



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Key Stage 3

We are delighted with the start that students have made to their studies in Years 7, 8 and 9. Across all subjects, it is a pleasure to see students engaging in lessons with great enthusiasm and diligence. As students are now settled into their routines, I wanted to inform you of some changes we are making to the way your child will be assessed this academic year in Key Stage 3, as we will no longer be assessing or reporting using National Curriculum levels.

Since 2014, changes have been made nationally which mean that schools are no longer obliged to assess, or report, using National Curriculum levels. These changes coincide with significant changes being introduced to A-levels and GCSEs. As a school, we felt that it was necessary to focus on these changes, given they directly influenced the qualifications our students were studying for, and during this time, we have continued to assess and report Key Stage 3 attainment using National Curriculum levels.

Whilst there are still one or two subjects still to complete a full cycle of the new style GCSEs, the vast majority have, and the results have been excellent. From the results, and the feedback we have received from various exam boards, it is clear that, as a school, we have a clear understanding of the more rigorous demands of the new GCSE and A-level courses. This means we can now ensure that the teaching in Year 7-9 focuses very much on laying the foundations, to prepare students for the challenges of Key Stage 4 and beyond.

Students in all key stages will continue to receive high quality teaching, where the focus of lessons will be to develop students' in-depth knowledge and skills. Departments will complete and mark regular formal assessments, in a way that is appropriate to the subject, and teachers will continue to assess in a regular, holistic way, based on the quality of classwork and homework that students produce. Teachers will continue to provide regular, high quality feedback so that students know how they need to develop and improve their work.

From this assessment of student work, and taking into consideration their achievement prior to starting St Mary's in Key Stage 3, in each subject we will report to you whether your child is working towards the standard we expect of them, working at the standard we expect of them, or working above the standard expected of them. In addition to this, we will report to you an effort grade, so you can see how well your child is applying themselves in lessons, and with homework. For Year 7 and 8, we will be reporting this information to you in February and also in July, given that these points mark half way through the year, and then the end of the academic year. For Year 9, as students are preparing to start GCSE courses, we will be reporting this information to you at the end of each term, as we have done in previous years.

As a school, we remain committed to ensuring that students in Key Stage 3 receive the highest quality, all-round, holistic education. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with your child's Head of Year in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

D McKeating

Assistant Headteacher

National Teaching School
designated by



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

