

Ysgol Uwchradd

Cathays

High School

A Guide to Key Stage 3

(Years 7, 8 and 9)

2015-16



Contact Details

School Contact Details

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Your Contact Details

To make sure that you are kept up to date with school events through text messages, letters and phonecalls and can be contacted swiftly in an emergency, please ensure that the school has the correct contact details for you, including mobile phone numbers. Please contact Mrs S Fergusson on SFergusson@.cardiff.gov.uk to update your contact details.

Important Dates

Mid-September 2015	Year 7 Family Interviews
October 15 th 2015	Year 7 Open Evening
November 26 th 2015	Year 8 Parents' Evening
February 4 th 2016	Year 7 Parents' Evening
March 3rd 2016	Year 9 Parents' Evening

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Key Stage 3 and what do pupils study?

Key Stage 3 covers Years 7, 8 and 9, when pupils study the following subjects:

	7	8	9
Art	2	2	2
Drama	1	1	1
English	6	6	6
French	3	3	3
GamesPE	4	4	4
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
IT	2	2	2
Mathematics	9	9	9
Music	2	2	2
R.E.	2	2	2
Science	6	6	6
PSE/Careers	1	1	1
Technology	3	3	3
Welsh	3	3	3
	50	50	50

These are National Curriculum subjects. Pupils also have additional educational experiences throughout the year and the school offers a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs.

The summer timetable covers the last six or seven weeks of the school year. During this time the conventional timetable stops and there is a new timetable every week. Pupils have opportunities to experience subjects in a wide variety of ways (in addition to conventional lessons) such as museum or theatre visits, trips, taking part in the school production, day-long or half-day workshops and so on. Pupils in Year 9 start their GCSE courses during the summer timetable.

How do I know how my child is doing in Key Stage 3?

There are several ways that we use to keep you informed about your child's progress:

Information giving opportunity	Frequency	When
Family Interviews	Once a year	Autumn Term of Year 7
Parents' Evening	Once a year	Autumn Term of Year 8 Spring Term of Year 7 and 9
Full Report to Parents	Once a year	March of Year 9 July of Year 7 and 8
Individual Reports	Several times a year	Each term
National Reading and Numeracy Test Results	Once a year	July or September of each year

How is my child assessed in Key Stage 3?

Your child is assessed in a number of ways throughout Key Stage 3. The main way of assessing pupils is to give them National Curriculum Levels based on their attainment over a period of time. These Levels range from Below Level 1 to Level 7. Some subjects also use Level 8 and Exceptional Performance. At Cathays High we subdivide the levels into Upper (U), Middle (M) and Lower (L) (e.g. 4M), to give a more accurate idea of performance. Students who are new to English are assessed using Step and Entry Levels e.g. Pre Step, Entry 1 etc and do not study all National Curriculum subjects until their ability in English enables them to access those subjects.

How is my child assessed when he or she enters the school?

All pupils are assessed in the first weeks of Year 7, 8 and 9 or when they first arrive at the school. They complete a reading test, a test in English, a numeracy test and a test in Maths. We use the results of these assessments, along with Key Stage 2 Levels (Levels given to pupils in primary school) to give each pupil a Baseline Level and a Reading Age. We use the Baseline Levels and the Reading Age to:

- identify which pupils need more help with reading, English, numeracy and Maths
- set targets for the rest of the year
- identify which pupils are More Able and Talented

Reading Ages

Pupils are assessed in reading throughout Key Stage 3 and are given reading ages. A Reading Age shows a student's ability to read in terms of years and months. A Reading Age can be higher or lower than a student's actual chronological age and depends on how good they are at reading.

- Below 6/8 = a student will have severe difficulties reading simple texts
- Below 9/6 = a student will have many difficulties accessing reading texts in secondary school
- 15/0 or 20/0 indicates the top Reading Age. Reading Ages do not go beyond 15 but the school uses 20/0 because many of the students are older than 15.

