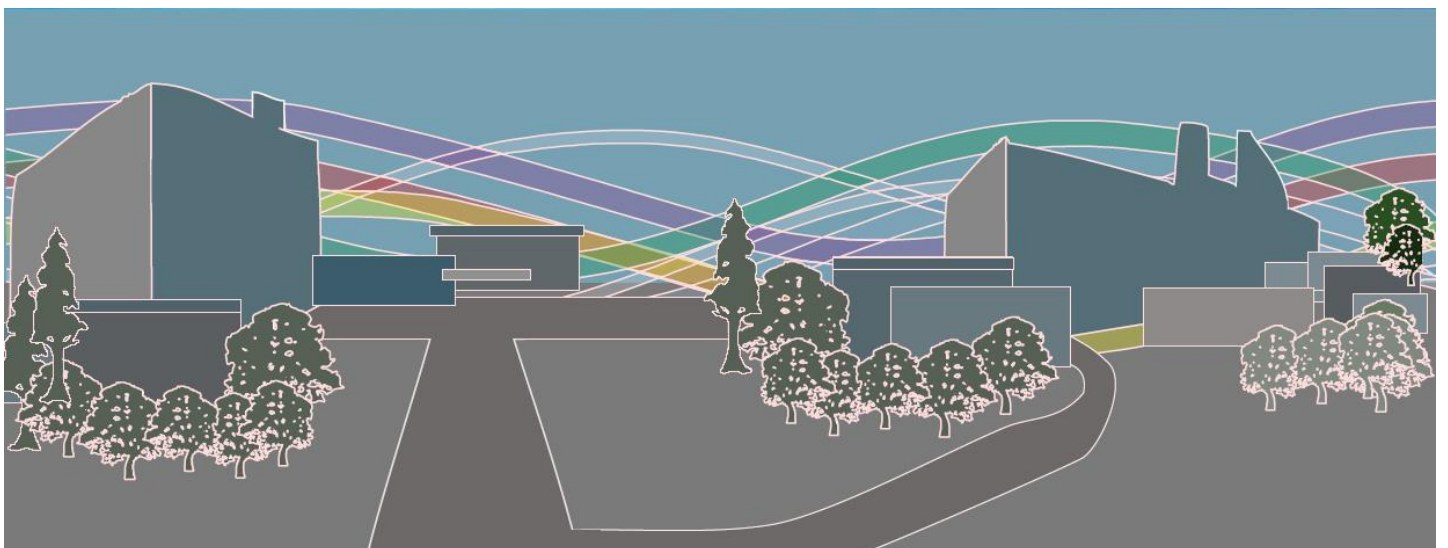# KS3 Assessment

System

A Quick Guide for Parents and Carers

Background and Context

Attainment targets and levels, which were introduced with the national curriculum in 1988, were removed in 2014. There were a variety of problems with the use of National Curriculum Levels, and their removal means that schools have developed their own way of assessing children's progress. At Marple Hall, we agreed that levels weren't very accurate and that they were potentially distracting from learning and the feedback we actually wanted students to act on. Over the last few years, we have been engaged in thinking around the curriculum and an assessment system that first and foremost supports teaching and learning. This booklet outlines that new system.

Example Gradebook Report

Below is an example of our KS3 Gradebook Report. For further information regarding the terminology used, please go to the relevant page reference. We do not print Starting Profiles or GCSE Destination Grades onto student copies.

Subject	Effort	Learning Behaviours	Homework	Response to Feedback	Progress
Art	1	2	2	1	Excellent
Drama	2	3	2	2	Expected
English	3	3	2	3	Below
Geography	4	2	2	4	Below
History	1	3	2	1	Expected
Computing	3	4	2	2	Below
MFL	3	1	2	3	Expected
Maths	4	1	2	4	Below
Music	2	2	2	2	Expected
Philosophy	1	2	2	1	Excellent
Science	2	2	2	2	Good
Technology	1	1	2	2	Good
			Page 4		*Page 7*

