

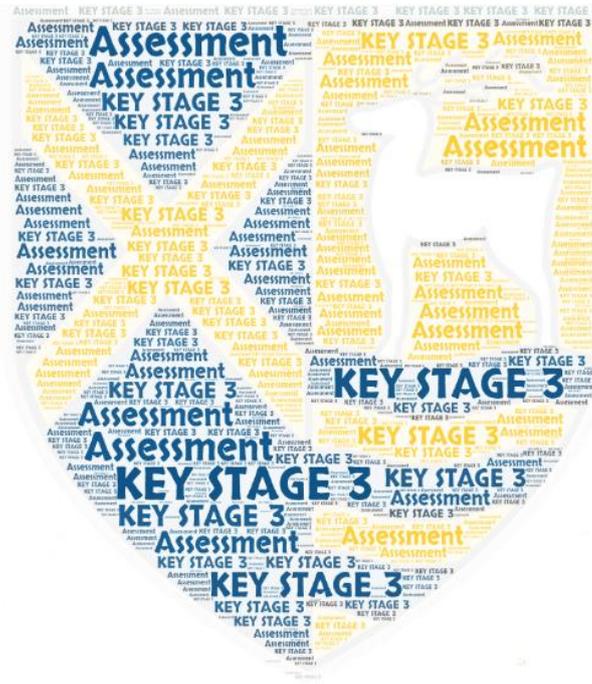


St Albans Girls' School



Parent Guide

Assessment in Key Stage 3



National Teaching School
designated by



National College for
Teaching & Leadership



St Albans Girls' School

How is my daughter assessed in Key Stage 3?

When students move into secondary school, we routinely make use of their KS2 Maths and English (reading) levels to determine their starting point from which to measure their progress. Alongside this we also include results from the Cognitive Ability Test (CATs), which highlight strengths and areas for development. There is a very strong correlation between this data and how students perform at GCSE, as shown in the table below:

Scaled score	Average GCSE grade
Under 90	1-3
90-94.9	3-4
95-99.9	4-5
100-104.9	6
105-109.9	6-7
110-114.9	8
115+	9

Teachers use this information in their planning, teaching and assessment. When planning lessons, teachers consider topic students for study, using the National Curriculum for each subject as a benchmark against national standards and by breaking tasks down into different success criteria. Teachers will use all of the information available to help each student achieve measurable success.

At STAGS, we do not publish target grades for any student at Key Stage 3, as we have found that this can often create a barrier to their learning. Targets are published in Year 10 and relate to GCSE outcomes at Key Stage 4. If your daughter's current academic performance is in line with this expectation, then her 'Current Progress' would be 'good'.

If your daughter is frequently exceeding the criteria above expectation, her 'Current Progress' would be reported as 'Good+'. Similarly, if your daughter is not meeting the criteria expected of them, her 'Current Progress' would be reported as 'Below'.

Current Comprehension Reading Age

We use the STAR test programme to calculate your daughter's current reading comprehension age at regular intervals. Students answer many questions that test their comprehension of selected extracts. It is natural for a student's current reading age to fluctuate throughout the year depending on performance in the test. However, if your daughter's reading age falls below 10 years, she will be entered into the Reading Club – a weekly intervention held in the Library Resource Centre.



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The numerical values attached to the 'Attitude to Learning' aspects of the report are defined as follows

Grade	Code	Definition
Excellent	Ex	An excellent student who applies themselves consistently to all tasks both in school and at home regardless of outcome. The student frequently exceeds expectations and demonstrates their own initiative.
Good	Gd	A good student who applies themselves well in the majority of class and home learning tasks completing them to the best of their ability.
Requires Improvement	RI	A student who could work well and complete tasks to the expected standard but greater consistency in effort, concentration and organisation is required.
Serious Concern	SC	A student who does not show sufficient commitment in this subject which has an impact on their own learning and possibly that of their peers. They may give up easily, and lack the discipline to complete all tasks. An improvement in effort is required.

An example of how this information is presented on your daughters report is illustrated below:

Subject	ATL	Progress
English	Ex	G+
Maths	RI	B
Science	SC	G
Art	Gd	G
PE	Ex	G+

When does STAGS report to Parents / Carers in Key Stage 3?

A report will be sent out three times a year. When making judgements on students' progress, teachers will use a variety of pieces of work. This may take the form of a test, an assessed piece of writing or other piece of work. At each assessment point, teachers will give a 'what went well' (WWW) and a 'Even better if' (EBI) comment. These comments will be linked to each curriculum topic success criteria. Progress is measured individually for each student in relation to their starting point.

Please note that all students can be judged to be making good+, good or below expected progress, it is dependent upon the success criteria of each topic being studied. Good+ progress does not necessarily mean that a student will achieve a top GCSE grade.



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Assessment Feedback Sheets

These can be found in students' exercise books and give an overview of the unit or topic completed and the expectations in terms of core knowledge and skills. Feedback is given to each student as follows:

- **W**hat **W**orked **W**ell (WWW)
- **E**ven **B**etter **I**f (EBI)

This is particularly important where a student is not making expected progress, as it shows what action is required to support improvement.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. My daughter achieved 110 (higher than National average) in maths at KS2 and in her first data report is making progress below expected. Why is she underachieving?

There is a strong link between teacher expectation of what students can achieve and their actual achievement. With this in mind, when we reviewed our KS3 curriculum, we raised the bar of expectation across the whole Key Stage, as we wanted to stretch and challenge all students. This is in line with the GCSE Specifications that include the new grade 9 at the top end, more rigour of subject content and the removal of coursework in most subjects. Students with a high starting point at KS2, will then be assessed relative to this when they join us, so the criteria will be deliberately challenging. As a result, you should not be alarmed that your daughter is not yet making the expected progress in the first term. What is important is how she responds to the feedback given to her by her teachers and that she continues to progress.

2. When my daughter gets her report and there is 'below' in some subjects, it's not very motivational is it?

We want to be honest with our assessment of students. For students to move forward with their learning they need to know their areas of improvement, so they can address them. It would be unfair to give students a false impression of their performance, and the focus is what each individual needs to do to improve their progress.

3. In the past, my elder daughter had a target at KS3. Why have you removed this in KS3?

We do not want to put a ceiling on expectations - we want all students to believe that with the right effort, they can make significant, positive steps forward. Just because most students with a KS2 starting point of 100 achieve a grade 4 or grade 5 at GCSE, that is not the case for everybody.

4. My daughter has mostly 'excellent' for Attitude to Learning, but is still making 'below' expected progress in some subjects. Why is this?

For most students, there should be a correlation between Attitude to Learning and their progress i.e. If these are all strong (Excellent) we would expect them to be making at least good progress. However, there may be exceptions for this. For example, a student with a high KS2 starting point in English and Maths may be making good progress in some subjects, but less than expected progress in others. This may be particularly so for practical subjects for example.

If you have any queries / questions about your daughter's progress within a subject, please do not hesitate to contact their subject teacher. If your queries are more general i.e. across a number of subjects, please contact your daughter's Director of Learning.