If a student has difficulty with reading or numeracy the school provides help for them through an intervention programme and/or in-class support from their teacher.

How is my child assessed at the end of a Key Stage?

At the end of each Key Stage, pupils are formally assessed. At Key Stage 2 (end of Year 6 in primary school) pupils are awarded a Level for English, Maths and Science by their teachers and these are passed on to secondary schools, shared with parents and sent to the Welsh Government. The highest Level they can achieve at this point is Level 5. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are awarded a Level by their teachers for every subject apart from Drama, RE and PSE. The highest Level they can achieve at this point is Level 7 in most subjects but some subjects use Level 8 and Exceptional Performance (EP). These Levels are shared with parents and sent to the Welsh Government. Pupils are assessed through GCSEs, BTECs and other qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4.

Targets

At Cathays High we use Baseline Assessments, FFT estimates and teachers' professional judgement to set targets for pupils. These targets indicate what a pupil could achieve should they adopt a positive approach to their learning, revise effectively, attend school, act upon advice and take advantage of all the opportunities available to them. When teachers assess pupils at different points in the year, using a Working at Level (WAL), we compare the WAL with the Baseline Assessment and the target Level to see how much progress each pupil has made.

In the Autumn Term of Year 7 we are given estimates of performance for pupils which give an idea of the levels that they should be achieving. These are not estimates for specific pupils, they are an indication of typical progress. These estimates are calculated using the levels gained at KS2 (primary school) and other factors such as month of birth and gender. These are sometimes called **FFT Targets** because they are target grades that have been calculated by the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) organisation based on data collected over many years and in hundreds of schools throughout England and Wales. Not all pupils have FFT targets because FFT have been unable to get their KS2 data from other schools or countries.

On the reports given out to parents (Full Report and Individual Reports), Working at Levels (WAL) are given. These show the Level that your child is working at at the time of writing the report. Comparing these Working at Levels with the target Levels gives a good indication of progress.

Reports also give a number for effort. The **effort** grade, ranging from 1-4 is awarded for a student's effort and interest in the subject:

1. Outstanding effort
2. Good effort
3. Satisfactory effort
4. Unacceptable effort

What is the Literacy and Numeracy Framework?

The Minister for Education and Skills has made raising standards of literacy and numeracy in schools a priority and has therefore introduced a new National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for all pupils aged 5 to 14.

The key aims of the LNF are to:

- help teachers of **all** subjects to identify and provide opportunities for pupils to apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum

- help determine **pupil progress** in literacy and numeracy and provide annual reports to parents/carers based on teacher assessment so that teachers, pupils and parents/carers are all clear how pupils are progressing and what are the next steps.

What are the National Reading and Numeracy Tests?

The National Reading and Numeracy Tests are tests which are taken by every pupil in Wales at the end of Years 7, 8 and 9 in secondary school. Pupils also take these tests in primary school. Pupils sit one test in reading, one test in numeracy – procedural and one test in numeracy – reasoning. Pupils complete practice tests before taking the official tests. Results are given as a standardised score and a reading and numeracy age. These are not public examinations and the results of the individual tests will be shared with the pupils and parents/guardians and the staff of the school, but will not be made public. Parents are also given information about where their child is placed in terms of other pupils' performance nationally.

What is a GCSE?

A GCSE is a General Certificate of Secondary Education. Pupils are awarded grades ranging from A*-G grades for GCSEs. A U grade means 'unclassified', i.e. no grade. If pupils want to study A Levels, which are the next step up from GCSEs, most Sixth Forms ask for 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C. GCSEs usually involve external examinations (often more than one paper), which can involve a traditional examination in a hall or a practical examination in subjects such as Drama or PE. Many GCSEs also involve Controlled Assessments (CATs).

What are 'Tiers of Entry'?

