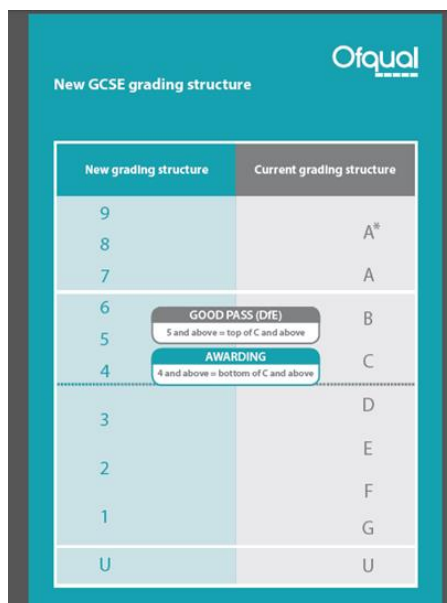




Changes to GCSE
Grades and
Assessment at
Key Stage 3
*A Guide for
Parents*

What are the Key Changes to GCSEs?

Currently, our Year 11 students in English and Maths are not working to A*-G grades. Instead they are working on a new number grading system. The new system does not mirror the old letter grade system of the legacy (old) GCSEs. However, the new grade 4 is broadly in-line with the current grade C, and the new grade 7 is in-line with the old grade A.



The image shows a chart from Ofqual titled 'New GCSE grading structure'. It compares the new grading structure (grades 9-1 and U) with the current grading structure (grades A*-G and U). The new grade 9 is equivalent to A*, 8 to A, 7 to A, 6 to B, 5 to B, 4 to C, 3 to D, 2 to E, 1 to F, and U to U. There are also callouts for 'GOOD PASS (DfE)' for grades 5 and above, and 'AWARDING' for grades 4 and above.

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

Non -GCSE subjects in years 9 -11 will be graded using pass, merit, distinction and distinction * grades.

This new system is being phased in. It has started with English and Maths, then most other subjects (apart from Design Technology and Media Studies) for assessment from the summer of 2018 (current Year 10 onwards):

- Our current Year 11 will sit legacy (old) GCSEs in all their subjects, apart from English and Maths (these subjects will have the new 9-1 grading system)
- Year 10 will sit new GCSEs in English and Maths and legacy GCSEs in all their other subjects apart from Design Technology and Media Studies
- The current Year 7, 8 and 9 will be sitting new GCSE in all subjects

Where students are studying towards legacy (old) GCSEs, we will be reporting to parents using the old A*-G grades. For subjects that will be new GCSEs, we will report using the new 9-1 grades.

How will we measure progress for students in Year 7 and 8?

- The government has now removed National Curriculum levels. Secondary schools are now free to develop their own systems to use with students and report to parents.

- At Haydock High School School, all students in Year 7 and 8 will also be assessed on the new scale of 9-1 in the same way as they will when they begin their GCSE course from Year 9 onwards.
- We believe that it is very important that teachers, parents, and the students themselves view progress as a journey which takes five years. Strong, steady progress and assessment whilst building knowledge and developing skills, is the key to GCSE success.
- Students are not expected to move up the scale quickly; the average grade at the end of Year 8 should be around a 2 or 3. Progress should be steady and secure over time.
- Some students in lower years may not arrive with us with skills which fit into the 9-1 criteria. The criteria sets a challenging standard and a minority of students in Years 7 and 8 may not be working at a GCSE grade 1. To support these students, we have added a 'B' grade ('Breakthrough') to the scale. These students are still working towards GCSE grade 1.

What are the benefits of using 1- 9 throughout all years?

The advantages of such a system are:

- It encourages all students to stretch themselves;
- The B-9 scale is linked to the new GCSE grades therefore it is easier to understand;
- It is easier for teachers, students and parents to monitor progress over time. As students are measured against the same criteria from Year 7 through to Year 11, we can clearly see the progress each individual is making in all subjects
- The language used to report to students and parents will be the same, making it easier for students to understand what they need to do to move on, and for parents to be involved in their child's progress.

How will targets be set for my child?

Progress Pathways

- In order to support students' progress, every student in Years 7-10 (and Year 11 for English and Maths) has a 'pathway' (Pathway 1-8) which sets out their estimated journey to their final GCSE grade based on their primary school SATS result.

