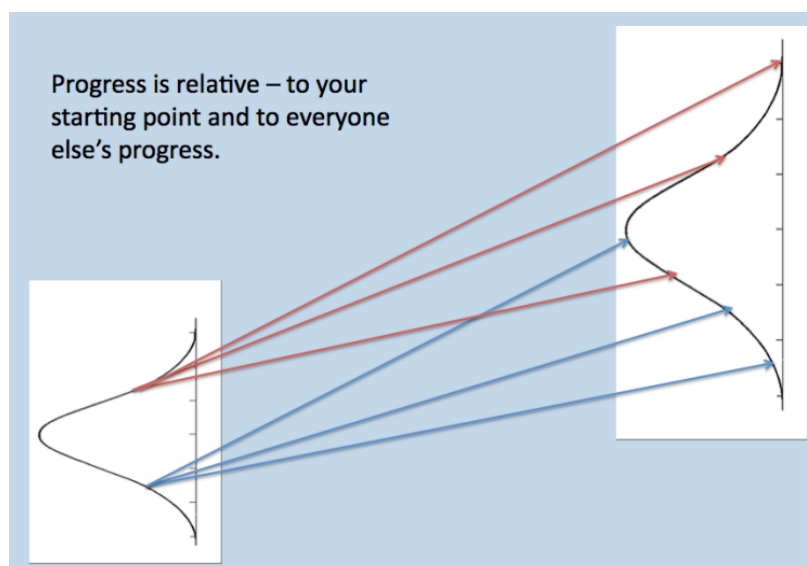




Assessment at KS3

An outline of our approach to assessment and reporting in Year 7, 8 and 9

A Quick Guide for Parents



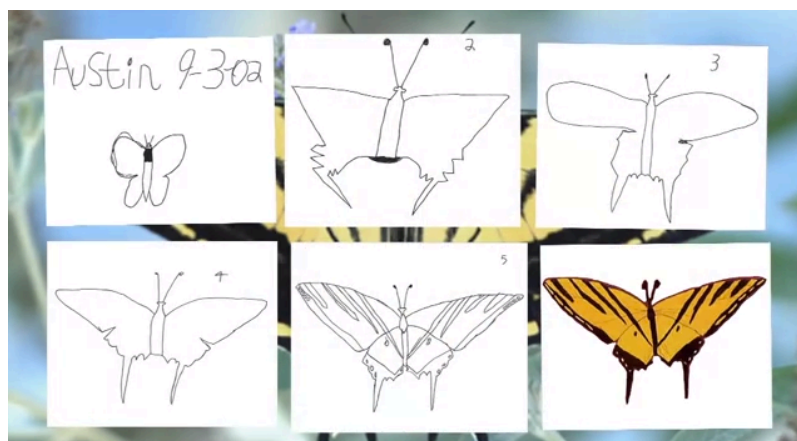
The Background

In 2014, the government removed National Curriculum Levels for Year 7, 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3). There were lots of technical problems with levels and we were glad to see them go. Schools across the country have been working to develop new ways to assess progress and attainment at KS3 so that students and their parents know how well they are doing and how to improve.

Basic Principles:

Formative Assessment and Feedback.

The most important goal of assessment is that it helps students to make progress with their learning. Grades by themselves tell students how they compare to others but they don't tell them anything about what they need to do to improve their work or deepen their understanding. They need feedback based on an assessment of their work.



Formative assessments in each subject are the most important part of our assessment system. We use tests, marking criteria and examples of excellent work to show students the standards that are expected and how to reach them. Feedback to students can guide them through the steps needed to improve. Austin's Butterfly illustrates this idea: He gradually improved his drawing because he acted on the feedback he was given.

Progress

Every child arrives to Highbury Grove having reached a different level of attainment in each subject. It is important that we take account of their starting point in setting learning goals and measuring progress. In our system, Progress grades take account of how well each student is doing compared to where they started. All students have scope to make excellent progress regardless of where they start.

Attainment Standards.

All children should believe that their learning has no limits; that they can continually improve and reach ever-higher standards. However, in practice, standards in learning are often defined by comparing certain outcomes to the full range of outcomes from all students. 'How good is my writing?' or 'is 70% a good score?' are questions that are best answered by comparison with standards set by the cohort as a whole. So, as well as telling students how to improve and how much progress they are making, we believe it is important for everyone to know how their level of attainment fits into the pattern of achievement in the school and nationally. A simple way to do this is by using a grade scale.

