



Working together to help your child make good progress!

You do not need to be an expert in any subject to help your child to enjoy learning and do well at Don Valley. By understanding what we do at Don Valley and by doing just a few things at home you can greatly help your child to progress and succeed.

The following pages outline what we do at Don Valley to enable your child to make progress and achieve their best. The final section includes a selection of ideas that you can do at home to help your child progress at Don Valley.

What we do at Don Valley

Feedback

Your child will get regular feedback from their teachers so that they know exactly how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers will talk to your child and write feedback comments on their work/in their exercise books.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is about teachers and students working together so that they understand:

- why what they are learning is important and how it all fits in
- what they have learned so far
- what they need to learn next
- how they can do this

Assessment for learning helps your child become a better learner. Teachers help students develop learning skills. You can help your child use and improve these skills.

Target Levels and Target Grades

A Target Level or Target Grade indicates what your child is capable of achieving. The Target is based on what your child has achieved in the past. For example a Target Level at Key Stage 3 will be based on what your child has done already and what levels they achieved in the Key Stage 2 SAT's (Year 6). A target Grade at GCSE will be based on what your child has done already, what they achieved in their Key Stage 2 SAT's and what they achieved in their Key Stage 3 SAT's (Year 9).

Target Profiles

In September every student at Don Valley receives a Target Profile. This gives the student their individual targets (levels/grades) for the coming year from their subject teachers. Throughout the year and at least once every half term the target for each subject is reviewed and the subject teacher will feedback to the student on what steps they now need to take to progress further. The teacher will tell the student what they need to focus on to make sure they progress further towards their target. It could be that they have reached the target already so a new target is set.

Levels: Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

Every subject at Key Stage 3 uses Levels from 2 to 8. The level identifies knowledge, understanding and skills. A higher value level indicates advancing knowledge, understanding and skill.

Descriptions of knowledge, understanding and skill required at each level is given to the student by the subject teacher.

The levels are divided into sub levels eg, 5c, 5b, 5a. Sub levels are used to help students to see that they are making progress within the level:

- a sub level of 'c' indicates that the student has just entered the level.
- a sub level of 'b' indicates that most of the work they are producing is in this level.
- a sub level of 'a' indicates that the work they are producing is almost in the next level.

All students are expected to progress by at least one sub level during the year (eg from Level 5c to Level 5b). Progress is measured from whatever they attained in Year 6 SAT's in English, Maths and Science. With effort and determination students very often make greater progress than one sub level.

GCSE Grades: Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)

Every subject at GCSE & VGCE uses grades from A* - G. Dida uses Pass, Merit and Distinction. These indicate the knowledge, understanding and skills required to achieve the grade in the examination in the summer term of Year 11.

Descriptions of knowledge, understanding and skill required at each grade is given to the student by the subject teacher.

Jesson Bands

All students are put into a Jesson Band (1 - 5). This band indicates how likely the student is of achieving a GCSE Grade A* - C at the end of Year 11. Key Stage 2 SAT's scores (done in Year 6) are used to forecast the chance of achieving an A* to C grade. Students in Band 5 statistically have the greatest chance of achieving A* to C. However, students in other bands can also achieve A*-C. The Jesson Band gives a prediction of the likelihood of achieving A* - C.

Estimated Levels & Estimated Grades

This is an estimate of the probable result that will be achieved based on the present performance of the student in lessons. If they are underachieving the estimate will be lower than their target.

Progress, Effort & Behaviour

A mark for each is given between the values of 4 and 1 where:

- 4 - Excellent
- 3 - Good
- 2 - Room for Improvement
- 1 - Below Acceptable Standards

Assessment & Reporting at Don Valley

Aims

- To raise students' self esteem
- To raise students' expectations
- To improve individual and whole school examination performance (KS3, KS4 and KS5)

To ensure:

- students are aware of their capabilities and are fully supported in pursuit of their potential
- whole staff awareness of value-added systems and their role in academic monitoring
- students and parents are fully involved in a comprehensive progress monitoring system

Throughout the academic year Years 8 - 10 recording & reporting to parents is as follows:

- Progress Check: Letters home & assemblies.
- Profiles: Form Tutor Review, Family Review.
- Target Setting: Target Profile.

In addition to the above:

- Year 7 have Settling In: Letters home.
- Year 9 have a SAT's Target Profile at the end of the Spring Term & KS3 SAT's & Teacher Assessment Reports at the end of the Summer Term.
- Year 11 have Progress File-Plan-IT, not a Profile.

Progress Check

This provides a 'snapshot' of the Progress, Effort and Behaviour of your child in each subject at a certain point in the year. The Progress Check allows the teachers and Head of Year to identify those students making good progress towards their targets and also identify any students who are making little progress or who are identified as causing concern. If required letters will be sent home after Progress Check to inform parents of any concerns and identify strategies that will be put in place to address the concerns raised.