Starting Profile *Pages 4 & 5*	SP3		GCSE Destination Grade *Pages 4 & 5*	6 - 4

Total Merits	56		Total Strikes	5

Formative Assessment and Feedback

The most important goal of assessment is that it helps students to make progress with their learning. Levels or 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, not a letter or number.
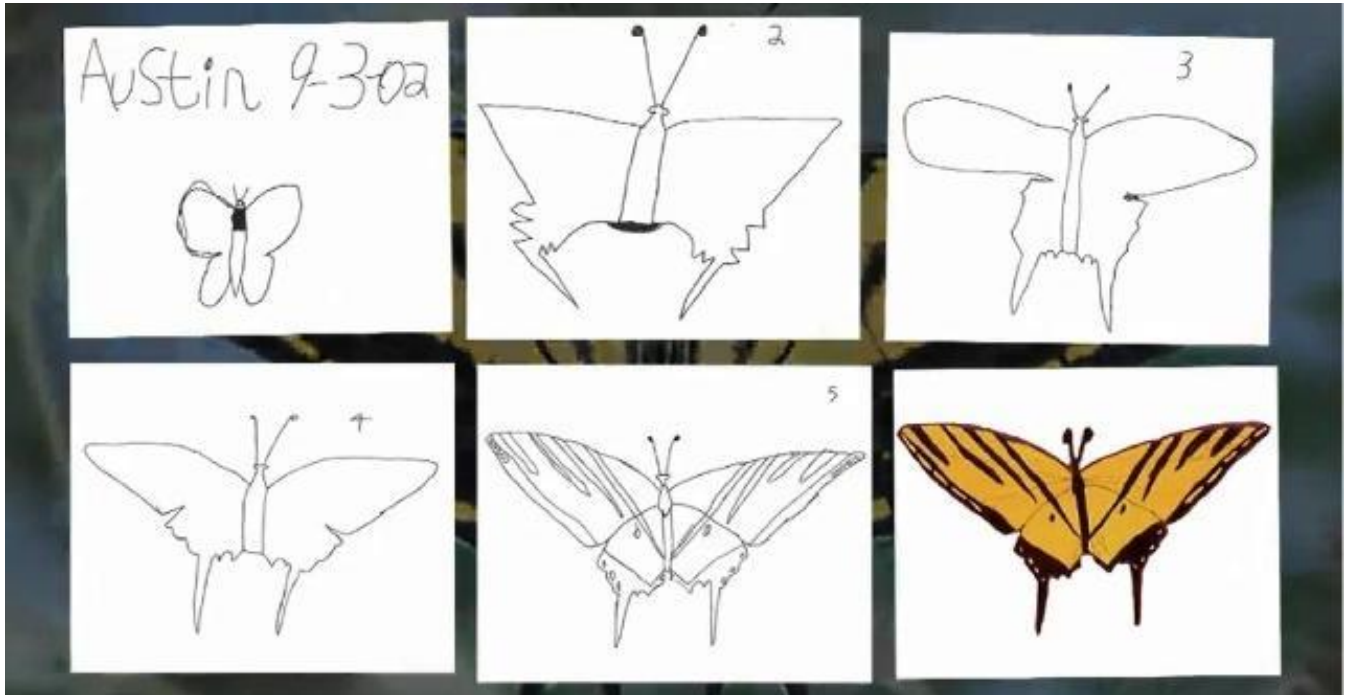
Formative assessment in each subject is the most important part of our assessment system. We use a variety of strategies in the classroom on a lesson by lesson basis to check students' understanding of new knowledge and skills. In addition, modelling and examples of excellent work are used to show students the standards that are expected and how they can 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 at Marple Hall 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, teachers will 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 and we want all children to believe that their learning has no limits; that they can continually improve and reach ever-higher standards.

Attitude to Learning

At Key Stage 3 all students will be assessed on their attitude to learning across four main areas. The following chart defines the high standard we want all students to aim for. We believe that great learning happens when students challenge themselves to work hard and aim high. We want all students to be able to develop, refine and use the **Marple Hall Spirit** every day so that they can understand the world and change it for the better.

Effort	Homework	Learning Behaviours	Response to Feedback
Shows great resilience, and perseveres with all challenges, even when they are difficult.	Manages their time and work efficiently, and is highly self-disciplined.	Actively participates in the lesson and is fully engaged and focused.	Actively seeks feedback to **craft only the best work.**
Seeks challenges and shows **determination.**	Seeks own solutions to problems.	Sets an example and shows **respect** to others.	Responds positively to praise and critique.
Uses their initiative and doesn't always have to be told what to do.	Organises time effectively.	Shows **honesty** and **trust**.	Learns from setbacks and mistakes.
Consistently makes an excellent level of effort, working above and beyond expectations.	Meets all deadlines. Is **ready** to access learning in following lessons.	Has high standards; is punctual, smart, organised and ready to learn.	Reviews own progress with **honesty**, acting on the outcomes.

Determination ⟩ Honesty ⟩ Readiness ⟩ Respect ⟩ Spark
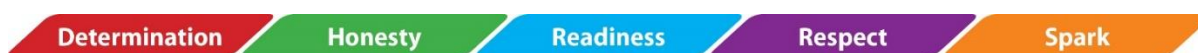
What does our system look like?

Essentially, we are adopting a five-year learning journey spanning across Year 7 to Year 11. To begin, we have allocated each student a **Starting Profile** based on his or her KS2 outcomes. Five Starting Profiles cover our cohort effectively and each one leads to a **destination grade** band, a grade band indicator which we think students should be aiming towards achieving at the end of Year 11. 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 structure progress within each year and unit of work. Furthermore, we do not share any assessment grades with students until Year 10. Feedback to individual students will instead be focused on how they can specifically improve.

