

November 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Year 10 Reports

Please find below some information explaining the Year 10 reports that you will receive throughout the year on Go4Schools.

I am going to explain each section, by using a series of FAQs under specific headings, so that you can read only the sections which may apply to your child's report. Not all questions will apply to all pupils. I apologise in advance for the length of this letter, but please keep it safe for future reference.

Subjects

1. My child is studying Triple Science, but why are there three of them showing?

Unfortunately, due to the way the system is set up on our school timetabling system (SIMS), the individual subjects are not shown. However, on each report they are always as follows, in alphabetical order:

Triple Science 1 = Biology, Triple Science 2 = Chemistry and Triple Science 3 = Physics.

Target grades

2. How have you set the target grades for my child?

We are using a national company, called FFT (with links to the Fischer Family Trust) to help us in determining target grades. This company analyse the exam results of pupils from the previous year's Year 11 cohort nationally and compare them with the pupils' levels of ability (in English and Maths) upon entry to secondary school, as well as looking at their gender and month of birth. Thus, we can see what the most common G.C.S.E. grade was for a pupil who entered secondary school with particular KS2 results and these key characteristics.

Next, we narrow this down and consider the schools which achieve slightly better results than Thomas Adams, which allow us to set suitable target grades for our pupils, with a built-in element of aspiration (as a school, we always want to do better than we did the previous year!)

In summary, the target grades set for your child should be considered challenging but achievable by the majority of pupils.

3. But my child is new to the school or didn't sit KS2 tests - how have you set the target grades for him/her?

We ask the English and Maths Departments to carry out initial assessments of your child's abilities in these two subjects, early on upon entry. From these, and after consultation with Subject Leaders of the other subjects, we set appropriate target grades.

4. Will these target grades ever change?

Possibly, yes, although probably not by too much. Each November, FFT update all of their information based upon the most recent cohort who have just sat the exams that summer. It will make sense, therefore, for us to review our pupils' targets in light of the new information.

5. Why do some subjects not have numbered grades?

Some pupils are studying BTEC subjects (or similar). These are usually graded as follows: Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Level 2 Pass, Level 1 Pass, U.

6. What are the new numbered grades equivalent to?

The chart below shows the broad equivalences of the new and old grades and the additional information supplied by the Department for Education and Ofqual.

7. What is the difference between a 'Strong Pass' and a 'Standard Pass'?

For the academic years 2018/19, pupils were able to achieve a grade 4 (a 'standard pass') to avoid resitting these two subjects. This currently remains the case. However, whilst we expect that students who are currently in Year 10 will avoid the need to re-sit these two subjects if they achieve a grade 4, within a few years they will be competing in the employment market with future cohorts who will likely have achieved a grade 5. Indeed, it may be the case that certain colleges/universities/employers may choose to only accept young adults with a grade 5 or above. As a result, we would encourage all students to aim to achieve at least a grade 5 in these two critical subjects.

Grading new GCSEs from 2017

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

8. Why are some target grades missing?

Once the target grades have been published, the only subject that should be missing a target grade is Core P.E., since pupils do not sit a formal examination in this subject.

9. Why do my child's Science targets appear as two grades?

Previously, those pupils who did not sit Triple Science (the large majority of the Year group), studied Core Science in Year 10 and a second G.C.S.E., Additional Science, in Year 11. The new G.C.S.E. Science syllabus means that there is a single qualification, studied over the course of the two years. However, this is known as a 'double award' and counts as **two** G.C.S.E.s.

Here are some examples of what the Target grades could appear as, for those pupils not studying Triple Science:

- 4/5 Equivalent to a pupil having one grade 4 target and one grade 5 target, so this is similar to target grades of 4+ and 5-
- 5/5 Equivalent to a pupil having two grade 5 targets

5/6 Equivalent to a pupil having one grade 5 target and one grade 6 target, so this is similar to target grades of 5+ and 6-

Attitude to Learning (A2L) scores

10. Why are the A2L scores so important?

A2L scores should help you to closely pinpoint where any issues may be occurring. They should be regarded as a key indicator of your child's attitude to school, work and likely future progress. These will usually be the first columns that we look at when mentoring pupils, before any reference is made to targets.

11. What does the 4-point scale mean?

The key to each area is shown at the foot of the report. Since we are continuing to use a 4-point, rather than 5-point scale, quite simply a score of '1' or '2' is good and a '3' or '4' is not! A score of '2' should be the aim for all pupils in all four areas in all subjects. '1' is exceptional. Any '3's indicate some concern and a '4' expresses significant concern. There is no "satisfactory" grade – '3' is **not** good enough!

12. Are the descriptors the same as when my child was in Year 9?

Yes, there have been no changes for this year.

13. Why are there some 'n/a' scores in the 'homework' column?

Core P.E. and the Vocational course do not set homework. These should be the only subjects which show 'n/a'.

Over the course of this academic year, you will receive a total of 3 reports they will include the following:

TP1 November - A2L's and Target Grade

TP2 February – A2Ls, Target, Predicted and Written comments

TP3 June – A2L's Target, Predicted and Summer Mock Exam Grades

Thursday 12th March 2020 – Year 10 Consultation Evening, 4:30 – 7:30pm

Although it is still relatively early days for pupils following their G.C.S.E. courses, I hope that you have found this report useful and would encourage you to discuss it with your son/daughter.

Please discuss this report with your child and please do not hesitate to contact Miss Devismes (Head of Year 10): amd@thomasadams.net with any general concerns, your child's subject teacher/s with any specific issues, or me (rsw@thomasadams.net) with any queries concerning understanding the report itself/target grades etc.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs R Wilkinson
Senior Teacher – Data and Assessment