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Dear Parent/Carer

There is much change going on in education, including a new National Curriculum and new tougher GCSEs. The new National Curriculum introduced in 2014 has a greater focus on knowledge development, along with the opportunity to study the 'big ideas' of a subject in greater depth. Another key change is the **removal of levels** from assessment, something which both students and parents have become familiar with over the past years.

Overall we are very happy with these developments because it provides opportunities to provide a more appropriate Key Stage 3 curriculum which builds the important foundations for Key Stage 4. We should no longer see KS3 and KS4 as separate courses, but rather as a continuum. The new National Curriculum also gives us the chance to develop better assessments which highlight specific strengths and areas for development within those 'big ideas', rather than a vague overall level which can often be meaningless and refer to small sections of work.

What we hope to achieve

A curriculum and assessment model which:

1. Is focused on developing the key concepts, knowledge and skills needed for success in KS4
2. Is based on high expectations and challenge for all
3. Adopts a mastery approach to teaching and learning, and uses proven effective teaching methods.
4. Uses regular assessment and feedback which gives all students the chance to develop a secure understanding of the key ideas.
5. Incorporates high quality end of topic assessments which help students develop the skills needed to tackle GCSE examination questions.
6. Using data from assessments reliably identifies what students have and have not understood and informs future teaching and learning, including intervention needs.

These are ambitious targets, but we are committed to do all we can to prepare our students for the challenges that lie ahead.

Mr A. Douglas

Asst. Headteacher



What are the new GCSEs like?

In September 2017 new GCSEs will be taught in the following subjects:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, Geography, History, Design & Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Business, ICT, Media Studies and Modern Languages, (not all of these subjects are delivered at New Bridge Academy).

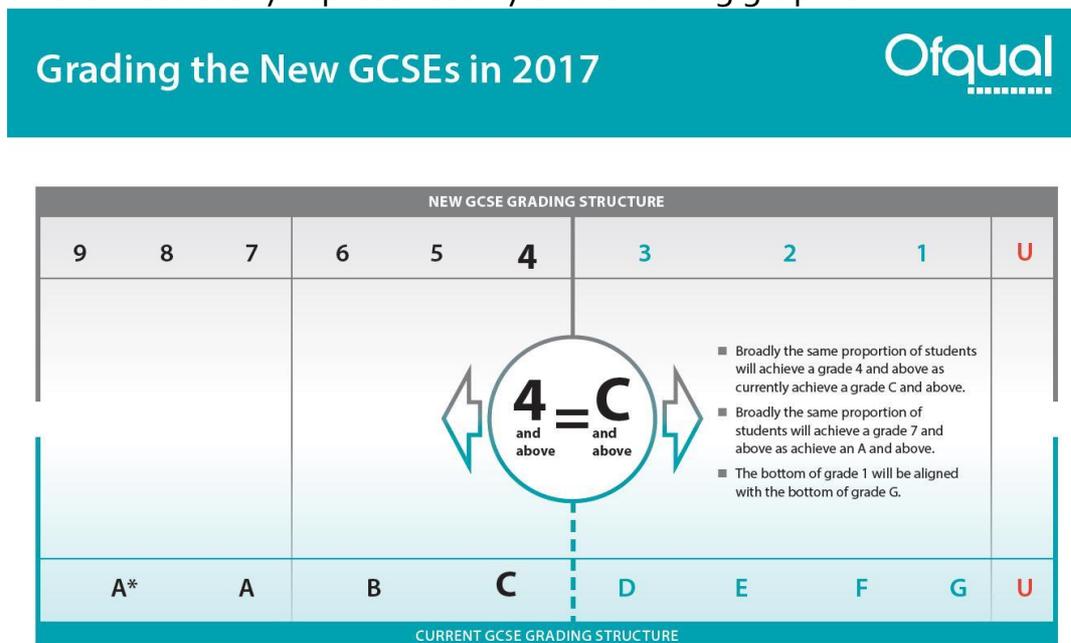
These GCSEs will be more demanding and require higher levels of literacy and numeracy to access the top grades.

Other changes include:

- a new grading scale that uses the numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade
- a structure where all assessment happens at the end of the course and content is not divided into modules
- exams as the default method of assessment, except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills required

How does the 9 to 1 grading compare with the current A* to G grading?

This is most easily represented by the following graphic:



You can see that there are more grades at the top end and fewer grades at the lower end.

Assessment at New Bridge Academy.

There will be a combination of Assessment for Learning (AfL) tasks and Summative Assessments.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and as such, AfL will be present in lessons as an on-going and continuous process. Some AfL assessments will be extended tasks. These can be thought of as “Checking Progress” activities. Following an assessment of this type there will be detailed marking and feedback, and the student will be expected to reflect and act upon that feedback. This provides opportunities for students to develop further their knowledge, skills and understanding before the summative assessment.



