



SOUTH MOLTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
— supporting success —

SMCC Life after Levels

'Flight Path'



"Ofsted will expect to see evidence of pupils' progress, with inspections informed by the school's chosen pupil tracking data."

"How is the school's assessment model linked to programmes of study and schemes of work in the new curriculum?"

Sir Michael Wilshaw

'Life after Levels'

Rationale: In May 2013, the Secretary of State announced: 'as part of our reforms to the national curriculum, the current system of 'levels' used to report children's attainment and progress will be removed. It will not be replaced.' These announcements made it clear that central government was no longer going to dictate how schools should record and report progress between statutory tests.

The KS3 National Curriculum levels and their associated level descriptors are no longer to be used when establishing Schemes of Work, planning curriculum and delivery or when assessing progress.

Criteria: We will have to devise our own assessment systems. The system devised must be as good as the previous system and we must be able to demonstrate visible progress for all our students.

This document examines the implications for, and our approach to, assessment linked to the shift to a more knowledge-based curriculum and the whole school approach we are taking at Ks3.

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY FROM 2016

We are moving to **knowledge-based assessment** in that, the new curriculum shifts us from a curriculum focused largely on processes and skills to one based on hard-edged knowledge. Where in the past we have prioritised the tracking of the individual progress, the new curriculum pushes us to focus on the acquisition of each year's prescribed topics and progress made towards these.

In the past we synthesised pupils' strengths and weaknesses to arrive at a fair 'best-fit' judgement; now, we need to tot up the sum of their knowledge.

Accountability at KS2 & 3 will continue to depend largely on English and Maths results, except at the end of KS4 where an average point score will be used across eight subjects (ten if you acknowledge the double-weighting of English and Maths).

Primary schools now count Reading and Writing as separate subjects, diminishing the contribution of Mathematics, but raising the significance of Writing, which has traditionally lagged behind. Good Reading results in the past have often offset poor Writing results, but this won't happen in future.

The bar is rising, the standard is rising by roughly half a level so that by the end of primary school, expectations will stand at that place we now know as old 4b or thereabouts. A similarly phenomenon will occur in secondary where the benchmark hurdle is going rise.

What does this mean for SMCC?

Whilst assessment requirements have diminished even further in KS3, they have tightened at GCSE. The new grading system (9-1 instead of A*- G) will not obscure that fact that the bar has been raised. Later in this document the comparison between the old and new grades is shown and the gold standard of the 'C' Hurdle is now a 5 which equates to a very high 'C' or 'B'.

With a more traditional curriculum will come more traditional assessment methods. The essay is back, and we should review how well we prepare students for it. Each subject carries a 5% tariff for grammar, punctuation and spelling, and this rises to 20% in English Language. That puts a considerable premium on students' linguistic abilities. Teaching materials for most topics are mainly the same across most subjects, but the level of demand will be higher.

We need to think about 'Language (literacy) Across the Curriculum'. We are going to need more from departments than a few spelling tests and a word wall. A hard-edged literacy strategy is needed to cultivate the skills of marshalling information into answers, and the use of more sophisticated sentences to express more complex meanings. Our Literacy Co-ordinator will spear head our approaches, however, literacy is the responsibility of all departments and all teachers. To assist in giving pupils the 'literacy toolkit' they need for all subjects our KS3 curriculum has key skills lessons 'Learning to Learn' which will have a primary focus of literacy skills.

KS3 resources should prepare for the new GCSEs, so the KS3 programme of study may need to be adapted to ensure students are prepared for GCSE study and assessment

The best investment, as ever, is to work hard at keeping students on an ambitious trajectory and offering urgent support when they seem to fall away. The responsibility for checking that schools use due diligence to track and support the progress of pupils will lie with Ofsted, who are due to explain how they will go about this in the Autumn 2016.

What we need to do! The changes to the KS3 curriculum and the withdrawal of formal teacher assessments from KS3 offer potential for innovation but also a risk of inadequate tracking and intervention. We need to maintain a strong tracking system in KS3 so that we don't create an impossible mountain of underachievement to climb in KS4.

Schools are expected to devise an assessment system that allows them to track against the block of content and skills required by the programme of study, whilst ensuring progress.

Assessment for Learning is the key to formative assessment in the new curriculum, where 'I can' statements and personalised learning checklists will be key in tracking progress

Levels have gone and the Department for Education DfE is encouraging schools to devise their own ways of recording progress. It is daunting to start over, but there is a new curriculum and a new standard, so we must change the way we track pupils.