Instead of inventing a new scale, we think it is a good idea to use the scale 1-9, linked to GCSE grades, so that it is familiar to everyone involved.

The Process

We have allocated each student at KS3 to what we have called a **Starting Profile** based on his or her KS2 Outcomes. Five Starting Profiles cover our cohort effectively. SP1 and SP5 are small at the extremes; SP2, SP3 and SP4 are our core cohorts. These profiles will not be used to label students; they will sit in the background of our data system to help teachers award appropriate grades.

Allocation to a Starting Profile is determined by KS2 outcomes as shown. For Maths and English separate Profiles will be based on the just the KS2 Maths or just the KS2 English levels respectively. Starting Profiles based on the average of Maths and English will be used for the other subjects to begin with. Where no KS2 data is available, we will use baseline test data and reading age tests to make a best-fit allocation. Each year Starting Profile allocation will be reviewed so that students can move up to a higher Profile if their progress suggests they need greater challenge.

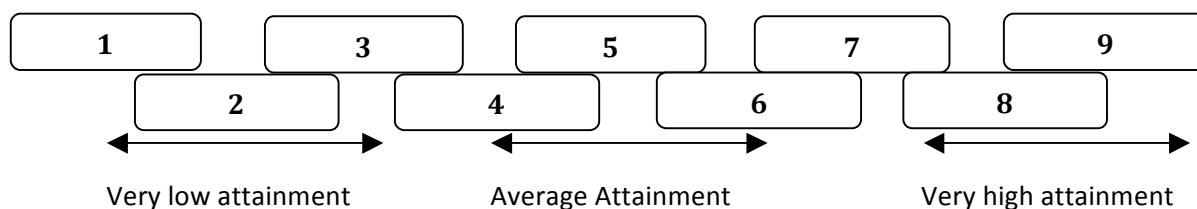
Starting Profile	SP Criteria Average KS2 Entry	Exceeding Target Exceptional Progress E	Securely on Target Good Progress G	Approaching Target Some Progress S	Below Target Poor Progress P
SP1	5a, 6	9	8	7	6
SP2	5c, 5b	8	7	6	5
SP3	4a	7	6	5	4
SP4	4b 4c	6	5	4	3
SP5	3, <3	5	4	3	2

For reference to old GCSE grades: 9~A**, 8~A*, 7~A, 6~B, 5~C/B, 4~C, 3~D, 2~EFG

It is expected that the G grade is the default grade for students completing the work to a good standard routinely. E indicates pushing to the top edge of the grade range and will be reserved for genuine excellence; E means Exceptional. SP1/Grade 9 generating E will be rare. This is A**- truly exceptional.

S meaning 'Some' suggests that, whilst progress is being made, it needs to improve to achieve excellence. This sets high standards that may be challenging for some students; we think that is a good way to keep students focused on aiming high.

Although we are using discrete numbers 1-9, each number on the scale is indicative of a wide attainment range. Teachers are using their judgement based on assessments of different kinds to estimate the best-fit grade. As we get to know how the new GCSE grades work in practice, we will get better at making these estimates more accurately.



Crucially, the numbers do not form a ladder; students making steady progress at the same rate, will retain the same grades throughout, every year. There is no limit on anyone's progress or attainment; students who continually improve beyond the average rate of progress will see their grades rise.

Attitude to Learning and Behaviour grades will be given as before: E (Excellent) G (Good) S (Some Concerns) P (Poor). A student with Progress S may well have E for attitude. This would indicate that they are working very hard but are still finding it difficult to progress, given their starting point.

Assignments

In order to help students, parents and teachers keep on track of the learning in each unit of work, including all the important assessments; we have developed Assignments for every subject. Here is an example from Geography GCSE; the same model is used for all years.

Unit 2: River Landscapes

GCSE Geography Assignment, Autumn 1

Name:	Date set:	Date due:	Parent/carer signature:
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A summary of the unit. The date by which all the work should be completed.