Summative Assessments

Summative assessments take place at the end of a unit of work and usually take the form of an assessment test of some type.

Summative assessments

- Provide a summary judgement about what has been learned by each student at a specific point in time
- Show what students can achieve without support
- Inform any subsequent intervention activities

Summative assessments will take a variety of forms, depending on the nature of each subject.

For example, in Maths and Science they are most likely to be tests. In English extended writing will be prominent, while in Design and Technology, assessments will be based around the design and make processes. In Music and PE, teachers will often rate the performance of students against set criteria.

Towards the end of the academic year there will also be an examination in most subjects.

How will Summative Assessments be graded?

A new grading system is being introduced which indicates how well the students have understood that particular unit of work, based on their performance in the final assessment. This fits in with our aim to develop a **secure** understanding of the key ideas needed for successful performance in KS4. The scale is:

STRAND	Equivalent GCSE Grade	Level of understanding.
Mastered	A* - B (6 - 9)	Grasped the main concepts and skills in a unit of work and can apply them to new contexts.
Secure	C - D (5 - 4)	Has a secure understanding of the main concepts and skills when applied to familiar contexts.
Developing	E - F (3 - 2)	Grasped some of the main ideas and skills in a unit of work, others require development.
Emerging	G (1)	Beginning to grasp some of the main ideas and skills in a unit of work.



Whatever the nature of the assessment, the outcomes will generate an equivalent GCSE grade which will be used to mark the students work. They will then be informed by feedback how to improve their work to achieve the next highest grade. The goal will be to get as many students as possible to reach the **secure** threshold and beyond.

How will Targets be set?

The prior attainment of students and baseline testing will be used to band each learner into the following categories:

Threshold	KS2 Prior attainment or baseline test
Mastery	Level 5a and above
Secure Learner	Level 4c – 5a
Developing Learner	Level 2c – 3a
Emerging Learner	Level 1a and below.

KS2 Levels are being replaced by "fine point scores" from 2016

GCSE targets will be based on the new GCSE grading scale of 1 to 9. Targets will span 3 grades – Minimum, Expected and Aspirational.

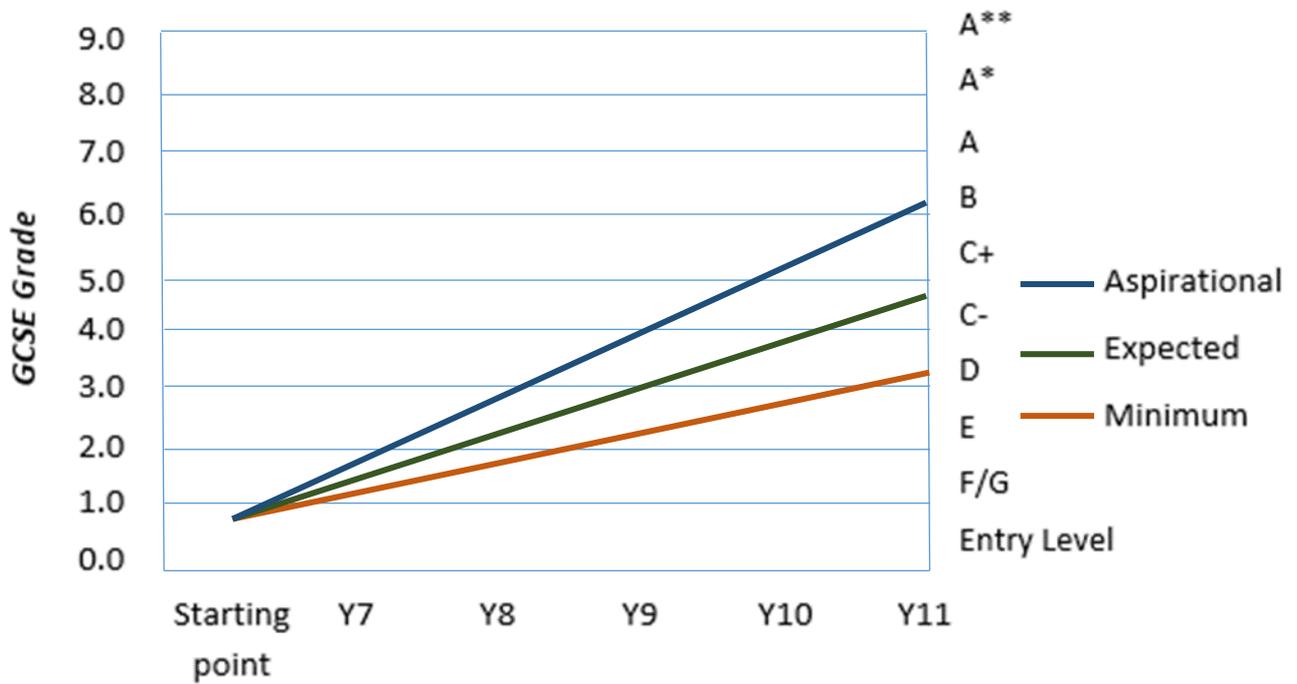
So, typical **emerging learners** will achieve grade G(1) if they reach their minimum target, grade F (2) if they make good progress and reach their expected target, and above grade E (3) if they excel and reach their aspirational target.

