

Fulford School



Reporting Systems



A Guide for Parents

October 2010

Fulford School Reporting Systems

As you are aware, we changed our reporting structures quite significantly last year. I would like to thank those parents who took the time to contact the school to suggest further changes that could be made to the reporting system and I am writing to explain both the rationale behind the new reports and the changes that we will be making during 2010-11.

The Rationale

Previously, each student has received one report, issued at the end of an academic year. This consisted of a great deal of prose, written by each subject teacher, as well as an overall assessment level for the student in each subject. Although these reports contained a lot of detail, there were several concerns, shared by parents and staff alike, including:

1. The time required to write, check and publish the report would necessitate a gap of well over a month between a report being written and it being sent home. As a consequence, some minor concerns or targets within the report could have become far more significant by the time that parents received it; similarly, these concerns could have been addressed and no longer be relevant to the student.
2. Although significant concerns or under-performance would always be communicated to parents during the course of the year, the only point at which more subtle and less obvious issues could be reported would be at the end of the summer term, by which time a student's progress would inevitably have suffered. The fact that these issues were communicated immediately before a six week holiday also made it very difficult for students to be proactive in addressing them; indeed, by the time that students returned in September, the report would often be forgotten.
3. The length and breadth of the written comments would often make it difficult for parents and students to identify the key points for action. Indeed, the ambiguity of many comments, such as 'with some success' or 'at times' created significant frustration.

As a consequence, we set up a working party of staff and parents during 2008-9 to consider how we might restructure our reporting in order to make it sharper, more frequent and to use it as a vehicle through which to address under-performance at an early stage, so that student achievement would not suffer.

Although there is only a statutory requirement of one report each year, under the new reporting system, each student will receive 14 separate reports during Years 7-11, rather than the 5 that would previously have been sent home. Of these, 5 will be 'interim reports', which are designed to provide parents with a quick health-check on their child's behaviour, homework, effort and participation within each subject. The other 9 reports will contain more detailed National Curriculum and GCSE assessment information, predicted grades and specific targets for each subject.

The gap between a report being completed by subject teachers and it being sent home will be no more than two weeks. This means that there is an immediacy to the system and that the information which you receive will be up-to-date in a way that the previous system did not allow.

Since reports are being produced throughout the course of the year, staff and parents are now able to address concerns or underperformance as soon as they arise. Immediately after every reporting point in the year for each year group, each Director of Learning identifies four students in his/her house whose reports suggest some degree of under-performance. These students are then individually supported and mentored over a period of 4 to 6 weeks, to prevent the concern from developing into a more significant problem. This system of intervention is very much designed to help to support students to maximise their achievement. The focus is upon support rather than punishment, prevention rather than cure, and feedback from parents and students has been overwhelmingly positive. During 2009-10, 120 different students across Years 7-11 benefitted from one-to-one intervention work of this kind. Even if your child was not one of these, through both the new Progress Review system and the vertical tutor group, he/she will have discussed his/her reports at length and will have set him/herself targets as a result, which will have been supported, monitored and discussed with yourselves, the form tutor and older students within the vertical form group.

Target Setting System

Key Stage 3 Target Setting

Students come into Year 7 with a National Curriculum test level in English, Mathematics and Science. These results are reported as whole levels, but are available to schools as split levels. For example, a pupil with level 4 may be level 4A (in the upper range of level 4), level 4B (mid-range) or level 4C (lower range). The target level we set for the mid-point of Year 7 is the next split level up. A student entering Year 7 with level 4B would therefore have a target level of 4A for the January 2011. This target then increases by one split level at each half yearly point of assessment.

In the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, the national average for students in Year 6 is around 4C to 4B. At the end of Year 9, the national average is around 5a to 6C. Although this is a useful point of comparison, we have created a target setting system which offers each student a realistic sense of aspiration and through which he/she can measure his/her own progress.

For subjects other than English, Maths and Science, each subject teacher will report a National Curriculum split level assessment at the end of Year 7. This assessment level then generates a target level for the mid-point in Year 8 which is one split level higher.

In some subjects, the initial assessment and subsequent target level may be below those for English, Mathematics and Science. In French, for example, most students have had little, if any tuition before coming to Fulford, so they cannot be expected to reach the same level as in more familiar subjects.