Levels were anchored to national test criteria so that progress towards that end could be monitored. There was a common standard expressed in the level descriptors and in Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) criteria. This gave us a good way to spot children who were flying and others who were falling off trajectory in order to provide timely support. It also enabled the exchange of common information between schools. We are likely to get varying or inconsistent data from our many feeder primaries who will be sending us different forms of assessment. It will be increasingly important to have robust cross-phase communication and working to establish consistency.

Alternatives to levels

The DfE outlined 5 key principles to consider. These provide a sound basis on which to build to our assessment policy, as it clearly underpins both the importance and use of assessment across the school.

‘We (DfE) expect schools to have a curriculum and assessment framework that meets a set of core principles and:

1. sets out steps so that pupils reach or exceed the end of key stage expectations in the new national curriculum;
2. enables them to measure whether pupils are on track to meet end of key stage expectations;
3. enables them to pinpoint the aspects of the curriculum in which pupils are falling behind, and to recognise exceptional performance;
4. supports teaching planning for all pupils;
5. enables them to report regularly to parents and, where pupils move to other schools, to provide clear information about each pupil’s strengths, weaknesses and progress towards the end of key stage expectations.’

From our (SMCC) research we have considered 7 options that have been suggested

OPTION 1: Continue to use the existing levels: This has been dismissed as a long-term option. The levels describe the old curriculum. There have been too many changes in content and to standards to make this a viable option. The only good thing to be said is that this allowed us to ‘wait and see’ whilst we established a strategy that we felt was robust and future proofed.

OPTION 2: Adjust the existing levels to reflect the new curriculum: Clear the current assessment grid and insert new strand headings to fit the new curriculum. Populate it with the big important statements from each year and re-label the levels as years to avoid mixing up the old and new scales.

OPTION 3: Keep a tick-list of NC objectives: Write down the huge list of NC curriculum objectives in order of year, and within each year in order of challenge. (It is easier to do this with the new knowledge-based curriculum than it was with the old one.) Across the top, write each child’s name and start ticking boxes as they master each objective

OPTION 4: Keep a priority list of NC objectives: This is a sensible version of Option 3. Instead of attempting to include every NC objective, select out the big important ones and use those. Think manageability. Like all tick lists, this approach offers a rather atomised view of learning. Ticks don’t give you much feel for the child, or tell you what to do next or how to get the information used in the forward teaching plans.

OPTION 5: Unit-by-unit assessment: This method was in common use at the start of the National Curriculum, and works best if you have substantial units of work e.g. half-term themes. For each theme, set down the NC objectives you intend to secure in the teaching, and at the end, assess whether the pupils achieved them or not. Over the key stage, make sure that you cover all the objectives. It makes sense for teachers to check if their teaching has worked. The downside is that it is not a good method for tracking, because it only tells you how the pupils did on those particular objectives in that particular unit. It does not track overall progress.

OPTION 6: Buy a scheme: Publishers will undoubtedly release scheme and test. There are cost implications but it will save effort. Ready-made products tend to be one-off tests rather than routine tracking, and if they apply less than once a term, they won’t give you enough information to act swiftly. Some publishers may offer online tracking systems, mini-tests and online assessments, and these might be worth a look.

OPTION 7 (for KS3): Use the new GCSE grades: This wouldn’t be a bad idea because if you have linked KS3 to KS4 the benefits of a seamless transition and strong foundations are evident. The advantage is that you would have a ready-made, nationally calibrated metric, and a strong sense of working towards the GCSE gold standard.

SMCC the way forward

Our College has decided to adopt a 'Flight Path' Model which draws on the strengths of each of the above. Until September 2015, we have continued to report progress towards old NC levels for year 8 & 9. Whilst no firm targets have been set for year 7, a holistic view of pupil progress based on their prior attainment at Ks2 has been reported to parents. This gave us the opportunity to research possible options, consult with partner schools, look at the strengths and weaknesses of any schemes and adopt a robust, flexible and future proofed system.

Our 'Flight Path' model analyses the data from our Primary feeders, takes into account FFT data, testing mechanisms, NFER Reading, Numeracy and CATs alongside teacher professional judgement to set an aspirational flight path to GCSE grades (9 – 1). At Ks3 these will be referred to as GCSE READY grades, which will feed into GCSE targets, which will continue the 'Flight Path', these may be modified 'upwards' to provide more aspirational targets for pupils who have risen above the projected 'Flight Path' at Ks3.