Many GCSE qualifications have examination papers which are available in two tiers – Foundation Tier and Higher Tier. Generally, Foundation Tier papers allow pupils to gain a maximum of a C grade. Higher Tier papers allow pupils to gain the higher grades of A*, A and B but are more demanding and often cover more content. Therefore, a pupil could take Foundation Tier and gain a C grade but the same pupil could take the Higher Tier and gain a D grade. Departments decide which tier is best suited to each pupil in order for them to gain the best outcome possible.

What is the difference between a Short Course GCSE and a Full Course GCSE?

Pupils can take a Short Course or a Full Course GCSE in some subjects. A Short Course is worth half a Full Course GCSE, i.e. if you wanted to get into a Sixth Form college, two Short Course GCSEs at grades A*-C would count as one GCSE at grades A*-C. Short Courses are often taken in subjects which are compulsory for all pupils in the school, for example in Welsh and Religious Studies. Short Course GCSEs cover less content than Full Course GCSEs and have fewer Controlled Assessments and shorter examinations. In Welsh, pupils take the Short Course GCSE in Year 9 and go on to complete the Full Course GCSE in Year 11. In RE some students are given the opportunity to study for a Full Course GCSE in Year 11, which is in addition to the Short Course GCSE in Religious Studies.

When do pupils take GCSE examinations?

Most pupils start taking GCSE examinations at the end of Year 9. Most pupils take a Short Course GCSE in Welsh and Religious Studies at this time. Some pupils take GCSE examinations earlier (see section on early entry for examinations). Further GCSEs are taken in Year 10 and most GCSEs are taken in Year 11.

Early Entry for Examinations

In order to raise standards and maximise pupils' chances of gaining the best possible GCSE grades and to allow opportunities for More Able and Talented pupils, the school enters pupils early for some examinations – i.e. they may sit some examinations in Year 9 or Year 10 as well as at the end of Year 11 as in the traditional model. This differs according to subject, as detailed below:

Cymraeg – Welsh

Pupils sit the Short Course Welsh Second Language GCSE in June of Year 9. The course involves one written examination (50%) and three Controlled Assessment tasks (50%). Pupils gain a Short Course GCSE at grades A*-U at the end of Year 9. In Year 10, pupils start the Full Course Welsh Second Language GCSE. The course involves an oral examination in April and a written examination in June of Year 11. The Short Course marks from Year 9 are added to the marks from the Year 11 exams to make up the Full Course GCSE qualification. If pupils did not gain A*-C grades in their written examination in Year 9, they have the opportunity to re-take the examination at the end of Year 10.

Other Subjects

Pupils who are More Able and Talented in a certain language or subject may be given the opportunity to sit examinations as early as Year 7. For example, several pupils in Years 7 and 8 sit GCSE examinations in Community Languages and a group of More Able and Talented students sit GCSE History in year 9.

General Student Support

www.meiccymru.org	Free and confidential helpline on a range of issues affecting young people
www.childline.org.uk	Advice and support for young people
www.actionforchildren.org.uk	Confidential counselling service for young people across Cardiff
www.bulliesout.com	Support regarding bullying
www.ceop.police.uk	Advice on internet safety
www.thinkuknow.co.uk	Information about online safety for young people and their parents
www.thecalmzone.net	Support for young men aged 15-35 affected by depression
www.parentlineplus.org.uk	Confidential advice for parents
www.youngminds.org.uk/young people parents@youngminds.org.uk	Support on mental health issues
www.youth2youth.co.uk	Helpline for young people in need of emotional support
www.b-eat.co.uk/YoungPeople	Support and advice regarding eating disorders
www.nshn.co.uk	Self-harming network
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents	BBC Advice for parents
https://hwb.wales.gov.uk	Hwb – the all Wales learning platform
www.change4lifewales.org.uk	Change4Life – ideas and recipes for a healthy and happy family life
www.wales.gov.uk then Education and Skills, then Schools section	Find out if you are eligible for free school meals

Literacy

Guide for parents: How to help your child with literacy

There are a number of aspects to consider with literacy, and many methods, strategies and games you can use to help encourage and support your children in becoming confident and accurate spellers, readers, writers and speakers. You will find a variety of suggestions below.