Typical **secure learners** will achieve grade D (4) if they reach their minimum target, grade C (5) if they make good progress and meet their expected target, and above grade B (6+) if they excel and reach their aspirational target.

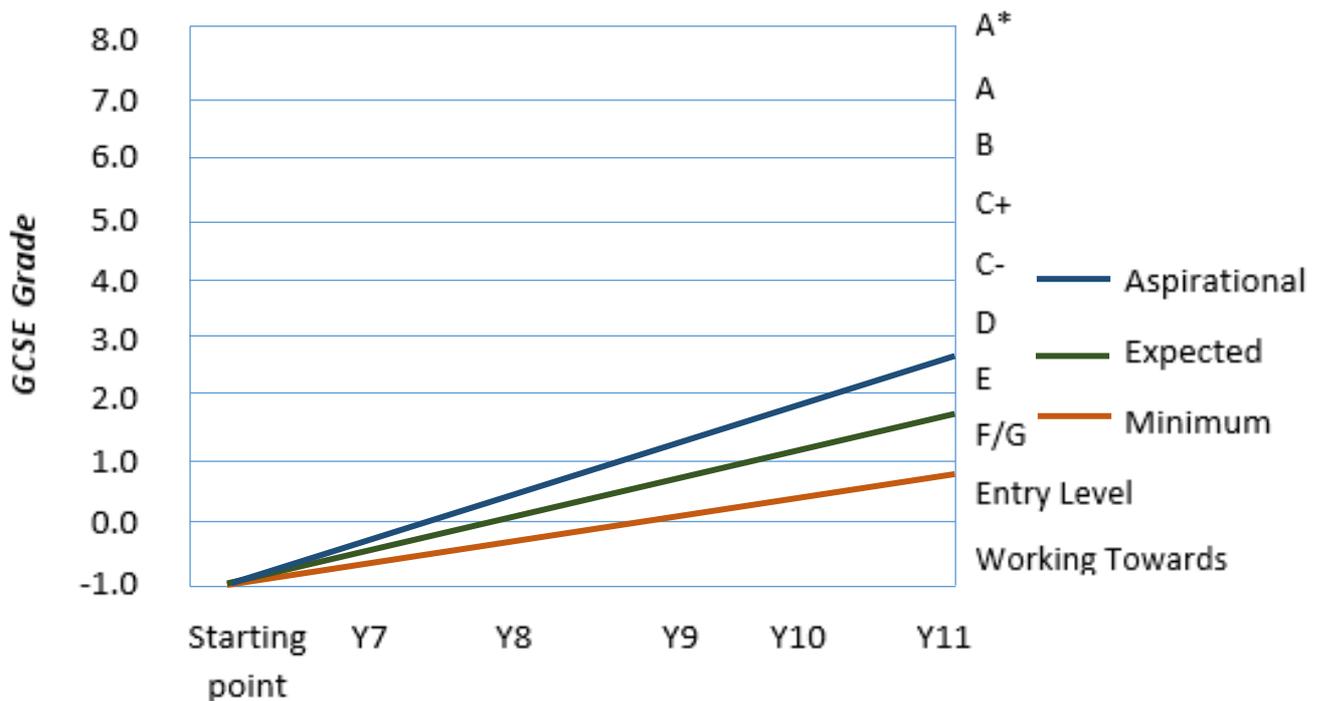
(A word of caution here: The new GCSEs and their grade boundaries are yet to be developed fully, so we are working on limited information. It is also impossible to foresee the potential effect of national grading methods.)

Graphical representation of targets and expectations
for the 2 most common bands

Secure learners



Emerging learners



How will Progress be judged and tracked within each academic year?

Students will be expected to perform at an assessment grade which is consistent with their prior attainment band as shown in the table below.

Threshold	Assessment Expectations
Mastery Learner	To achieve 'Mastered' on most assessments
Secure Learner	To achieve 'Secure' on most assessments
Developing Learner	To achieve 'Developing' on most assessments
Emerging Learner	To achieve 'Emerging' on most assessments

Target achieved



It is important to note that assessments gradually become more challenging as students move from year to year, so students can continue to achieve 'Secure' for example and be making expected progress. This is illustrated in the table below.

