

Presdales School

Key Stage 3 & 4

Assessment:

A Guide for Parents

Introduction

Ensuring that your child makes strong academic progress is a key priority for the staff and governors at Presdales School. Your child's teachers will use a variety of approaches to assessment and use this information to plan learning activities that help your child build on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding. We share this assessment information with you through our assessment point reports which are published three times a year. This handy guide explains our approach to assessment and answers some of the questions that you might have as a parent. Do please get in touch if you have any specific questions and we will be only too pleased to help.

Why are my child's SATs scores so important?

Your child's Year 6 SATs results reflect their ability in English and Maths with English being split into reading, writing and spelling/grammar. In each of these areas, your child will have achieved a standardised score between 80 and 120 with a score around 100 being broadly average. A score higher than 100 means that your child is in the upper half of the ability range and a score lower than 100 means that your child is in the lower half of the ability range. These SATs scores do not necessarily relate to your child's future ability in English and Maths. In addition, your child may demonstrate a particular ability in a range of subjects that is not captured by their SATs scores. The standardised scores achieved by your child provide a starting point, also called a baseline, from which it is possible to set benchmarks for the years ahead. This is possible because of the way data is analysed nationally, across many thousands of children's attainment, to identify links between SATs scores and the most likely grades children will achieve at GCSE.

Why do you set benchmarks for my child? Why are benchmarks so important?

Your child will study a wide range of subjects as part of our inspiring, challenging and empowering curriculum. Across all of these subjects, the curriculum is sequenced carefully over a number of years so that your child develops a deep knowledge, range of skills and level of understanding. By setting benchmarks, your child's teachers are able to pitch their lessons at an appropriately challenging level so that your child has the best chance of making strong progress in line with their ability. Benchmarks give an indication of your child's potential but it is not uncommon for students to make much faster progress than their benchmarks - it is therefore useful to see your child's benchmarks as a guide and a healthy challenge for your child to work towards. Benchmarks also help children understand their potential in different subjects. Finding out if you are performing above or below their benchmark can help children gauge if they need to work harder to realise their potential. It also helps the school put particular interventions in place to support them.

How can you set benchmarks for my child when they have just started Year 7?

Nationally, statistics are published which show the likelihood of a child with certain SATs scores achieving a particular grade at GCSE. These statistics are shared in the form of a 'transition matrix' and they bring together the GCSE grades of thousands of children. Each GCSE course has a transition matrix. These GCSE grades are then set against each child's SATs scores from when they were in Year 6 to provide a percentage likelihood of achieving each GCSE grade. This is a complicated statistical process so it is best illustrated with a table. Figure 1 below shows an extract from a transition matrix for GCSE English Literature.

Figure 1: Example Line from a Transition Matrix

		Percentage of Children Achieving GCSE Attainment Grade in English Literature									
		U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Key Stage 2 Scaled Score for Reading	103	0	1	5	13	19	24	20	11	5	2

The table shows the percentage likelihood of a child with a Key Stage 2 Reading score of 103 achieving different GCSE grades in English Literature. On average, the most likely grade to be achieved is a 5 which would be in line with a child making average progress. At Presdales School, we believe that students should achieve better than average and achieve progress which is in line with the top 20% of schools so we set benchmarks that are higher; in this example above, a child’s benchmark would therefore be a Grade 4-6 in years 7-9 and a grade 6 in year 10 and 11. By achieving a Grade 6, your child would have made better than average progress.

We believe in setting benchmarks that encourage students to develop high expectations of their future achievement. We know that students who attend well and bring a positive attitude to learning in to all of their lessons they will often go on to make strong progress and achieve their benchmarks; often, students achieve higher grades than their benchmarks which is a reflection of their continued commitment over a five year period.

Your child may demonstrate a particular aptitude for a subject and in such circumstances it may be helpful to raise the benchmark grade for your child. It is very rare indeed for the school to lower the benchmark grade for a child.

How do you set benchmarks for students who have not taken SATS at Key Stage 2?

For students who did not take Key Stage 2 SATS, we look at the results of their CAT tests (taken at the start of Year 7) and use these to compare with other students in the year group and select appropriately challenging benchmarks. We use feedback from teachers to review the appropriateness of these benchmarks at future tracking points.

When and how do you assess my child? What is a tracking point?