Aspects to consider when writing

There are a number of aspects to consider when writing. These include:



- knowing what the purpose of our writing is and who we are writing for;
- thinking about the content and what form our writing will take. For example it might be a shopping list, a report, a letter to a friend, or an email;
- thinking about the structure appropriate to the purpose and form of our writing, including the use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation;
- selecting the vocabulary that will best convey our meaning;
- thinking about how to spell the words we write.



Supporting and encouraging your child

Children can find writing a real challenge. They need encouragement, support and praise for their efforts. You can best support your child by:



- encouraging them to write on every possible occasion, praising their efforts and, importantly, letting them see you writing whenever possible;
- playing word games with them, for example, I spy, and Find the word puzzles;
- pointing to interesting or new words as you read to your child (without interrupting the flow of the story);
- composing emails together.

Most of us, even if we consider ourselves to be good spellers, make spelling mistakes at some point. What is important is that we know what to do when we get stuck and we know how to correct our mistakes.

The English language is a rich and complex language; but despite its complexity 85% of the English spelling system is predictable. Your child will learn the rules and conventions of the system and the spelling strategies needed to become a confident speller.

Spelling strategies

There are many strategies that you can use to will help your child become a confident and accurate speller. These include:

- sounding words out: breaking the word down into phonemes, for example, **c-a-t** and **sh-e-ll**. Many words cannot be sounded out, so you will need to use other strategies;
- dividing the word into syllables, and saying each syllable while writing the word. For example, **re-mem-ber**;
- using the Look, say, cover, write, check strategy:
 - Look at the word and say it out aloud, then cover the word, then write it and finally check to see if it is correct. If not, highlight or underline the incorrect part and repeat the process;
- using mnemonics to help memorise tricky words. For example, *people: people eat orange peel like elephants*, and *could: O U Lucky Duck*.
- finding words within words. For example, *rat* in *separate*;
- making links between the meaning of words and their spelling. For example, *sign*, *signal*, and *signature*. This strategy is used at a later stage than other strategies;
- working out spelling rules for themselves. This strategy is used at a later stage than other strategies;
- using a dictionary as soon as they know how to.

Encourage your child to have a go at spelling words they are unsure of. This will give them the opportunity to try out spelling strategies and to identify those that they find useful. You can help them to use the strategies outlined above and praise their efforts.

Literacy resources for parents to help support the development of their child's reading and writing skills

To develop reading skills:

Read an online magazine together...

<http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/discoverybox-face-face-with-lions>

Would they prefer to listen to stories? Free audio versions of stories...

<http://www.storynory.com/archives/classic-authors/>

If your child prefers non-fiction and interactive resources...

Subscribe to the weekly newspaper for children, First News:

<http://www.firstnews.co.uk/subscribe>

Published in on-line instalments, and particularly empowering for girls:

<http://www.mysocalledsecretidentity.com/aboutcat>

General tips for developing a reading habit with teenagers:

http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2869%2C3047%2C6167&parent_directory_id=2865&id=10861

To develop writing skills:

The Sprout is a Cardiff based, youth information, safe website

Encourage your child to read and post on www.thesprout.co.uk

CGP workbooks http://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/Student/books_ks3_english.book_EL31

Write a play...

http://www.innovationslearning.co.uk/subjects/english/activities/playscript/play_home.asp

A website that makes writing and producing your own short graphic novel really easy:

<http://www.comicmaster.org.uk/>

Apps to improve spelling:

An iphone app called 'Chicktionary' is free, fun and addictive(!).

The Android version of Chicktionary requires payment.

'Squeebles' is a paid for app that allows you to input and record your own personal spelling lists, and also keeps a record of your scores.