Profiles

Profiles provide a detailed report of how your child is progressing in each subject at a certain point in the year. The Profile provides the focus for the discussion about your child at Family Review.

The Profile provides a statement by your child's subject teacher which refers to the progress they are making. The Profile also includes a Target Statement which refers to the Target set by the teacher for the year. The teacher will comment on:

- what your child needs to focus on to progress....
- what skills your child needs to develop further...
- has your child met their target - if so, what next...

Form Tutor Review

Before Family Review the Form Tutor will meet individually with all students in their Tutor Group and discuss their Profiles from each subject. The Tutor will focus on the main issues facing your child and his/her academic progress. They will discuss challenges that your child has met already and ones that they are facing and possible ways forward.

Family Review (Years 7, 8 & 9)

An opportunity for you to meet with your son/daughter and their Form Tutor to discuss their Profiles. The Review provides the opportunity to celebrate the efforts of your child and discuss future targets with them as well as discuss any concerns you may have.

Subject Parents Evenings (Years 10 & 11)

An opportunity for you to meet with your son/daughter's subject teachers to discuss their Targets, progress towards their Targets and ways forward. The evening provides the opportunity to celebrate the efforts of your son/daughter, discuss future targets with them and address any concerns that you, your son/daughter or teacher may have.

What you can do at home to help your child

You can help your child make progress towards achieving their targets by discussing each target with him/her. What are the teachers saying to your child about ways to improve? What feedback comments are teachers making on their work?

Talking things through and learning together can make a difference. You are not expected to be an expert but someone to share thoughts and ideas with.

Here are some questions that you could ask to get the conversation started:

- *What sort of day have you had? What did you learn in English today?*

Start with a subject they enjoy or are doing well in!

- *You were a bit worried about your homework in Science – how did you do? What did the teacher say about it?*

Move on to subjects they find more difficult or like less.

- *Let's have a look at what the teacher has written.*
- *What does this comment mean?*
- *Is that what you expected to get?*
- *What are you going to do next time to improve?*

Look for the positive comments and praise these first. Then where improvements can be made.

Listen carefully to what your child has to say. Try to respond positively and encourage them.

- *I'm really pleased that you did well in History today.*
- *What did you enjoy about the lesson?*
- *Why do you think this helped?*
- *Do you think this could help you do well in Maths?*

Use success in one subject to help your child learn better in another.

If your child has struggled in a lesson to understand something, help if you can. If you can't, talk about where to get help, either from the teacher the next day or from a friend.

Your child can improve in every subject. Talking with them will help them to believe this.

Find Out :

- your child's timetable (look in their planner) so that you know what lessons they have had that day and what is coming up tomorrow.
- What subjects your child likes most and what they are less happy about

Find Out :

- For each subject : what your child is doing well and what they need to do to improve and progress so you can talk about things that can make a difference (see the Target Profile Sheet in their Planner and look at the teacher feedback in their exercise books).

Find Out :

- What your child's TARGETS are in all of their subjects. These are all on the Target Profile Sheet in the plastic wallet at the back of the planner. Targets are also on their Profile and updated every half term in their exercise books.

Talk to your child about their TARGETS. Here are some questions to get you started:

- *What does this target mean?*
- *What do you need to do to achieve it?*

Always start with subjects they enjoy or do well in.

Move on to the trickier areas.....

- *Which target is the biggest challenge?*
- *What could you do to get around the problems so you can achieve it?*

If they are unsure encourage them to talk to their teacher

- *Here's a target we talked about last time. How's it going?*
- *This target 'needs to contribute more to discussions in lessons' seems to come up in English, history, science and geography...why are you finding this difficult?*
- *Lets see if we can think of some ways to help you improve it....*

Finish positively!

It is important to discuss your child's targets with them and with their Form Tutor at Family Review (Years 7, 8 & 9) or their subject teacher at Parents Evening (Years 10 & 11). This is your chance to find out exactly what they mean and what your child needs to do to improve and how you can help at home.

If your child is worried about achieving a target encourage them to talk to their teacher. If they are still concerned make an appointment with their teacher. This will give you all the opportunity to talk about achieving the target.

Homework

Homework is an important part of your child's learning. Resist the temptation to 'help too much' and do it for them! Don't panic if you know little about the subject they are studying.....

.....ask them questions which will help them to find the answers themselves

.....encourage them to work with or talk to friends about it

.....find out what support is available in school (H/W Club?)

All homeworks for every subject are detailed on the school's website.

Doing Homework well can take up a lot of time. It is important that you encourage your child to keep a balance between work & play!

Talk to your child about their homework. Here are some questions to get you started.....

- *You worked really hard on your H/W - What did your teacher have to say about it?*
- *Tell me what this is all about. When is it due in? Can I do anything to help?*
- *Try thinking that out loud - it sometimes helps you get your head around things!*
- *Let's work through this together.*
- *You could call Kylie to talk that through if you are really stuck.*