target, based on their current threshold. This should be their main focus. Read the report with them, and help them to understand how they might address these targets.

If your child is making 'less than expected progress' but has high 'approach to learning' grades, then this means they are working well – but maybe finding aspects of recent work more difficult. It is important that students take the feedback they are given from teachers to make progress, and spend time on their corrections and misunderstandings.

In their classwork, teachers mark with purple pens, and students will make corrections with green pens. Taking time to look at their books and helping them to respond to teacher feedback is a useful way to help them address any difficulties.