



Information on the new GCSE 1-9 system

As you may know the government has introduced a new grading system for GCSE that is being phased in at the moment. In 2017 Year 11 students in English and Maths will be the first to receive outcomes on this new GCSE 1-9 scale and students of nearly all other subjects will receive these grades from 2018. The only subject to retain A-G grades will be DT Product Design and this will change from 2019.

This means that students in Year 10 need to understand very clearly how these grades work as they will receive a GCSE results certificate which mainly has the 1-9 numbers on and will have almost no mention of the familiar A-G grade system that we have become used to.

The table below is a Department of Education chart which shows how the new system works.

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

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

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

There are some key points that need to be pointed out:

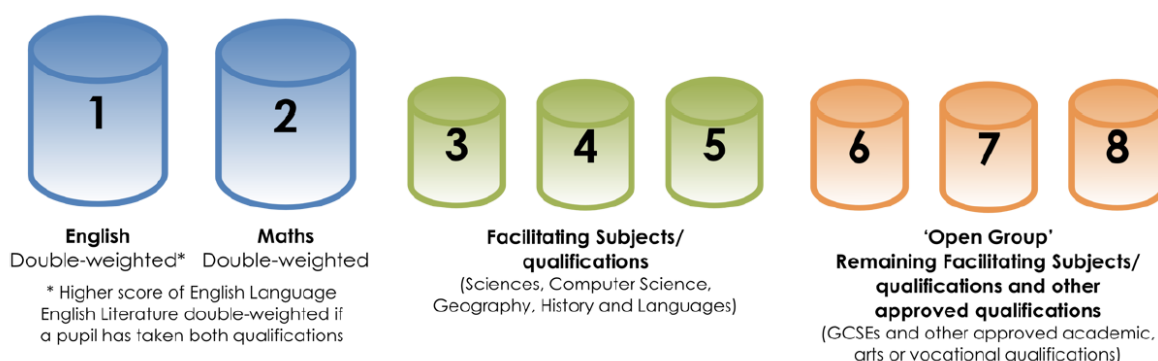
- Essentially a grade 4 is the equivalent of a C grade – the number of pupils who gained a C or above on the old system will be the same as the number who gain a 4 and above on the new system.
- A good pass is however now defined as grade 5 or above.
- A grade A is the same as grade 7
- The top grade A* is now split into two grades – 8 and 9
- Grade 1 is equivalent to a G grade

The move to defining Grade 5 as a good pass is an interesting one. Schools will now be judged on how many pupils gain a Grade 5 in both English and Maths. All schools will therefore see a drop in their headline figure if you try to compare it to the number who gained Grade C in English and Maths because there will be a fall – a grade 5 is essentially a high grade C.

New Progress Measure Progress 8

As if the above change was not enough the government has introduced a new progress measure for all schools called Progress 8. This attempts to measure the amount of progress that a school makes across eight key subjects from pupils starting points as defined at the end of Year 6 – i.e. from Key Stage 2 to the end of GCSE.

The Key subjects are shown here:



The average grade achieved in these 8 subjects is calculated for a pupil and this is then compared to the average grade achieved of all pupils who achieved an identical score in the Key Stage 2 tests back in Year 6. If the difference is say 1.0 then the pupil has made 1 grade more progress across the eight subjects than average. If the difference is 0.5, then half a grade more progress has been made or a grade more progress in 4 subjects.

The Progress 8 scores for all pupils in the school are then averaged and the school is awarded this average as their Progress 8. Our progress 8 score is 0.59 and puts us top in Suffolk for progress in 2016 and among the top 5% of schools. It is essentially saying that here students make about a grade more progress than average in about 5 out of every 8 subjects. The measure is a complex one and is not really designed for parents or pupils but for school leaders and others wanting to judge the performance of a school.

Nonetheless the concept of being a grade above average, on average grade, or being a grade below average is an easy one to grasp so we have based our targets on this concept. This is called Progress 8 Plus One targeting and has been adopted by the school as a means of setting aspirational targets for most of our pupils. Essentially the school sets a target that shows the grade needed to make average

progress and the grade needed to be one grade above average. This latter is then used by most subjects to set their subject target grade. In some cases the average progress grade is selected but in general we would aim for the higher one.

What does this mean in practice for my son or daughter?

- Achievement must be high across all subjects not just Maths and English
- No dropping of subjects when the going gets tough
- High aspirational targets being set as before
- Careful monitoring of progress and support to keep students on track

We hope this information helps you understand both the new 1-9 grades that are being used in GCSE reports and gives you an idea of how our targets are based on our students essentially trying to achieve a grade that simply represents, for them, above average progress.

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