Allocation to a Starting Profile is initially determined by KS2 outcomes as shown in the tables overleaf. Where no KS2 data is available, we will use CAT4 scores and reading age tests to make a best-fit allocation.

Year 7 and 8

In the summer term of Year 6, all students in English state schools sit their end of KS2 assessments. The scores achieved in those tests are then reported as scaled scores ranging from 80 to 120. We use the average of thes scores in Reading and Maths to allocate an initial Starting Profile.

Year 9

Due to the cancellation of SATs in 2020 and 2021, Year 9 students do not have any prior attainment data. We therefore used CAT4 data (cognitive baseline tests) to initially assign students a Staring Profile.

The table below is our best interpretation of mapping Starting Profiles to the GCSEs. This a guide to help parents and carers understand how prior attainment may impact on future GCSE grades; it is in no way exact or a ceiling of a child's future potential. We do not refer to, or discuss, Starting Profiles with students; they are published on Year 7 Gradebook 1 and not referred to again for the duration of their Marple Hall journey.

Starting Profile	GCSE Destination Grade
SP1	9-8
SP2	8-6
SP3	6-4
SP4	5-3
SP5	3-1

GCSE grade changes

As you may already be aware, GCSEs have undergone major changes both in terms of content covered within a subject and also how each subject is assessed and graded. Alphabetical grades (A*-G) have been phased out and numerical grades (9-1) are now used. This began with English and Maths in 2017. The majority of other subjects were examined for the first time in 2018 with the remaining subjects following in 2019. The diagram opposite shows how the different grading systems compare.

new GCSEs at **Marple Hall School**

OLD GCSE	NEW GCSE
	9
A*	8
A	7
B	6
	5
C	4
D	3
E	2
F	
G	1
U	U
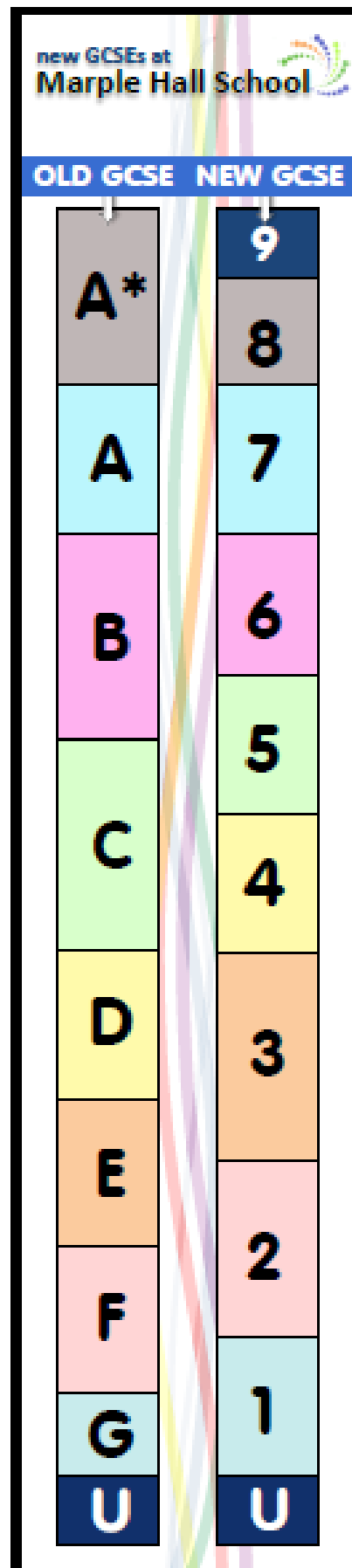
Tracking and reporting to parents

Reporting is an integral part of our communication and collaboration with parents. Our reporting calendar is carefully co-ordinated with Parents' Evenings to ensure that information is useful, relevant and timely. Our aim is to provide information which enables you to understand how your child is performing at school and to enable you to help and support your child to improve.

You will receive three Gradebook Reports per year. The Gradebook Report is a one-page profile which reports your child's effort, homework, behaviour and response to feedback as mentioned on page 4. Furthermore, a breakdown of strikes, merits and attendance data is also included so that you have a complete overview of your child's performance in school.

Parents' Evenings are important because they give you an opportunity to discuss what your child is learning at school and how they are getting on. Children do better when information about their learning is shared between everyone involved in their education. By attending Parents' Evenings, you can make a real difference to your child's learning.

The table below illustrates key dates in the assessment and reporting calendar for this academic year.

