



DE LA SALLE SCHOOL

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Dear parent/guardian

Re: Follow up to your child's monitoring report

Rationale behind the changes

We are writing to you to respond to your questions relating to your child's school monitoring report. It was expressed in the letter that accompanied the report that the changes that have taken place to the national school assessment framework are indeed the most far reaching for a generation. To that end, we appreciate fully that you will have questions regarding the report.

This year to meet changes nationally we have moved to a system known as 'flightpaths'. As was described in the letter that accompanied your report and the video clip on the school website, many schools are now offering their pupils an average GCSE target grade **for all subjects** from year 7 that is based on their KS2 SATS scores. The system that we are using in school reflects that of other schools nationally.

Understanding your child's flightpath

The biggest change to the way we measure your child's progress is that they will have the one range of GCSE target grades for all subjects. This will make things much easier for both parents and children to understand. It will also ensure that pupils see all subjects as being equally important.

Below is an explanation of how the flightpath your child is on relates to GCSE grades (both old and new). As you can see, the new GCSEs across all subjects, are even harder from this year.

Flightpath	Anticipated end of y11 average grade	OLD GCSE grade equivalent
PANKHURST	8/9**	A**
SHAKESPEARE	7	A*/A
NIGHTINGALE	6	A/B
EDISON	5*	B/C
PARKS	4	C/D
WILBERFORCE	3	D/E
MANDELA	2	E/F
PASTEUR	0-1	F-U

**Grade 5 will be the nationally expected grade children will be expected to achieve. This is equivalent to a high C grade on old GCSE examinations. In short, exam papers are on average, half a grade harder*

***A new grade 9 can be achieved. This is the equivalent to a double A* on the old GCSE examinations.*

Common questions from parents

1. Will my child stay on the same flightpath?

A child will never move down on a flightpath. This would not be aspirational. However, if a child regularly performs above expected progress, then this will be reviewed.

2. How did the school come up with the policy?

We researched the approaches of schools in the North West who have been praised by OFSTED for their work in this area and have shared best practice with them.

3. My child is better at practical subjects such as PE and art, but is not making expected progress. Why is this?

Your child's flightpath is based on their KS2 SATS score. This score measured their ability in English and mathematics **only**. As a result of this your child's performance in practical subjects is now linked to how well they are doing in academic subjects, and vice versa.

We appreciate that in this area, there may well be a case for placing your child on separate flightpaths for academic and practical subjects and we will be reviewing this in due course.

4. My child received a really strong KS2 score but is now not making expected progress in some subjects. Why is this?

Now your child has begun secondary school they are measured against GCSE target grades. As a result of this there has been a 'jump' in expectation. This is particularly noticeable for some families who have children on the highest flightpaths of Nightingale and Pankhurst.

Furthermore, students have limited experiences of certain skills-based subjects in primary school and so need time to develop their understanding in these areas.

5. Why did the school choose to assess so early in the year? Would it have not been better to wait until pupils have had a chance to develop their knowledge and understanding?

The decision to do this was made so that we could gain as much understanding of the learning needs of our children as soon as was possible so that we could teach them more effectively.

6. Why did the school choose not to share information regarding target grades with pupils?

This has been a quite deliberate decision. Some families have expressed an interest in sharing with their child the grade their flightpath could result in by the end of Y11. We have chosen not to do this because:

(a) It could be detrimental to the happiness of the child. We are trying to avoid 'labelling' your child. A lot could happen in 5 years!

(b) We feel it is much better to focus on the effort levels of the child rather than the grade. We want them to 'go for gold' and just do their best!

(c) As mentioned above pupils progress at different rates. Their flightpath can, and will, change.

7.How will the school be expressing to parents and pupils how well a child is doing?

As explained in the letter that accompanied your report we will be using the following system:

Well above (expected progress)

Above (expected progress)

Expected (progress)

Below (expected progress)

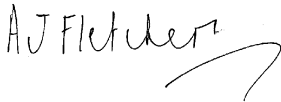
Well below (expected progress)

To that end we are sharing this information with you but politely request that you consider the arguments above in your conversations at home.

We have appreciated your comments so far. They will no doubt help us to create a system that is fair and easy to understand. Please don't hesitate to get in touch should you need further information or would like to comment further.

We will also be offering further advice on school parents' evenings should you have questions that arise through the year.

Yours faithfully,



Mr A J Fletcher

Assistant Headteacher: Teaching and Learning Team