In this first 'transitional' year, new year 7 and years '7 into 8' and '8 into 9', will all have 'flight paths' set. Year '9 into 10' will have GCSE targets set as they enter year10, these will be a mixture of '9 to 1' and 'A* to C, dependant on the subject area.

In subsequent years new year7 will have 'flight paths' set with GCSE ready grades and year 10 will have GCSE grades set on a '9 to 1' scale.

What does this mean in terms of old levels and new 'Flight Paths'?

Table 1: This shows the equivalences between old NC levels from KS2 to KS3 and on to GCSE, linked through the 'Ofqual' points.

Pupils expected levels of progress can be plotted by adding:

2 NC levels across KS2 to KS3 (12 Ofqual points)

1.33 NC levels across KS3 to KS4 (8 Ofqual points)

Table2: This shows the suggested link between old (A*-G) GCSE grades and the new (9-1) GCSE grades.

We have then projected the 'Flight Path' backwards, subtracting 8 Ofqual points, the expected Ks4 progress, in order to create our new 'FlightPath' GCSE ready grades (9r-1r).

Table 3: This shows the 'Flight Path' from Ks2 through Ks3 and on to GCSE.

3 example 'Flight Paths' have been illustrated.

TABLE 1: We have used the Ofqual point score to link old KS2 level performance to old KS3 level performance and subsequently to GCSE outcome based on expected levels of progress.

	OLD GCSE EXPECTED GRADES	OLD KS3 expected progress	KS2 fine levels
66			
65			
64			
63			
62			
61	A*		
60			
59			
58			
57		G&T	
56	A		
55			
54			
53		8	a
52			b
51	B		c
50			
49			
48			
47			
46		7	a
45	C		b
44			c
43			
42			
41			
40		6	a
39	D		b
38			c
37			
36			
35			
34			
33		5	a
32	E		b
31			c
30			
29			
28			
27		4	a
26	F		b
25			c
24			
23			
22			
21		3	a
20	G		b
19			c
18			
17			
16			
15		2	a
14	U		b
13			c
12			
11			
10			
			1
			a
			b
			c

2 levels of progress are expected from KS2 to KS3

This means adding 12 points to the KS2 Ofqual score

1.33 levels of progress are expected from Ks3 to GCSE

This means adding 8 points to the KS3 Ofqual score

	NEW GCSE EQUIVALENTS	OLD GCSE EXPECTED GRADES	Flight Path Projection (FPP)	OLD KS3 expected progress	KS2 fine levels
66					
65	9				
64					
63					
62					
61					
60	8	A*			
59					
58					
57			9r	G&T	
56					
55					
54					
53					
52					
51			8r		
50					
49					
48					
47			7r		
46					
45	5				
44					
43					
42					
41					
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13					
12					
11					
10					

Consider Alex:
 Ks2 = 4c (25pts)
 Expected progress (2 levels 12pts)
 Ks3 = 6c (37 pts)
 Expected progress (1.33 levels 8pts)
 Ks4 = top C (45pts)

New GCSE Low 5
Flight Path Projection 5r (5 ready)

Consider Abi:
 Ks2 = 6b (39pts)
 Expected progress (2 levels 12pts)
 Ks3 = 8b (51 pts)
 Expected progress (1.33 levels 8pts)
 Ks4 = low A* (59pts)

New GCSE Mid 8
Flight Path Projection 8r (8 ready)

Consider George:
 G&T pupil
 What does he get?
New GCSE High 9

How will departments track progress ?

Departments will be free to determine the schemes of work and assessment criteria that provides a robust and meaningful tracking system. It is envisaged that the assessment will follow aspects of the criteria laid down in options 2-7 above.

The assessments will need to feed the 'Flight Path' model of tracking pupil progress, departments will be accountable for the decisions arrived at for each pupil and as such must have a departmental tracking scheme. This tracking will be the focus of line manager progress support meetings. Once the departments have had time to embed their assessment procedures a central record will be kept and the systems will be reviewed and best practice shared.

Some form of baseline testing will be undertaken in each area, in order that pupil progress can be measured throughout the 'flightpath'.

To support departments the Pixl package KS223 has been purchased, this offers support in 'unpicking' the curriculum, it offers an editable recording system and assessment tests.

How will the College track progress?

