

23 September 2016

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Dear parent/carer

You will no doubt be aware from the press of the many changes affecting curriculum and assessment in schools in England and Wales. One of the most significant changes is the removal by the government of the requirement for schools to assess progress using National Curriculum levels. Schools are now allowed to devise their own method and measure of assessment. Children at Key Stage Three at Boston Spa School are no longer assessed using levels; we have instead adopted a system of Steps. Steps are a much more effective way of not just measuring progress but of ensuring teachers, children and parents know exactly what they need to do to make further progress. I hope the information below explains how your child will be assessed at Boston Spa School.

What is the difference between steps and levels?

National Curriculum levels provided broad descriptions of what skills and knowledge were required for each level. Steps are a much finer tool and allow us to break down each unit of work, or learning journey into a series of “can –do” statements, making it clear to all what is required for each step and what your child should do to progress. There are 9 steps in total, each broken down into a number of statements. Below is an extract from an English example which demonstrates how students make progress in a small section of their work on grammar:

Here’s an example from English:

Can Do Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can write compound sentences consisting of two simple sentences									
I can write complex sentences with a subordinate clause at the end of the sentence									
I can write sentences with an adverb at the beginning									
I can write sentences with the adverbial element in different sentence slot positions									

Teachers will be able to set really clear and meaningful targets and plan really targeted teaching to address gaps in individual children’s knowledge and understanding. Steps are not only designed to cover National Curriculum requirements but are carefully mapped against the requirements of GCSE, thus ensuring that Key Stage Three is the best possible foundation for success at Key Stage Four.



What about targets?

Once we have all the Key Stage two data we will use this to generate step targets for Years 7 and 8 that will be aspirational but achievable and closely linked to expected achievement at GCSE. I will write to you again when these are in place and explain how we use them in more detail.

How will I know what progress my child is making?

We will report at least twice a year the step your child has reached for each subject and whether or not they are on track, i.e. making the right progress. We will also report a progress score which tells you how well your child is working and whether they are making enough effort. These are explained fully in your child's planner. In addition, every child will have a learning journey stuck into their books which shows the assessment points across a half term. You should be able to see their progress clearly over time and get a clear picture of what they are studying.

I hope this has explained our new assessment system and that I have answered any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Westerman
Deputy Headteacher