

Changes to grades continued...

The new grade 5 will be set as a 'good pass' and should be in line with what the DfE say is "comparable to a high C or low B under the current system – making it similar to the standard aimed for by pupils in top-performing countries such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland". This has led to criticism that many current 'low C' students will lose out on a 'good pass' - recently predicted to be as many as 23 per cent.

In January 2015 it was reported that the two largest English exam boards - AQA and OCR, would cease to offer any more GCSEs

in Northern Ireland as NI will continue to use the old, alphabetical system of grading and they will not offer courses with more than one grading system. Schools have been told by the DfE that where the Northern Ireland exam board does not offer subjects, "schools will be allowed to continue to offer 9-1 GCSEs in those subjects", but only until alphabetically-graded specifications become available".

In England, until all GCSEs are awarded as 9-1 grades, pupils will receive a combination of alphabetical and numerical grades. The transition period between a combination of new courses with new methods of assessment and grades will be challenging for schools, pupils and parents, and consideration needs to be given to how this is communicated to employers.

KS2 Assessment

This year will be the first time pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are not assessed using 'levels'. Instead, they will be given a scaled score for each subject, with 100 representing the 'expected standard'. The Department for Education is yet to outline what the 'expected standard' will be.

In addition to classroom assessment, KS2 pupils will be assessed in May by a new set of National Key Stage 2 tests, and by statutory Teacher Assessment for writing. The KS2 tests will include: English reading; English grammar, punctuation and spelling (short answer); English grammar, punctuation and spelling (spelling); Mathematics - arithmetic; Mathematics - reasoning (2 papers). There is no longer a mental arithmetic test and calculators cannot be used during any of the tests.

Over Christmas the DfE confirmed that the deadline for teachers to submit their Teacher Assessment data has been set as 27th May - a month earlier than expected. This is another in a series of moves that have faced criticism from teachers, including announcements that pupils will be expected to interpret commas in longer numbers (with implications for EAL pupils), and the challenging definitions of grammatical features in the national curriculum test frameworks (an exclamation can only start with 'what' or 'how' now...).

In July 2016, pupils who reach the threshold score for the 'expected standard' will receive a scaled score of 100. None of the thresholds will be known until after the first round of tests in 2016. Parents will be given a scaled score and outcome (e.g. met expected standard/ did not meet the standard). They will also receive a statement of the Teacher Assessment (e.g. working at expected standard).

To calculate progress, each pupil is measured against pupils with the same average points score from KS1. The positive, and negative, progress scores for a cohort, compared to KS1, are averaged, and the progress score for the whole cohort found. Individual scores will not be reported.

The new accountability framework will require schools to meet either the new attainment floor standard (65% Reading, Writing and Maths combined attainment), OR have sufficient progress in all 3 subjects. Special Schools will not be held to account by the floor standard, however schools with SEN units will be.

Edited by Beth Greville-Giddings

INSIDE



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A brief introduction



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Westbury School Learning and Development Bulletin



Relay

Issue 6,
February 2016

Making the grade(s)

Reforms to qualifications, including GCSEs, in England are being introduced gradually with the first new courses being taught from September 2015. The changes include the content, structure and grading of courses. For students receiving results in summer 2017, GCSE English and GCSE Maths exam results will be graded from 9 - 1 instead of from A* - G; and from summer 2019, all GCSE subjects will be graded 9 - 1.

Ofqual have stated that students taking their GCSEs during the period of transition will not lose out, due to the use of a statistical method known as comparable outcomes. There are several anchor points to ensure that the same proportion of students will achieve 'broadly equivalent' grades based on the proportion of pupils likely to achieve each grade.

Defending the new system following concerns from schools surrounding the changes to the system, and what this may mean in terms of pass-rates, resits and accountability measures, Nick Gibb,

Minister of State for School Reform, wrote in *Schools Week* that "Before 2010 those running our education system had false confidence that standards were rising, when the truth was that our qualifications were becoming devalued and were failing to prepare students to succeed in a demanding economy".

(continued inside, including changes for Key Stage 2)

New GCSE Grading Structure

New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	D
3	E
2	F
1	G
U	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

Psychology of Behaviour

Nick Rose is a leading practitioner for psychology and research at Haileybury Turnford Academy in Hertfordshire. He also writes the 'Evidence into Practice' blog which was recently shortlisted for a TES award.

evidenceintopractice.wordpress.com

In a recent series of articles, Nick Rose looks in detail at the Psychology of Behaviour. In three parts, Nick focusses on behaviourism, restorative practice approaches and group-level strategies.