GCSE grade	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
6			
5			Mastered
4		Mastered	Secure
3	Mastered	Secure	Developing
2	Secure	Developing	Emerging
1	Developing	Emerging	Beginning
Entry Level	Emerging	Beginning	
Working towards	Beginning		

Note: This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is unlikely that progression through GCSE grades will be as linear as this. Some students will be working below grade 1 on entry, so two additional grades have been added below it.

Tracking within individual subjects

Teaching staff will enter assessment data into subject spreadsheets and the data will then be imported into our data tracking system.

So subject data will appear similar to that below.

Targets & Assessments **David Jones**
[Subject: Music](#)

Target: Secure

Activity	Grade	Progress
Assignment 1	Mastered	Well above
Assignment 2	Mastered	Well above
Assignment 3	Mastered	Well above
Assignment 4	Mastered	Well above
Examination	Mastered	Well above
Overall	Mastered	Well above

You can see from this data that the student, David Jones, has performed exceptionally well in music. He has performed above his 'Secure' target on all assessments. David obviously has a talent for the subject and in the following year we would raise his target for music.

Targets & Assessments **David Jones**
[Subject: Science](#)

Target: Secure

Activity	Grade	Progress
Biology 1	Secure	On target
Chemistry 1	Developing	Below
Physics 1	Secure	On target
Biology 2	Mastered	Well Above
Chemistry 2	Developing	Below
Physics 2	Secure	On target
Examination	Secure	On target
Overall	Secure	On target

On this subject, Science, David has met his target overall. However, there appears to be a weakness in Chemistry. This provides much more useful information than just an overall level.

We will expect the teacher to identify specific areas of weakness and provide guidance to David on how to improve. This information will also be available for the next academic year so that his teacher is aware of this potential weakness and can provide additional support in this area.

Student Data;

This data then summarises a student's performance across the full range of subjects:

Targets & Assessments

David
Jones TG: 7x

Subject	Target Assessment Grade	Current Assessment Grade	Progress	Projected GCSE grade range in Year 11
English	Secure	Secure	On target	4 to 6
Maths	Extended	Secure	Below	4 to 6
Science	Secure	Secure	On target	4 to 6
PE	Mastered	Mastered	On target	6 to 8
Des. Tech.	Secure	Secure	On target	4 to 6
Art	Secure	Secure	On target	4 to 6
Music	Secure	Mastered	Well above	7 to 9
Computing	Secure	Secure	On target	4 to 6

You can see for this particular student that the general picture is good with one subject above target, and six on target with none below target.

This recording method will be used in all subject areas so your student's annual report will describe his or her progress as being "below expected", "as expected", or "above expected" in each subject area.

Summary

There is much change going on in education at the moment:

New National Curriculum

Focus on the 'big ideas' in each subject. Create a solid foundation for GCSEs. **No more levels.**

New GCSEs

More demanding. End of two year examinations. New 9-1 grading system.



Assessment changed to prepare students for new GCSEs.

Students banded on prior attainment at Key Stage 2, and baseline testing:

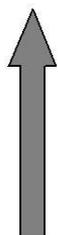
Categories include Mastery, Secure, Developing, Emerging and Entry Level



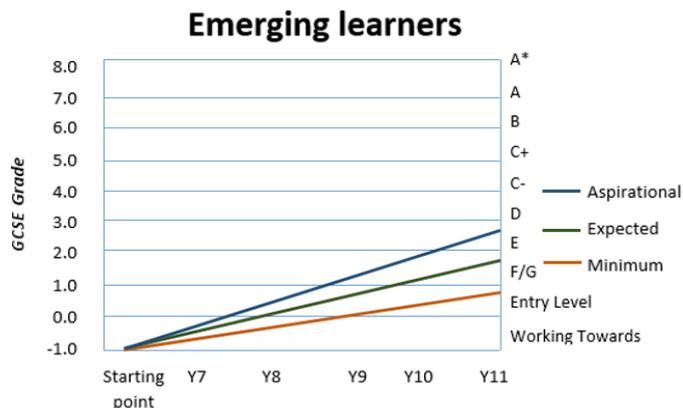
Prior attainment banding determines long term GCSE targets and shorter term summative assessment targets.

Summative, end of topic assessments will take a variety of forms depending on the subject. Assessments will be graded using the following scale:

Mastered
Secure
Developing
Emerging



Secure represents a good understanding.



Student progress will be tracked across all summative assessments for every subject studied.

Targets &

Assessments David Jones TG: 7x

Subject: Science

Target: **Secure**

Activity	Grade	Progress
Biology 1	Secure	On target
Chemistry 1	Approaching	Below
Physics 2	Secure	On target
Examination	Secure	On target
Overall	Secure	On target



Student progress will also be monitored across all subjects through a progress report'.

These progress report will be used to inform parents / carers and other agencies as required