General

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks3/english/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english> - refresh literacy skills for all ages

www.betterreading.co.uk – useful hints and tips to improve reading

www.facebook.com/maketimetoread - set up to encourage parents to make time to read

www.booktrust.org.uk – a range of projects and programmes to promote reading and writing for all ages

www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk – encourage your child to fall in love with reading

www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk – to encourage reading over the summer holidays

English as an Additional Language

<http://www.starfall.com/> - Aimed at primary ages but good for real beginners learning alphabet, phonics, sounds etc. Also has maths games and if you use headphones it reads the sounds out loud.

<http://www.ego4u.com/> - More appropriate for older learners. Explains the rules of grammar and then there are online exercises and you can check your answers online.

<http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/> - Primary resources is a great place to find worksheets

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/> - Basic ICT skills, concentrating on typing skills. Good for those with very few computer skills.

<http://www.nelsonthornes.com/wellington-square/> - This website has games and activities designed to go with the wellington square reading series. However, a lot of the games don't involve having to read the books and are good for basic vocabulary.

Numeracy

Guide for parents: How to help your child with numeracy

At Cathays High School we recognise the importance of numeracy skills, and wish to make sure that children develop sound mathematical skills before they enter the adult world.

We appreciate the contribution that parents and carers make to their child's education. Parents often ask teachers ***"What can I do at home to help my child with maths?"***, the **most effective support you can offer your child is time!**

Talk to your child about mathematics. If you think about it, you are probably already doing a lot of mathematics at home without realising it. If you involve your child, you will help them learn. Remember though, that mathematics at home is meant to be fun! You should enjoy it – and so should your child. The following pages give some topics and tips to help you involve your children in learning important life skills.

Measurement

Measurement is a mathematical skill taught in school in many subjects and used in many places around the home including the kitchen, bedrooms and the garden.



Children learn measurement words quite naturally from being with adults if you talk to them about it. They will find out, which words you use for measuring different things: that juice comes in litres not pounds, or centimetres.

Children also learn about measuring tools. They learn that tape measures are for length and height, that scales are for weight, measuring jugs are for capacity and clocks and calendars are for time.

In the Kitchen - if we couldn't use certain mathematical skills in the kitchen, then cakes would be too sweet, dinner not cooked enough, or our meat pies too soggy. (YUCK!)

In the kitchen, many ingredients have to be measured before cooking. Children can learn a lot about measurement and measuring tools in the kitchen. You can ask your child to measure out the ingredients. See if they can do simple sums, like how much pasta to cook for the family if each person needs 75 grains (or 100 grams). And help yourself get used to grams and litres by using the metric measurements in recipes.



Temperature

Temperature is an important topic in your child's school subjects. It can be found in Science, Geography, Home Economics and others. In mathematics, we often use temperature scales (thermometers) to help pupils understand the concept of Negative Numbers.

Help your child understand this topic by involving them every time you switch the oven to a certain heat or store food to a given temperature. For example, milk has to be stored under 4C, ice cream has to be stored under 18C or switch the oven to 180C.

Time



Time is another important topic in your child's school subjects. Give them the opportunity to practice what they learn in school about Time. Let them work out for you how long the cooking will take, how long to cool it or how long a particular product has before it expires. Use magazines to find out when a TV programme is on and to set the video recorder.

Ratio and Proportion

You fancy cooking a cake that your friend gave you the recipe for. The ingredients are for 8 people, but you need to make one for 3 people only! What do you do? Well, don't suffer in silence, ask your child to get involved.



There are lots of opportunities for your child to practice Numeracy in the garden. Ask them to measure the area of the garden, preferably in metre squared. They could convert every measurement from Imperial to Metric or vice versa.

Time for a bit of DIY



This is a great opportunity for your child to practice their number skills. Get your child to measure up a wall to be tiled and work out the surface area in square metres. Give him/her the catalogue or take them with you to the DIY store and ask them to work out how many tiles (of a particular size) are needed to cover the wall, or how many rolls are needed in the case of wallpaper.