At Progress points (Ppt) and Reporting Points (Rpt), as laid down in the annual assessment calendar teachers will be expected to submit their judgements, based on department policy as to the level of progress made by pupils. Teachers will be expected to submit 'Below--B', 'On—O' or 'Above—A', for each pupil in their care in relation to their 'Flight Path'. This infor Expected Attainment Pathway (EAP)

SISRA details

A 'Flight Path' is a matrix of grades that displays the expected attainment of pupils as the move through the college, from a given starting point within a Grade Method (e.g. KS2 level or score) to a given endpoint within a Grade Method (e.g. GCSE Grade).

When we collect assessment grades, they are uploaded into a collection within Analytics. Collections will now be nominated as being from a particular school year and scheduled assessment point, so for example Y8, Progress point 1 (Ppt1). SISRA Analytics will know the expected 'Flight Path' for each pupil and will from the teacher inputs be able to track pupil progress accordingly.

Our 'Flight Path' Model

Our College plans to use a simple system to record whether a pupil is on track or not by using the symbols

Our College data administrator has set up a Grade Method (calling it "Prog Points") for use within KS3:

3x Master Grades:

'Below--B', 'On—O' or 'Above—A'

So, overall grades will be the same as the master grades in the format 'Below--B', 'On—O' or 'Above—A'

We have also made the decision to present an end of KS3 grade in the style of 'GCSE READY' grades:

Master Grades:

9r 8r 7r 6r 5r 4r 3r 2r 1r U/F

Sub Grade Elements:

Initially we have chosen not to sub level or 'fine grade' these but this may change in the light of future experience.

As the summer of 2015 is the final year in which KS2 levels will be given to pupils after their SATs, the school has decided to stick with these for use as the starting point for their Year 7s from September. It's important to remember that we can choose ANY starting point that fits with the Grade Methods described earlier in this document, and this will no doubt change Year 7 pupils next year as they would not be receiving NC Levels at the end of KS2.

The following shows how this may look for a few starting points:

'Flight Path' Starting Point	Year 7			Year 8			Year 9			End of Ks3 'Flight Path'
	Progress Point 1 Ppt1	Progress Point 2 Ppt2	Report Point Rpt1	Progress Point 1 Ppt1	Progress Point 2 Ppt2	Report Point Rpt1	Progress Point 1 Ppt1	Progress Point 2 Ppt2	Report Point Rpt1	
5c	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	6r
4a	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	6r
5a	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	On --O	7r

Each figure in the table above would be set by Our College Data Administrator. So for each starting point, in this case KS2 fine levels, the administrator would be selecting the expected grade for each term throughout KS3, based on the Grade Method they have set as being appropriate for each individual Progress point. In this case you can see that the school would simply be using

the 'On —O' to show that a pupil is on track regardless of the start point.

If a pupil is making the expected progress since the last progress point the, the teacher submits an 'On—O' this matches the expected progress of the 'Flight Path'.

The beauty of this system is that between some progress points pupil progress may be expected to be small due to the topic being delivered or the gap between consecutive progress points. At another progress point pupils may be expected to make big progress again due to the topic being delivered or the gap between consecutive progress points.

The 'Flight Path' would then not be highlighted as a negative or positive regardless of the progress made as long as the teacher reported, 'On —O' as the progress made.

If a pupil makes less than expected progress 'Below —B' or greater than expected progress 'Above —A' and the teacher reported this then, SISRA will recognise this and knows exactly where each pupil is expected to be at each assessment point, the reports will automatically be colour coded based on the teacher input.

Report Example :

Below we have 3 pupils who all came in on the same starting point (KS2 level). Their current progress will be colour coded automatically by Analytics simply because the system knows where each pupil should be based on the 'Flight Path' model. This report is for in college use and not sent to parents.

Pupil	'Flight Path' Starting Point	Year 7			Year 8			Year 9			End of Ks3 'Flight Path'
		Ppt1	Ppt2	Rpt	Ppt1	Ppt2	Rpt	Ppt1	Ppt2	Rpt	
'Flight path'	4a	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	6
Jones, Alan	4a	=	↓	↑	=	=	=	=	↓	↑	6
Smith, Jane	4a	↓	↑	=	↑	+	↓	=	↑	+	7
Williams, Robert	4a	+	+	↓	=	=	↑	+	↓	↓	5

Each pupil is automatically identified as being on track, below expectations, or above expectations, with a second indicator (shown here as an arrow icon) to quickly see how each grade corresponds to the previous grade. No icon would be used if the grade had not changed since the previous collection). We've used a double arrow icon to show when a pupil has moved more than 1 overall grade in any direction (an = to a + is seen as 1 step).

Reporting to parents.

Reporting to parents is covered in the 'Reporting Policy'