	Gradebook 1	Gradebook 2	Gradebook 3	Parents' Evening
Year 7	22nd November	25th March	8th July	27th November
Year 8	18th December	25th March	8th July	26th February
Year 9	18th December	25th March	8th July	25th January

Please note that the Year 9 Parents' Evening is combined with Options Evening.

Attendance definitions

Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind with their work, and there is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results. The table below is our interpretation of a range of attendance percentages.

98% or above	🟩	Children are more likely to achieve the best possible grades they are capable of
95% or below	🟧	Children are more likely to achieve up to half a GCSE grade **below** their full potential
90% or below	🟥	Children are more likely to achieve up to three quarters of a GCSE grade **below** their full potential
85% or below	🟥	Children are more likely to achieve up to a whole GCSE grade **below** their full potential
80% or below	🟥	Children are more likely to achieve up to one and a half GCSE grade **below** their full potential

Defining 'current progress'

Progress is reported as a word instead of a number or grade. Teachers will report progress relative from a students' Starting Profile to their GCSE destination grades. It is normal for a child to progress at different rates across their different subjects.

Excellent progress	Suggests that a student is currently making excellent progress and will exceed expectations by the end of Key Stage 4**.**
Good progress	Suggests that a student is currently achieving well and as a result could exceed expectations by the end of Key Stage 4.
Expected progress	Suggests that a student is on track to achieve in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 4.
Below expected progress	Suggests that a student is currently underachieving and not achieving in line with expectations.

Gradebook 1

Progress will not be reported on Gradebook 1 in the autumn term. This is because we want to share meaningful assessment information and take time to learn about our students. Instead of reporting progress, we will include a child's Reading Age to support the importance of literacy. Year 7 students will also receive their CAT4 results and further information about what the tests mean.

We will be reporting progress for all year groups from Gradebook 2 onwards. If outside of the main reporting times you have a concern or query about your child's progress, then **please contact the subject teacher or form tutor as relevant in the first instance.** Teachers can then give you more meaningful, specific feedback about your child's learning in particular subjects.

It is important that as a school, and as parents, we all view your child's progress as a journey. Small steps every term, whilst building knowledge and developing skills, is the key to success. It may be that your child shows more progress in certain subjects than others. This is perfectly normal.

Determination   Honesty   Readiness   Respect   Spark
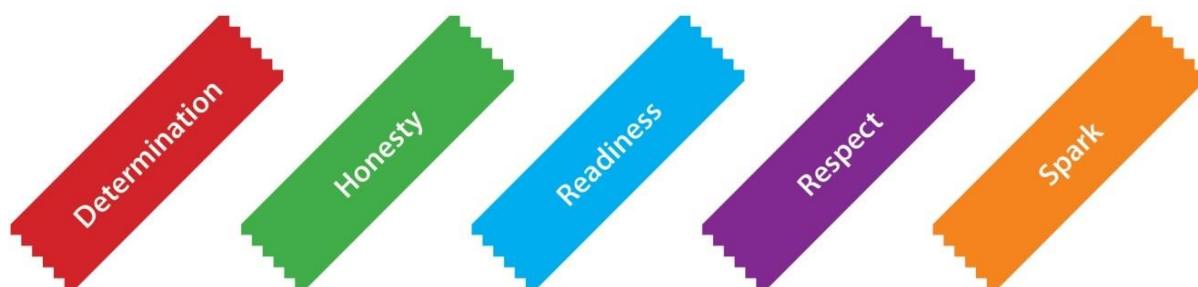
What are the benefits of our assessment system?

We believe that our model of assessment will enable us to simplify assessment and allow teachers to focus on teaching and learning and the effective delivery of our curriculum. Directly linking the assessment of students' attainment and progress to our curriculum means that our assessments should be better-tied to our curriculum content: the big ideas, powerful knowledge and key skills our students should acquire by the end of each scheme of learning, year and key stage.

In particular, we expect to see the following benefits from our new assessment system:

- Smoother transition between key stages
- The development of students who are focused on learning more than attainment, so that they do not place false ceilings on their future achievement
- An increased emphasis on effort and the development of the Marple Hall Spirit.
- Real stretch and challenge for all of our students.

Why do we not share grades at Key Stage 3?

We want all children to believe that their learning has no limits; that they can continually improve and reach ever-higher standards. Alongside new, more challenging content within our curricula, it would be impossible to accurately assign grades with confidence to children before they have fully embarked on their GCSE course. We believe KS3 is about developing a deep love of learning and building key knowledge and skills for the future; GCSE courses begin in Year 10 and that is when assessments will move towards a grading system.

Where can I find more information?

We hope that the booklet explains the new system, as well as the philosophy that underpins it. We are sure that as your child moves through the school it will become necessary to amend, adapt and refine our procedures and further information will be provided as and when required.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions or feedback, please contact:

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