Behaviour management never seems far from the education headlines and Rose suggests that 'perhaps because of a growing feeling that behaviour has become increasingly difficult to manage, behaviour management has become the focus of experimentation'.

Behaviourism

Any system where rewarding and sanctioning are used is a behaviourist approach. Rose begins by looking at the work of B. F. Skinner and his theory of operant conditioning; the core idea of which is reinforcement using rewards and punishment. These methods and token economies are used widely in schools however they are criticised for relying on extrinsic motivation and encouraging pupil reliance on reward. As pupils get older they often lose interest in rewards, leading to what Rose calls 'reward inflation' as schools are forced to come up with new ideas or increase the value of reward to elicit the same desirable behaviour. Rose highlights how the evidence suggests that 'rewards work better when they are slightly unpredictable' and not at fixed intervals.

Restorative Practice Approaches

The process of restorative justice involves all those involved in an incident coming together to discuss the impact and outcomes of what has happened. This strategy is being used in schools as an alternative to punitive approaches. Rose's second article looks at '**Positive Psychology**' - how schools can 'promote positive emotions and relationships', and 'positive goals leading to accomplishment'; and '**Cognitive-behavioural therapy**' - to 'identify and change patterns of thinking or beliefs which underlie behaviours which are unhelpful to the individual' Rose's evaluation of the available evidence shows that it is unclear as to how effective these approaches are. There are case studies of anti-bullying programmes that are perceived to have an impact, however there is little quantitative evidence that they work.

Group-Level Strategies

The final article looks at how schools can use our natural propensity to conform to social norms to manage behaviour. Rose evaluates the concept of 'normative influence' and how this can be applied to promote pro-social behaviour. He looks at how we use normative influence in classrooms - whether that be school rules or behavioural climates; and discusses the work of Doug Lemov and his set of classroom routines which 'he suggests, work together to create a positive classroom culture'.

The articles go into detail on each aspect of the psychology of behaviour, using evidence to relay the background for each focus and how they are being used in the classroom. The pieces give a balanced summary of each focus and are an excellent place to start if you are interested in the subject of behaviour management. The first article is available here: <https://goo.gl/1vXpsk>

Edu-Blog Spotlight

Sean Harford is an HMI and Ofsted's National Director, Education - leading on policy for EY, Schools and FE & Skills. He blogs for Ofsted at <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/> and he tweets as @HarfordSean

To kick off the new year, Ofsted are continuing to dispel myths about what inspectors 'expect' to see or read when they visit a school.



In addition to their clarifications document*, Ofsted are publishing a series of videos to tackle specific myths around marking and pupil feedback, lesson planning, grading and observation.

Sean states that "It's really important that people understand what our inspectors do and don't look at, or expect, when we inspect".

The aim is that by engaging with leaders and teachers, they will have a better understanding of how Ofsted and inspections work at a time where they are making radical changes to the way they inspect. The blog (featuring a number of writers) is intended to inform schools about the developments in school inspection and about their aim to help inspection improve the way schools work, not be a burden.

Videos featured in this post cover topics including preparing for inspections, lesson grading, and pupil feedback. With the opinion that "If teachers are told that the reason for doing something is 'because Ofsted wants it', we want to be even clearer on whether that is the case or not – invariably it will not!", Sean welcomes thoughts and suggestions on what other topics or issues you'd like covered or clarified through this blog in the future.

*Ofsted inspections: Myths' can be found here <https://goo.gl/TXapKd>

Full post, with comments at: <http://goo.gl/Szv6TM>

You've been asked for some information or a pupil report for a meeting, but what do all those letters mean?

Decoding the Diary Sheet

EWO

Education Welfare Officers work with schools, pupils and families to support regular school attendance. They also help to sort out problems in school or at home.

The role of an EWO includes duties such as liaising with other agencies such as social services, probation officers, educational psychologists, the police and careers advisers; promoting regular school attendance and dealing with absenteeism; helping families get the benefits they are entitled to; and where appropriate, prosecuting parents who fail to ensure their children receive a suitable education. They may also attend school events, such as parents' evenings.

EWOs may be based in a centre or school, often as part of a multidisciplinary team, although some work from home.

Some schools, including the Westbury Woodlands Federation, now employ attendance officers in a similar role.