Teachers will be assessing your child all of the time. This helps teachers and students assess the extent to which the correct knowledge, skills and understanding has been developed. Such assessments will typically take the form of a written or practical task and may be referred to as a summative assessment, which takes place at the end of a period of learning at the end of a term. Your child’s teachers will also assess their ongoing work in the classroom and through their homework. Teachers are able to assess the progress your child is making through a range of classroom activities which might include question and answer sessions, group work, written work in books, presentations or project work to name but a few. This ongoing assessment may be referred to as formative assessment, it helps teachers adapt their curriculum, and lesson plans to meet the needs of your child and groups of children within their classes.

Your child’s teachers will then use all of this assessment information to make a decision about their current working grade and they will record this centrally at our whole school tracking points which take place three times a year for years 7-9 and twice a year for years 10-13. Typically, these tracking points take place in each term and after each of these assessment points we will attach a report on the Edulink portal. This report will provide you with information about your child’s achievement including the progress they are making towards achieving their benchmarks. The reports may also include comments from your child’s class teachers. In Years 7, 8, and 9, progress will be reported as whether a student is below, in-line or above the expectation for their benchmark. In other years, progress is indicated through a ‘Current Working Grade’ which can be compared directly with the benchmark grade.

Why do you have 3 tracking points in a year? One per term?

When assessing your child it is important to provide them with the time and the space to make progress. Our assessment, recording and reporting pattern provides teachers with lots of lesson time to support your child with their learning before the next assessment point. During this time, your child’s teachers will be monitoring your child’s

achievement in lessons, and also their attitude to learning, to ensure that they are on track for the next assessment point. We find that three assessment points provides teachers and children with the breathing space they need to make strong progress between assessment points.

We also do not report on years 10-13 in the first term as they either have just started the course (year 10 and 12) or they are building up to their mock GCSE and A Level examinations (year 11 and 13)

Should I worry if my child is below benchmark at an assessment point?

Ideally, your child should make steady progress towards their GCSE benchmarks for each subject they are studying. Sometimes, you will find that your child is judged to be above their assessment point benchmark which is great news as it means they are working really hard and are making excellent progress.

We would always advise parents to spend time talking to your child about their report and you can always contact your child's Form Tutor and subject teachers should you require any further information about your child's achievement. There is also one parents evening a year which is a good opportunity to speak to teachers about your child's progress.

After each report, each student's teachers, in conjunction with Heads of Department, Heads of Year, AHT of the Keystage and DHT (Curriculum), will identify any areas of significant underperformance in comparison to benchmarks with a view to implementing suitable intervention strategies for such subjects. Parents may be contacted to discuss any such intervention strategies and, in particular, how they can best support their child in this regard.

The table in Figure 5 below, illustrates several scenarios that you may experience regarding your child's progress and we have provided a helpful guide so that you can consider how best to support your child.

Figure 5: Things to consider if your child is below benchmark	Things to Consider
My child is just below benchmark in 1 or 2 subjects	If your child is normally on track, this might not be a cause for concern. Sometimes, children cover a topic or a set of skills that they find challenging and it means they might be slightly below benchmark now and then. You might like to find out from your child why they are below benchmark and then keep an eye on your child's next report to see if they are back on track. If not, this might be a good time to have a chat with your child's Form Tutor or their class teachers.
My child is just below benchmark in many subjects	You may be aware of a reason why your child is below benchmark in a number of subjects; sometimes children go through a difficult period in their lives and this can sometimes affect their progress. You might like to contact your child's teachers to find out further details about why your child is just below benchmark in a number of subjects and then keep an eye on your child's next report to see if they are working hard to get back on track.
My child is well below benchmark in 1 or 2 subjects	If your child is well below benchmark in 1 or 2 subjects then you might like to contact your child's Form Tutor or class teachers to explore the reasons why. There may be good reasons for this and it may be that your child needs to focus on particular aspects of the subject that they are finding difficult to grasp.
My child is well below benchmark in many subjects	You may already be aware of the reasons for this and be in conversation with your child's Form Tutor, the pastoral team or your child's class teachers. Normally, a child who is in this situation may benefit from a meeting in school with their parent/s to make a plan for moving forward.

How important is Attitude to Learning?