Although you should generally see an upward trend in your child's assessment levels across Key Stage 3, there may be occasions where the National Curriculum level suggests that he/she has not progressed or even that he/she has regressed in the subject. This will not necessarily be the case. Although all curriculum areas assess a student's skills in the subject rather, the medium through which this assessment is conducted can have an impact upon a child's achievement level. In PE, for example, a student might be able to show co-ordination skills of a higher level when playing football than when playing tennis. This might result in an apparent dip in his/her achievement during the summer term.

Why split the levels?

Previously we set only an end of Key Stage 3 target level for students. This has seemed a very distant, and therefore not very meaningful target – the end of Year 9 – for students who have just started in Year 7. By breaking down the expected progress into half-year “chunks” we hope that the levels will seem more realistic and achievable.

GCSE Estimated Grades

The estimated grades on reports at GCSE are produced by an organisation called Fischer Family Trust. Fischer Family Trust is a charitable organisation which uses a student's prior achievement at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in order to estimate the grade that she/he is most likely to achieve in each subject at GCSE. The estimated grades reflect an average of how students with similar prior achievement profiles to your child, in similar schools to Fulford, have achieved in each GCSE subject in the past. They are not, therefore, a prediction of future results.

In the vast majority of cases, these estimates reflect realistic target grades to aim for at GCSE. There will always be individual students for whom these grades may seem unrealistic. However, they provide a useful starting point when setting personal targets.

Changes to the Reporting System 2010-11

In response to parental suggestions, we have made two significant changes to the reporting system this year.

Firstly, the progress grade on reports will no longer be a number; instead it will become a letter as follows:

A = The National Curriculum split level for the subject is **above** the previous assessment

E = The National Curriculum split level for the subject is **equal to** the previous assessment

B = The National Curriculum split level is **below** the previous assessment

Where the National Curriculum level has not improved or has gone down, there should and will be a discussion with the student about why this is the case. However, the change is designed to make the grade less judgemental and to start an open discussion about how the student can address the concern.

This progress grading system is deliberately designed to avoid a direct comparison against the target grade. Although the target provides a useful benchmark, the most important concern is whether or not the student has progressed since the last assessment.

Secondly, the subject-based target on the final report of the year will be specifically written for that student, rather than selected from a statement bank. Although we will not be returning to the extended prose of reports of the past, this will allow teachers to provide a sharper focus upon how the student can improve at the beginning of the following year. Where applicable, it will also allow teachers to suggest why the student appears to have stagnated or regressed in the subject.

I apologise for such a lengthy document! However, I hope that it helps you to understand the reasons that we have changed our reporting system and the target setting systems which underpin it. Whenever you are concerned by the data on your child's report, do please feel free to contact the school. Ultimately, we are trying to construct a system which allows students, staff and parents to work in partnership with one another, in order to maximise achievement and to address concerns or under-performance as early as possible.

A copy of this booklet will be available on both the website and the VLE for future reference.



Mr T Johnson
Assistant Headteacher

Reporting Schedule 2010-11

Year 7

1. Interim report 1 sent home **Friday 12th November 2010**
2. National Curriculum report sent home **Friday 4th February 2011**
3. Interim report 2 sent home **Friday 20th May 2011**
4. Final report sent home **Friday 8th July 2011**

Year 8

1. Interim report sent home **Friday 15th October 2010**
2. National Curriculum report sent home **Friday 21st January 2011**
3. Final report sent home **Friday 24th June 2011**

Year 9

1. National Curriculum report sent home **Friday 17th December 2010**
2. Interim report sent home **Friday 4th March 2011**
3. Final report sent home **Thursday 30th June 2011**

Year 10

1. Interim report sent home **Friday 22nd October 2010**
2. GCSE report sent home **Friday 11th February 2011**
3. Final report sent home **Friday 15th July 2011**

Year 11

1. GCSE report sent home **Friday 28th January 2011**



Reporting Booklet – October 2010

Student's name: Form:

I confirm receipt of the letter about **Fulford School Reporting System**, dated October 2010.

Signed parent/guardian: Dated:

Please return this reply slip to **Form Tutor by 15 October 2010**.