

Assessment: A Guide for Parents



LAURUS
TRUST

Assessment

‘Assessment’ is usually thought of as meaning a test or exam – but it’s much, much more encompassing than that. Assessment is a fundamental part of the whole learning process and links with the other two key aspects of education: Curriculum (*what* students learn) and Teaching (*how* students learn). Indeed, together these are sometimes referred to as the ‘holy trinity’ of education: assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning.

At the Laurus Trust, we believe that, for our students to have the best-possible learning experience and achieve their very best, it is essential that these three strands align: indeed, much of our teachers’ ongoing professional learning focuses directly on this.

It is very challenging to form a whole picture of what a young person actually knows, understands and can do. Thus, teachers in the Laurus Trust employ a mixed constitution of assessment through taking ‘Multiple Inadequate Glances’ to form a comprehensive picture of the progress a student is making. These Multiple Inadequate Glances will include traditional formal written assessments, but also such factors as verbal contributions in class, less formal written tasks in exercise books, completion of practical activities, classroom questioning and the questions that students ask, and interactions in the classroom: the latter can indicate a concept has been grasped – or is still causing puzzlement. It is the ‘noticing’ of these, frequently subtle factors, across a series of lessons and topics, and within a whole class learning context, which enables skilled teachers to tailor their teaching to the needs of each individual in front of them.

This dynamic approach to assessment in its widest reach informs teachers’ planning, actions and reactions. The responsive teaching which emerges from this leads to more active student involvement and continuous improvements in their learning. It is our aim to not only ignite curiosity and foster deep understanding among our students but also inspire a thirst for lifelong progression.

The purpose of this assessment is:

- To provide teachers, students and parents/carers with a continuous record of progress at Key Stages 3, 4 & 5
- To provide students with useful information regarding the success of their learning and to help them identify strengths and weaknesses and identify strategies for improvement
- To motivate students by providing them with short and long-term targets
- To provide teachers with useful information about their own effectiveness and so inform the planning of their teaching styles
- Through the reporting system, provide parents/carers with a clear picture of their child’s progress and achievements, identifying strengths and weaknesses and setting targets for development.



Targets

The Assessment Process

- The assessing of students is an ongoing process and gathers evidence from a variety of sources including, but not limited to:
- Classroom observation (Questioning, retrieval quizzes, mini-whiteboard work)
- Written work in the classroom
- PP&R (Homework)
- School tests and more formal written assessments
- Predictions based upon prior attainment
- External examination including GCSE/BTEC/CAMNAT/GCE/ A Level examinations

Setting Targets

- 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 targets, 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. Targets at Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) and 5 (Years 12 & 13) give an indication of your child's potential, but it is not uncommon for students to make much faster progress than their targets - it is therefore useful to see your child's targets as a guide and a healthy challenge for your child to work towards. Targets also help children understand their potential in different subjects. Finding out if you are performing above or below target can help children gauge if they need to work harder to realise their potential.

High Expectations

- We believe in setting targets 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 into all of their lessons will often go on to make strong progress and achieve their targets; often, students achieve higher grades than their targets at KS4 & 5 which is a reflection of their continued commitment over a five-year or seven-year period.
- You will be pleased to hear that we want Laurus students to be better than average! This is why we set targets at KS4 which represent the progress made by the top 20% of students nationally. For KS5, we set targets that are above the national average based on national chance graphs. This provides an appropriate level of challenge. Your child may demonstrate a particular aptitude for a subject and in such circumstances, it may be helpful to raise the target grade for your child.

Reporting point

- Reporting points take place three times a year (Autumn, Spring, Summer term). Typically, these reporting points take place in December, March and June and after each of these reporting points we will send home a report through the MCAS App and BROMCOM Student Portal.



KASH Reports

- We report on progress to our students, and their parents and carers, three times a year through our KASH reports. These reports are emailed out to parents and carers, and also published on the MCAS App and BROMCOM Student Portal.



Knowledge



Attitude



Skills



Habits

- KASH stands for Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Habits. Each of these areas are determined by a student's subject teacher to be either 5 (concern), 4 (cause for concern), 3 (secure), 2 (enhancing) or 1 (excelling) compared to age-related expectations. Knowledge and skills descriptors for subjects can be found in the curriculum section of our website for the relevant year group.
- At Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9), reports include Foundation Stage Levels, the descriptors for which can be found on the KS3 Curriculum Overview page of our website. These reflect an assessment of a student's current attainment in each subject. To aid a more accurate assessment of current attaining grade, some curriculum areas report this later in the academic year.
- At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) and Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13), reports include teacher projections – the grade a student is predicted to get in their final assessments in Year 11 or Year 13, as appropriate. These projections will often change as a student moves through Key Stage 4 depending on their attitudes and habits, and the impact these are having on their progress.
- Not all reports contain all this information for all subjects. Some reports will just focus on Attitudes and Habits for most subjects, for example at the start of Year 7, as we know that these two areas are the ones that students can influence the most.
- Subject specific knowledge, skills and guidance can be found on the school website. under the 'Curriculum and Assessment' area. We also have video guides available about the KASH process.



Key Stage 4

For most GCSE courses the grading system is based on the 9 to 1 scale. When your child collects their final qualification exam grades they will receive grades according to the new system and not the old (with several exceptions e.g. BTEC /CNAT qualifications).

With the GCSE grading system a 9 is the highest grade and 1 is the bottom of the grade available. There is no direct comparison between the old A* to G and the new 9 to 1 grading systems but we can draw relationships between them.

These are shown in the table below. The Government benchmark for a standard pass (high grade) at GCSE is a grade 4. Previously (under the old A* to G grading structure) the Government considered a grade C as a higher GCSE grade. A grade 5 is called a strong pass at GCSE.

Grading new GCSEs from 2017

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

BTEC / CNAT, and other vocational qualifications use a related grading system including a range of grades shown below: Grade Equivalent points score (when compared to the 9 to 1 grade system (see above) Level 2 Distinction* 8.5 Level 2 Distinction 7 Level 2 Merit 5.5 Level 2 Pass 4 Level 1 Distinction 3 Level 1 Merit 2 Pass 1.25

BTEC, and other vocational qualifications use a related grading system including a range of grades shown below:

Grade	Equivalent points score (when compared to the 9 to 1 grade system (see above))
Level 2 Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 Distinction	7
Level 2 Merit	5.5
Level 2 Pass	4
Level 1 Distinction	3
Level 1 Merit	2
Pass	1.25

