

13 July 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Year 7 Reports – to be amended and re-issued next week**

Thank you very much to those parents who have given us feedback about the Year 7 reports. This has been helpful to us and has encouraged us to re-issue the reports with some amendments.

You will have been aware of the changes in primary schools as they abandoned national curriculum levels and moved to other forms of assessment. These changes have also affected secondary schools in key stage 3 (Years 7 to 9). In previous years, Year 7 students used the same national curriculum levels as primary schools, extending the range up from level 5 to level 7, but as primary schools dropped levels, secondary schools were advised to do so too.

This September Millthorpe School stopped using levels in Year 7 and Year 8. Instead, we created for each subject a list of criteria representing what we were teaching and what we wanted students to know, understand and be able to do. These are what our teachers have assessed against and we have placed the lists on our website. You will also find them stuck into students' books in most subjects. Sharing our curriculum and the achievement criteria in this way allows teachers to show students exactly what they must do to succeed. Nevertheless, this new system has not proved so easy to report as the old national curriculum levels. As well as assessing throughout the year using these criteria, students also sit an end of year examination in most subjects.

In our report to you, we showed the learning conduct grade for both January and July. This is important information about your child's effort and their attitude to learning. We also gave the examination mark. This is harder to interpret: each subject may have a different level of difficulty in the exam and each child began Year 7 at a different starting point. To help you interpret the exam score, we also provided the year group average so you can tell how well your child did in comparison to others at Millthorpe. Unfortunately, you cannot tell from this what progress has been made or how your child compares to others across the country.

We also provided you with information about how successfully your child had completed the assessment tasks throughout the year together with the total number of criteria your child could have achieved on our Year 7 curriculum in each subject. Again, this shows how much they have learned compared to what they have been taught, but does not show progress in comparison to others or to what might be expected.

To try to provide some progress information, we used our knowledge of students' starting points and their criteria achieved in each subject to estimate how much progress they had made in Year 7. For each subject we judged whether progress had been above, below or at expected levels in comparison with others in the year group. Expected progress would have been that typical of the middle half of the whole year group. In this context, "Expected" is a good level of progress.

There is no national framework in place to define progress now that national curriculum levels are gone, and we only have our own Year 7 students to compare with. We were trying to replicate on only one school's resources the type of progress measure that the government has put in place for the nation. It is clear from some parental feedback that we overreached ourselves and that our system for estimating progress is not yet robust and refined enough. Having carefully looked at the points several parents made,



Millthorpe School is a trading name  
of South Bank Multi Academy Trust  
[www.southbanktrust.co.uk](http://www.southbanktrust.co.uk)

Company Number: 10067116  
Registered Office: Woodthorpe Primary School  
Summerfield Road, Woodthorpe, York YO24 2RU



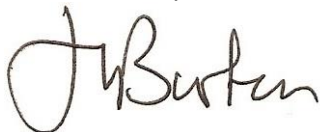
we now consider trying to assign progress judgements to these criteria to be unhelpful. We will amend the reports to remove this judgement.

We also had comments that it was difficult to make sense of the number of criteria achieved when the maximum number varied so much from subject to subject. We agree and will amend the reports to show the percentage of criteria achieved during the year and the year group average for this.

We are committed to providing good quality information that helps you to judge how well your child is progressing, and I regret that we were not able to do this in the first year in which we moved away from old national curriculum levels. Therefore, we will re-issue the reports, removing the judgement on progress made, and indicating the percentage of criteria achieved along with the year group average. This means you will only have information about what they achieved over the course of the year and in the end of year examination, with nothing about rate of progress. Our teachers tell us that they feel better able to teach students how to improve using the new success criteria so we will retain this part of our system for next year. We will go back to the drawing board and re-think how we can report to you differently to provide more reliable information about progress next year.

Finally, this is a national issue, not just a Millthorpe issue, and many schools are wrestling with the problem of how to assess students in Years 7 to 9 now levels are gone. Thank you for your patience while we refine what has been a major assessment overhaul in our school. We will re-issue the amended reports to your child next week.

Yours faithfully



**Trevor Burton**  
Executive Headteacher



**Gemma Greenhalgh**  
Head of School



**Tim Gillbanks**  
Deputy Headteacher