Attitude to Learning is a very important part of your child's life at school. With the right attitude towards their learning, your child will achieve well and make strong progress. There are four aspects to our Attitude to Learning expectations: Effort, Homework, Behaviour and Organisation. Students are given a score out of 1 for each of the subjects they study for Effort and you should expect your child to be achieving a score of 2 or above in all of their

subjects. A score of 3 or below indicates that your child is not yet meeting the school's expectations with regard to their Effort and there is scope for improvement. They should also achieve a 'satisfactory' for Homework, Behaviour and Organisation which will have already been flagged through the use of the consequence system

Your child's Attitude to Learning score may help explain why your child is below benchmark, or indeed above benchmark, for some of the subjects they study.

What does the information mean on the Assessment Point Reports?

Below you can find an example of a Key Stage 3 and a Key Stage 4 Tracking Point report. We have drawn your attention to a few key pieces of information to help you interpret the report and talk about it with your child.

Progress: this student is currently below expectation (B) in Art and above expectation (A) in Computing and Design & Technology. There are in-line with expectation in all other subjects. Their benchmark for all subjects is 4-6.

This student's effort is good (2) in all subjects and excellent (1) in Mathematics.

This students' behaviour, homework and organisation is Satisfactory (S) in all subjects.

	YEAR 7 REPORT C 4/4/22 TO 27/6/22 For XXXX
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	Attendance at School % Year to Date (1/7/22)	Times Late for School Report Period C	Achievement Points Report Period C	Consequence Points Report Period C
XXXX's Figures				
Year 7 Average				

Report codes are as follows:

Effort:	1 = Excellent 2 = Very good 3 = Inconsistent 4 = Poor
Homework/Organisation:	S = Satisfactory U = Unsatisfactory
Progress indicator:	A = Above expectation I = In line with expectation B = Below expectation

Subject and Class Teacher	Effort	Behaviour	Homework	Organisation	Benchmark	Progress Indicator
Art <i>Ms Bird</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	B
Computing <i>Ms Bowden</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	A
Design & Technology <i>Ms Hayward</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	A
Drama <i>Ms Shakespeare</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
English <i>Ms Turner</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
French <i>Miss Hayward</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
Geography <i>Ms Bowden</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
History <i>Miss Catford</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
Mathematics <i>Miss McCallum</i>	1	S	S	S	4-6	I
Music <i>Ms Shakespeare</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
PE <i>Ms Bowden</i>	2	S	N/A	S	4-6	I
Philosophy, Religion & Ethics <i>Ms Stewart</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
Science <i>Ms Richard</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I
Spanish <i>Ms Price</i>	2	S	S	S	4-6	I

Art <i>Ms Bird</i>	
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Glossary of Terms Related to Assessment

Term	Definition
Achievement	In school terms, achievement is reflected by the GCSE and A-Level grades a child achieves and how they these grades compare to their potential or benchmark grades.
Assessment	The process of finding out what a child knows, can do and understands.
Tracking Point	A moment in the year when teachers capture a child's current working grade.
Attainment	The grade or grades achieved by a child in national exams such as GCSEs and A-Levels.
Current Working Grade	A grade awarded to a child to indicate their current level of ability.
Formative Assessment	Ongoing assessment which is used by teachers to assess what a child can do well and what they need to do to improve. Formative assessment comes from the work children do in the classroom in their books and folders, during class discussions and through a wide range of other learning activities.
Standardised Score	A number given to a child following a summative assessment which helps to compare their attainment with the attainment of all other children who took the same test. Typically, 100 will be average. A child with a score above 100 is above average and a child with a score below 100 is below average. A higher or lower number correlates to how much above or below the average of 100.
Summative Assessment	Assessment which is used at the end of a unit of work or sequence of learning to indicate the level of a child's achievement across the topics tested. Summative assessment is typically assessed through a test or the production of a final assessed piece of work.
Benchmark	The grade a child works towards which is set by the school and based on the child's prior attainment. A child will work toward benchmarks in all of the subjects they study. The benchmarks provide a focus for each child at the end of the term, for the end of the year and also for the end of their GCSE or A-Level studies. A child may be set different benchmarks across all of the subjects they study.

Transition Matrix	A table which shows the relationship between the grades children achieved at the end of Year 6 and the grades that the same children went on to achieve in their GCSEs. Transition Matrices are updated each year and are specific to a cohort of children. Sometimes, a Transition Matrix may include the data from several cohorts of children across several years which provides a stronger correlation between the Year 6 grades and the GCSE grades they take 5 years later.
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For more information please click on this link to access the assessment policy:

[Assessment-Policy-July-2022.pdf](#)

And for further information please email:

jstephenson@presdales.herts.sch.uk