

9th October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Key Stage 3 Assessment and Reporting

At St Michael's, our aim is to deliver a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of every young person, regardless of their prior attainment or background. This ensures all students have the scope to make excellent progress.

This year we have made changes in Key Stage 3 (KS3) to the information we report home and have moved to using assessment scores as percentages instead of GCSE and BTEC grades. The progress report gives a percentage score for each student along with a **Similar Start Group Average** for the most recent assessments. We hope that this will provide you with a more detailed look at your child's academic progress. A short presentation has been recorded to explain these changes: <https://st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk/curriculum-overview/>

We recognise that all of our students are individuals with their own strengths and academic journeys. The Similar Start Group Average provides a focussed comparison against students with a similar 'starting KS3' profile. We have placed each student into one of eight data groups based on their results in the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 2. In the absence of SATs due to the pandemic, the results of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) have been used for Year 9 students. For those with no prior-attainment, the most recent assessments in English and mathematics will inform this grouping. The Similar Start Group average is the average for those students who are in the same start point grouping. This will enable you to capture your child's progress compared to similar start point students and will take the following form:

Progress compared to Similar Start Group Average	Guidance
Significantly above	Your child is making a lot more progress compared to the similar start group average
Above	Your child is making more progress compared to the similar group average
In line	Your child is making similar progress compared to the similar start group average
Close	Your child is making less progress compared to the similar start group average
Below	Your child is making a lot less progress compared to the similar start group average

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Each subject is different and so it is not useful to compare scores across subjects. Subjects such as maths can be very content focused, which can help a student break down the subject into chunks, but this also means that more is often required to be learnt for summative assessments. Other subjects rely heavily on skill development, which improves over time. This is particularly evident in practical subjects where performance levels generally begin low and improve through the key stage.

In discussions with your child, please start with the positives. These are the subjects that are in line, above, or significantly above the similar start group average. Also, the subjects where the percentage has increased since previous reports. If progress appears to be a little behind in a particular subject, it can be useful to compare with similar subjects that are going well and see if your child's approach to one subject is different to another. For example, is homework being completed regularly? As part of this conversation, are they able to describe to you what they have covered so far this year? The learning journeys in the curriculum section of the school website will support this: <https://st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk/subject-information/>

The progress report will also advise you on your child's willingness to learn. We believe that the most effective learning happens when students challenge themselves to work hard and aim high. Other information in the report includes attendance data since the start of the academic year, the number of late arrivals to school, and behaviour points (both positive and negative). If you would like to discuss any aspect of the report, please contact your Head of Year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Bending', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr C Bending
Assistant Headteacher