

## **Assessment Of Learning: - Key Stage 3 Exams and Formal Assessment**

Assessment of Learning is regularly carried out at significant points in a pupil's school career through Teacher Assessments or via external examinations and these results often inform the direction that future study will take; GCSE results informing A Level choices for example.

- Currently in Wales Levels are awarded at the end of Key Stage 2 (end of primary school) in English, Maths, Science and Welsh.
- Pupils are awarded the level which best describes where they are currently working.
- Legally secondary schools are only required to provide a level at the end of Year 9. However, in Dyffryn Taf, we provide assessments throughout Years 7, 8 and 9.

At the end of Year 9 levels are awarded in all National Curriculum subjects, namely English, Maths, Science, Art, Design & Technology, Geography, History, ICT, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, Physical Education and Welsh, and this information is submitted to the Welsh Government. Religious Education is not formally levelled at the end of Key Stage 3, however assessment takes place throughout the Key Stage and is communicated, via exercise books and pupil reports.

We have recently re-introduced a formal exam period for some subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils have an exam timetable and sit tests under exam conditions in a large venue. There are significant changes planned for the future of assessment, both at GCSE and at A Level, with an increasing emphasis on accuracy and problem solving in formal examinations. Coursework will contribute a smaller proportion of final grades and there will be fewer opportunities for re-sitting papers. We are committed to supporting and training our pupils to develop the skills, approaches and attitudes necessary for them to be successful in this environment. We believe that the experience gained by sitting formal exams throughout Key Stage 3 will be invaluable when they come to sit their external examination in Key Stages 4 and 5.

### **What would be an average level of achievement for the Key Stage 3 age group?**

- When pupils start KS3 in Year 7, the average level nationally for core subjects is approximately Level 4.
- By the end of Key Stage 3 (end of Year 9) the performance of the vast majority of pupils will be within the range 3 to 7 and the national average at the end of KS3 is approximately Level 5.
- Level 8 is available for a small number of high performing pupils at the end of Key Stage 3.
- Rarely, an assessment of Exceptional Performance may be awarded.
- Average progress in core subjects between the end of Key Stage 2 and the end of Key Stage 3 is between 1 and 2 levels. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that the levels represent a quite broad range of ability; there may well be significant variation between a pupil who has been working comfortably for a period of time at level 5 and a pupil who only just reaches a Level 5 at the end of Year 6.

### **How do levels link to GCSE grades?**

At Key Stage 4 pupils will be awarded grades A\* to G based on GCSE grade descriptors and nationally set boundaries for external examinations. As a general guide, national figures show that the majority of pupils who achieve Level 6 in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 will go on to achieve at least C grades at GCSE.