Watching a Film – Time for a Takeaway

When you want to order a take away, tell your child the amount of money you've got to spend and give them the responsibility of writing and calculating the order from the menu to see if there is enough money to cater for everybody's different tastes in the family.

Out Shopping

Why not give them the responsibility of working out the running total of your shopping list as you wheel your trolley round the supermarket? (Make sure you have extra cash though!!). When you finish shopping sit down together and compare your child's total against the till receipt. Let them also work out which products are better value for money, for example a one 3kg bag of long grain rice for £3.50 or a 1.5kg (of the same product) for £1.90. They can also work out the exact savings when buying goods in bulk. You can even set them a task of working out (roughly) how much money is spent on every member of the household in a given month by collecting and keeping receipts. When out shopping for clothes, look for those items in a sale and ask them to work out the percentage reduction in price.



Mobile Phones Packages

There are a lot of deals out there for signing on to a mobile phone contract. People use the phone for different purposes and therefore require different packages and tariffs. Talk to your children about helping you find the best deal for you. If you have a contract already, then involve your children by asking them to help you check your monthly bill or why don't you compare your existing contracts to see who got the best value for money deal.



Numeracy on the Web



The internet is a wonderful source of information and materials to help parents to understand what we are doing in numeracy today and to help their children with number activities at home.

The following is a collection of Web Addresses, which you may find helpful.

A short description of what you will find on each site is added:

<http://www.mathsyear2000.org/games/index/shtml> A very useful collection of games and information is still available from this Government site. Reliable and fun too.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/parents/> This is the DFES 'Parents' Centre' – follow the links at the bottom left to find out about the National Curriculum and more.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/> This is the BBC's site. It is a huge site with many links and provides a fantastic range of excellent games, puzzles and information.

<http://www.mymaths.co.uk>

The department is currently subscribed to this great website and all pupils have access to it via usernames and passwords. If your child does not have the log in details, then please contact the school and ask for Mr Ghelali.

<http://www.coolmath.com>

This fully interactive site and allows the user to sharpen basic math skills, play games and explore new math concepts.

<http://www.funbrain.com>

This site includes 17 original games based on soccer, car racing and much more. Other games include Math Baseball, where a child can score runs with correct answers and Operation Order, where students can build pyramids with their knowledge of algebra.

<http://www.mathcats.com>

Math Cats provides playful explorations of important math concepts through games, crafts and interactive projects. The site includes a magic chalkboard and an art gallery.

<http://www.aaamath.com>

Customized by grade level and topic, AAA Math features explanations of various mathematical topics, practice problems and fun, challenging games.

For additional ways of helping your child – try these links:

- www.sumdog.com
- <http://www.parentcentre.gov.uk>
- <http://www.counton.org>
- www.fathersdirect.com
- www.bookstart.co.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bitesize
- www.mathsrevision.net
- www.mathsmadeeasy.co.uk

For further advice and guidance on numeracy contact: **Mr. A. GHELALI** -
AGhelali@cathays.cardiff.sch.uk



Reading Behaviours

What we 'do' when we read for meaning

1. Activate your Prior Knowledge

What do you already know?

2. Self-monitor

Make a 'clunk' a 'click'

3. Question

Use your inner voice to ask questions

4. Analyse and Connect

Make links with other texts

5. Visualise

What pictures do you see?

6. Analyse and Infer

Dig for clues/hidden meanings

7. Analyse and Evaluate

Give your opinion

8. Analyse and Summarise

Grab the main points





Oracy Behaviours

What we 'do' when we talk

1. Prepare your talk - think about **purpose, audience** and **role**.
2. Select the appropriate **language** and **vocabulary** for your talk.
3. Select relevant and interesting **content** for your talk.
4. Focus on the **delivery** of your talk and think about **expression** and **body language**.
5. Make sure you demonstrate **active listening** and **respond** to others.
6. **Analyse and evaluate** your talk to help you target skills which you can improve.

