



Perry Beeches II
The Free School

TARGET SETTING, ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS:

**A Parents' Guide to Changes to GCSEs and
Student Progress**

September 2016

NATIONAL CHANGES TO GCSE GRADING

You may be aware that, from Summer 2017, GCSEs will no longer be graded A* to G. This system has been replaced by a numbered system of Grades between 1 and 9:

- Grade 9 will be the highest awarded. This is the equivalent of an 'A*+'.
- Grade 4 will be the equivalent of a C.
- Grade 1 will be the lowest grade awarded.

Because these reforms are being phased in over time, your son/daughter will complete Year 11 with a mixture of Grades 1 – 9 (in 'reformed' or new Specification subjects) and A*-G Grades (in 'unreformed' or old specification subjects). The table below will explain this in more detail:

	Reformed Subjects Grades 1 – 9	Unreformed Subjects Grades A* - G
Year 7 <i>Final GCSE Exams, 2021</i>	All GCSE subjects will grade using 1 – 9.	
Year 8 <i>Final GCSE Exams, 2020</i>	All GCSE subjects will grade using 1 – 9.	
Year 9 <i>Final GCSE Exams, 2019</i>	All GCSE subjects will grade using 1 – 9.	
Year 10 <i>Final GCSE Exams, 2018</i>	<u>Grades 1-9 awarded in:</u> English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Art, Citizenship, Computer Science, Drama, French, Geography, History, Music, PE, Religious Studies, Science.	<u>Grades A* - G awarded in:</u> Business Studies, Economics, Health & Social Care, Leisure & Tourism, Media Studies, Product Design, Psychology, Sociology.
Year 11 <i>Final GCSE Exams, 2017</i>	<u>Grades 1-8 awarded in:</u> English Language, English Literature, Mathematics	<u>Grades A*-G awarded in:</u> Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, DT, Drama, French, Geography, Health & Social Care, History, Media Studies, Music, PE, Religious Studies, Science.

Years 7, 8 and 9

We are currently developing, in collaboration with colleagues across the Academy Trust, clear and student-friendly grade descriptors for each year group. Students will be assessed against grade descriptors relevant to their year of study, and given a Grade between 1 and 9 at each assessment point during those years.

In Year 8, for instance, the grade descriptors are more challenging than the ones in Year 7, building upon skills developed in the previous year.

Years 10 and 11

In Years 10 and 11, students will be assessed against the GCSE Grading System which has been outlined by the exam boards.

TARGET SETTING FOR PERRY BEECHES II STUDENTS

At Perry Beeches II, we are determined that every child succeeds and is given the opportunity and challenge to be the very best they can be. We know too that you will expect high/aspirational targets to be set in order to encourage students to fulfil their potential.

In the past, you will have been given National Curriculum Level Targets, which changed every year. For example, your son/daughter may have expected to achieve a '4b' at the end of Year 7 and then a '5c' by the end of Year 8. We know how confusing this can be and have tried to improve this by linking their academic performance in the years leading up to their final GCSE exams more clearly to the new Grades 1 to 9.


Your child will be given a GCSE/End of Year 11 Target, which you will be notified of at the start of the 2016-17 Academic Year. We will expect them to achieve that target grade each year if they are to be considered on track to achieve it at GCSE. For example, if your son/daughter is expected to achieve a Grade 6 at the end of Year 11:

- In Year 7, they will be considered 'on target' if they secure a Year 7 Grade 6.
- In Year 8, they will be considered 'on target' if they secure a Year 8 Grade 6.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

As ever, we appreciate that the support of parents and carers is key to students reaching their potential and we will communicate with you regularly in order to update you on their academic progress.

Reports to you as parents/carers will explain where your son/daughter is currently working in relation to their end of Year 11 target grade. The report you receive from school will therefore look something like this:

 Winston Churchill, 9KPA End of Year 11 Target Grade: 6	
English	Working Above Target
Mathematics	Working Above Target
Science	Working On Target
History	Working On Target
French	Working Above Target
Computer Science	Working Below Target
Drama	Working On Target
Religious Studies	Working Above Target

At the end of each Academic Year, you will also receive an End of Year Working At Grade indicating the 1-9 level at which we think your child is presently working.

SIXTH FORMS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Naturally, these changes may appear to be somewhat complicated. However, please rest assured that these are national changes about which Sixth Forms, Colleges and Universities are being made fully aware. They will adjust their entry requirements accordingly, particularly in 2017 and 2018, the years in which students will leave with both letter and number grades.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: why have you made these changes?

A: The Government has scrapped the old A*-G grading system and replaced it with a 1-9 system. The intention of this is to better distinguish between candidate exam performance.

Q: Do all schools use the same assessment system?

A: All schools will sit the same GCSE exams and all of their students will leave with 1-9 grades. Because of the scale of these changes, some schools are adopting different models but the majority have adopted the Perry Beeches system of 1-9 Grades for each year group.

Q: Will this change how my son/daughter's work is marked?

Fundamentally, it is only the grading system which has changed. Students will still, as ever, receive from their teachers timely and meaningful comments which commend things that they have done well and highlight areas for development.

Q: How will I know that my child is still making progress?

Student exercise books will continue to demonstrate the progress your child is making. However, you should note that the new system encourages meaningful feedback over constant teacher grading. Progress will be demonstrated in their reports, indicating whether they are 'On', 'Above', or 'Below' Target in each subject.

Q: Will some subjects be 'worth more' than others?

No. The Government and exam boards are simply phasing in the move to 1-9 in different subjects in order to best manage the change and transition. In 2017 and 2018, 'new/reformed' GCSEs will carry the same worth and value to students and the school as 'old/unreformed' GCSEs. From 2019 onwards, all subjects will be graded 1-9.

Q: What happens when my child leaves Perry Beeches II?

Colleges and Universities are well aware of these changes and are expecting students, particularly in 2017 and 2018, to have a range of different grade types. They are expected to advise on their entry requirements in the coming months.

Q: How can I make sure my son/daughter is making progress?

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. You can continue to support your son/daughter by encouraging them to reflect on where their strengths and areas for development lie in each subject. Teacher feedback in exercise books will support you and your child, as will regular reports and Parents' Evenings.