- All students are expected to succeed at a grade above the national average. These targets are therefore referred to as their OPT (Outstanding Progress Target). Targets will be based on the results of Key Stage 2 English, Maths or a combination of the two.
- This pathway allows your child to work out the minimum grade they need to make outstanding progress towards at the end of each academic year. If your child makes the gradual but challenging progress set out each year, then they will end up making progress which is above the national average from where they began in Year 7.
- If your child has made significant progress while they have been at school already please remember that their pathway is not a ceiling. All students are **encouraged to excel as far beyond their pathway and target as possible**. The pathways are merely an indicator as to what will put students ahead of their peers nationally.
- If at an assessment point your child is already achieving their outstanding progress target and pathway this will result in their target being moved up for the rest of the year and beyond. Pathways or targets will not be moved down.
- Across five years, this pathway and target amounts to progress which is likely to put your child significantly above average from students across the country based on what students have achieved in GCSEs nationally in past years.
- Pathways challenge each student to reach their full potential. While the targets are very challenging, it is always possible that some students will achieve beyond their expected grade at every stage of their journey.
- As far as possible your child has been placed in a set which takes into account their starting point in their SATS so that an appropriate pathway can be given to them.
- It is important to remember that these targets are simply a benchmark to what is above average. They are not a ceiling to achievement. Students are taught and encouraged to work **as far above these targets** as they can possibly go to achieve their best.

This is an example of someone on a pathway 5. A student on a pathway 5 will have started school in Year 7 with a nationally expected average score in their SATS tests.

End of YR	GCSE Grades		
11	5	6	7
10	4-	5-	5+
9	3	4-	4+
8	2+	3-	3
7	1+	2-	2+
	Pathway 5		

The yellow score shows the national average target. In Haydock we regard this as 'requires improvement' because we expect that students to strive for more than average. Green is good and above average progress from where they began and purple is outstanding. It is the purple number which is the students' OPT (Outstanding Progress Target)

How will my child know their pathway?

- Each of the students' workbooks and folders has a sticker on the front which shows their pathway for each subject and indicates their end of year target. In Years 10 and 11 this will also indicate their end of Key Stage 4 grade.
- At each assessment point, students fill in their current and test grade. They can then see how they are progressing in relation to their OPT.



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My Pathway

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My End of Year OPT

OPT	3	
My Current Levels	Term 1	
	Term 2	
	Term 3	
	Assessment	Class work

This is an example of a sticker from a Year 8, pathway 5 student.

Reporting your child's grades

You will receive regular reports regarding your child's progress.

These reports will contain:

- A current grade of B- 9 (the grade which summarises their general working level in all areas of assessment)
- The grade will have a + or - to indicate how secure your child is in all of the skills within the criteria for that subject.
- An examination grade of B-9 (your child will have three formal examinations a year, this grade will represent their achievement at a given point in time and will reflect knowledge skills, but also important examination skills such as revision and independence)
- An ATL grade (Attitude to Learning) from 1-5 which is an average of your child's attitude to their studies in every lesson, every day (the score is a mathematical average of the mark a teacher awards on the register each lesson)
- An attendance percentage (the minimum target is 96%)
- In Years 7 - 10 parents receive reports up to four reports throughout the year (please see website for an overview of reporting). The reports show their current grades, exam grades and attitude to learning



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Year 8 Progress Report

June 2017

NAME	John Smith	ATTENDANCE	98.23%
REG GROUP	8.1	07/09/2016 - 30/06/2017	

Subject	End of Year OPT	Classwork Term 1	Formal Assessment Term 1	Classwork Term 2	Formal Assessment Term 2	Classwork Term 3	Formal Assessment Term 3	Attitude to Learning T1	Attitude to Learning T2	Attitude to Learning T3	Average AIL
English	5-	4	4	4	4+	4+	4+	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1
Mathematics	4+	3+	4-	4-	4	4	4	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0
Science	4+	3+	3+	4-	4-	4	4+	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1
Art	4-	2	2	2+	2+	2+	2+	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.4
Computing	4-	2+	2+	3-	3-	3	3+	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8
Design/Technology	4-	3-	3-	3-	3	3	3	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6
Drama	4-	3	3	3	3	3+	3+	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Ethics/Philosophy	5-	4	4	4+	4+	4+	4+	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9
French	4-	2+	3-	3-	3	3+	3+	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Geography	5-	4	4+	4+	5-	5-	5-	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2
History	5-	4-	4	4	4	4+	4+	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0
Music	4-	3-	3-	3	3	3+	3+	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Physical Education	4-	3-	3-	3-	3-	3+	3+	3.7	3.6	4.0	3.8
Spanish	4-	3-	3-	3-	3-	3	3	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.8
AVERAGE AIL								3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9

Below expected progress towards OPT	Improvement required	Making good progress towards OPT	Making excellent progress towards OPT
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The report is colour coded to show where students are making progress **towards their expected OPT** for the end of the year.

Grey – Making below expected progress towards OPT

Yellow – Improvement required

Green – Good progress towards OPT

Purple – Outstanding progress towards OPT

The aim is to stay in **at least the green and at all times aim for purple** and remember there are **no limits** to going above the set target.

To conclude, we highly value your role in supporting your child's progress journey and value your collaboration.

Using your child's report

Highlight the greens

Encourage them to think about how they can move from the yellow or grey

Ask what they need to do in their work to get to purple

Encourage them to work to their OPT in their homework

Use the ATL scale to highlight features of ATL 4 and 5