

## National Curriculum Levels Explained

The National Curriculum is a framework used by schools to ensure that learning and teaching is both balanced and consistent.

The National Curriculum sets out:

- the subjects to be taught
- the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject
- standards or attainment targets in each subject which are used to measure your child's progress and indicate how they can progress further.

Each subject follows a programme of study, containing activities which allow students to learn information and develop the specific subject knowledge, skills and understanding that your child is expected to achieve by the end of the Key Stage. The attainment of students in each subject area is measured in **levels** from 1-8 with an additional measure for exceptional performance. Both English and Mathematics are tested at the end of Key Stage 2 through external tests, with other subjects being assessed internally through teacher assessment. In addition to the National Curriculum, students study Business Studies as part of their Y7 curriculum (which is not assessed against levels).

Teachers make decisions about the level your child has achieved through the assessment of classwork, home learning, examination and test results and a combination of all of these. These levels are used to inform target and projected information and combined with teacher feedback, allow your child to see where they have been successful and where improvements are required.

To achieve each level, a student has to demonstrate to the teacher, when assessed, that they are able to meet the required standards of attainment. These will be different for each subject area and are available to view at the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/secondary>

To achieve a more refined measure of attainment, each level is sub-divided into A,B and C, where A is the upper level and C is the lower. The sub-division of each level allows teachers to make a more precise judgment about a student's performance as well as being able to see how they are progressing through a particular level. A child may therefore achieve a level 5 in a subject at three possible sub-levels. A level 5A for example, would indicate that the child comfortably meets the required standards to achieve the top of the level, but a 5C would suggest they had only just met the required standard.

## National Curriculum Levels and Age Expectancy

There is a national benchmark laid down at the end of each key stage which highlights the expected performance of a pupil. At Key Stage 3 (Y7-9), this is Level 5/6 in all subjects. As our students are of above average ability, we would anticipate that they should achieve level 6-8 in most subject areas. It is worth noting however, that some subjects may demonstrate different rates of progress due to the wide variation in experience students may have in primary schools. This is particularly the case for example where students may be studying a Modern Foreign Language for the first time. It is normally the case, however, that students are able to access the higher levels of attainment in all curriculum areas by the end of the Key Stage.

End of Key Stage	National Expectation	QEGS Expectation
3	Level 5-6	Level 6-8

Nationally, students are expected to achieve three levels progress across the course of their secondary school education. As a selective school, where students should perform above the national average, we would expect our students to make the equivalent of four levels progress from arrival in Y7 to completion of courses in Y11.

All students undertake benchmarking activities in each subject during their first term of Y7 to ascertain their initial attainment level. Subject leaders use this information, combined with Key Stage 2 test results and Cognitive Ability Test data to set end of Key Stage 3 targets which are both aspirational and reflect at least two levels of progress. Therefore, a student who achieves a level 5B at the start of Y7 would expect to be set a target of at least 7B to be achieved by the end of the Key Stage. This would normally be at the end of Y9 with the exception of Religious Studies, ICT, and Modern Foreign Languages, all of which begin their GCSE courses at the start of Y9.

### Translation of Levels into GCSE Grades

To provide an indication of the possible progress based upon making four levels of progress, Key Stage 3 levels are translated into GCSE grades to allow teachers and students to make informed decisions about target setting in Key Stage Four. If a student meets a target earlier in a Key Stage than expected, the target will be reviewed and raised to encourage aspiration and progress.

The table demonstrates the progress expected of a student in school based upon the National Benchmark of 3 levels progress and the Benchmark applied to selective schools of 4 levels progress.

KS2 Level	KS3 level	3 levels progress	4 levels progress
4C	5A	C	B
4B	6B	C	B
4A	6A	B	A
5C	7C	B	A
5B	7B	B	A
5A	7A	A	A*
6C	8C	A	A*
6B	8B	A	A*
6A	8A	A*	A*

Targets are set at the beginning of each Key Stage, published to parents and are then subsequently reviewed at regular intervals. At each review, information is provided which includes the target set and, in addition, a projected level or grade is also given. The **target** information highlights the level or grade we consider your child is capable of achieving at the end of the Key Stage. The **projected** information shows the level or grade we believe your child may achieve at the end of the Key Stage if they were to continue to work at their current level.

We strongly believe that students perform at their best when expectations of them are high. By providing aspirational targets within a supportive and encouraging learning culture, we give our students the confidence to perform above and beyond their own expectations. Our firm belief in a 'can do' culture helps students to develop valuable skills, which should not only serve them well within their time in school, but also in their future working lives.

Should you have any questions relating to target setting and assessment, please contact us.