Summary of the unit: In this unit you will investigate the physical processes that lead to distinctive river landscapes. You will learn the key parts of a river's drainage basin as well as understand mass movement and weathering. You will also learn to recognise the different characteristics of river valleys throughout their various courses. You will study the formation of a variety of river landforms as well as the way that floods impact on people and the environment. Finally you will study how river floods can be managed through hard and soft engineering as well as education and forecasting.

The key concepts being explored in the unit. These are the main words and concepts that the students should know and understand.

1. Key words/concepts you must understand and be able to recall precise definitions of:						
Hard / soft engineering	Attrition	Abrasion	Transportation		Solution	
Chemical / physical weathering	Saltation	Traction	Suspension	The Bradshaw model	Thalweg	Meander
Flooding	Drainage basin	channelisation	afforestation	watershed	Distributary	River cliff
mouth	Hydraulic action		source	Upper/ middle/ lower course		Confluence
Test 1: ____/10	Test 2: ____/10	Test 3: ____/10	Test 4: ____/10	Total: ____/40		

Assessments in the subject will show how well they understand the terms in context.

2. Assignment expectations	E	G	S	Incomplete
Active participation in class discussions and debates				
Thorough note-taking; clear and well detailed books with key geographical language				
All homework completed				

The main activities and pieces of work that must be completed for the student to be signed off as having finished the assignment.

3. Specific assignment tasks	E	G	S	Incomplete
Explain the formation of a meander and an ox bow lake (4). Use a diagram in your answer.				
Describe how a river's gradient, depth, velocity and suspended load change downstream. Include a sketch of the river's long profile with your answer (5).				
Annotate a photograph of a river in an urban area and explain how people have altered the characteristics of it to increase the risk of flooding				
Explain how the risk of flooding can be reduced through planning and forecasting (4)				
Compare, using a table, the advantages and disadvantages of one hard and one soft flood management technique.				
⇒ Using an example you have studied, explain the management techniques used to reduce the impacts of flooding. (6)				
Completed assessment— (30 minutes)	Assessment grade			

The main assessment tasks and tests that students will complete as part of the overall assessment of their attainment and progress grades.

Self assessment of unit grade:
Reflection on topic :

Student signature: _____ Teacher: _____ Parent/carer signature: _____

Parents should find that assignments are stuck in students' books and folders. They should be kept up to date as part of the teaching process. Sometimes teachers check things off and add assessment results; at other times students will be asked to do this for themselves.

If students have not completed the assignment by the deadline, teachers will have the option of referring them to a departmental catch-up session after school or on a Saturday to make sure they keep up with the work.

Reporting

Parents will receive regular reports during the year. We have arranged our reporting schedule so that our key assessments, parents' evenings and formal written reports are spread across the year.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Mid October	Attitude to Learning Report.	Attitude to Learning Report.	Attitude to Learning Report.
Early November Assessment Point 1	Full Written Report	AP Data Report	AP Data Report
Early January Assessment Point 2	AP Data Report		AP Data Report
End of January		Full Written Report	
February 24 th			Parents' Evening with Options Evening
Mid-April Assessment Point 3	AP Data Report	AP Data Report	AP Data Report
May 4 th		Parents' Evening	
May 25 th	Parents' Evening		
Late June/Early July	End of Year Exams		
July Assessment Point 4.	AP Data Report	AP Data Report	Full Written Report
July 12 th			KS3 Graduation Event

An Assessment Point Data Report will include grades for Behaviour, Attitude to Learning, Attainment and Progress. The Starting Profiles will not be included on the report. However, the table on page 3 will tell parents how the 1-9 grades and progress grade link to the Starting Profile.

A Full Written Report will include all of these grades in addition to comments from each teacher.

Attitude to Learning is graded E, G, S, and P defined as follows:

Excellent: Always tries hard and perseveres when they experience difficulties, seeks to achieve excellence in all that they do, participates fully in lessons, is well organised and produces homework to a very high standard; often goes beyond the minimum expected.

Good: Consistently works hard and produces work that meets the expected standards; participates well in class, is well organised and has a good homework record with very few omissions.

Some Concerns: Inconsistent in terms of the quality of work produced, concentration in class, completion of homework and general organisation.

Poor: Regularly arrives to lessons without completed homework or the required equipment; does not concentrate well in lessons and often produces work below the standards they are capable of reaching.

Tom Sherrington, Headteacher

Matt Little, Assistant Head, Assessment and Reporting

October 2015

