

Using Asset Languages to assess candidates at KS3

Q Can we use Asset Languages grades to assess candidates at Key Stage 3?

A Yes - either teacher assessment or external assessment grades can be used.

The QCA document *Key Stage 3 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements* sets out the requirements for modern foreign languages. A further QCA document *National Curriculum in Action* explains “You will arrive at judgements by taking into account strengths and weaknesses in performance across a range of contexts and over a period of time, rather than focusing on a single piece of work.” However, it does not specify *how* this should be done and there are a variety of practices across schools.

Because Asset Languages uses consistent measurement techniques it is able to provide a reliable national benchmark for all schools.

Asset Languages grades can be used in several ways:

- to supplement your current approach. Over time, you may wish to reduce your reliance on existing methods as you gain confidence in Asset Languages grades;
- to completely replace your current approach by using Asset Languages grades as the primary measure (see below);
- to partially replace your current approach – e.g by incorporating an Asset Languages writing task.

Whilst using Asset Languages can save time in reporting, internal standardisation across different classes represents good practice and should still take place.

Q How do Asset Languages grades compare with National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3?

A Languages Ladder can-do statements have been created to be broadly in line with National Curriculum levels.

However, descriptors do not always match the National Curriculum precisely:

- The Languages Ladder has been designed for a wide range of languages (e.g. Chinese, Arabic) For example, at level 6 the National Curriculum descriptor refers to past events, but not all languages deal with the past in the same way.
- The Languages Ladder focuses on communicative language ability – what a learner can do using the language. This is slightly different to the remit of the National Curriculum.

These slight differences need not prevent you from using Asset Languages as a tool for reporting National Curriculum levels. In the absence of formal national testing at Key Stage 3 there will already be a degree of inherent subjectivity. Using Asset Languages adds objectivity.

Work is currently being undertaken to benchmark Asset Languages to National Curriculum levels. At present we are confident in making the following assertions:

- At both Breakthrough and Preliminary stages, which cover the expected levels of achievement at Key Stage 3, the Asset Languages grade shows reasonable agreement with the corresponding National Curriculum level.
- Passing grades at the Intermediate stage indicate achievement above the level of the majority of students at Key Stage 3. Additional evidence should be sought for such students.

Q How can Asset Languages assessments be used to report a National Curriculum level?

A The following approach is consistent with the *Key Stage 3 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements*:

Firstly, use Asset Languages grades to identify a provisional National Curriculum level for each skill (see above). The grades may be achieved either through Teacher Assessment or External Assessment. Review the outcome against any additional evidence that you may have and adjust appropriately.

If you do not have an Asset Languages grade for a particular skill, you should use any alternative evidence that you may have.

Whilst Asset Languages is a powerful tool in assessing a pupil's level, remember that your own assessment over a long period of time is also of considerable value and it should not be underestimated.

Having decided a National Curriculum level for each skill, add up the levels and divide by 4 – half numbers are rounded up.

Example: A pupil achieving a National Curriculum level 4 for Listening and Reading and a National Curriculum level 5 for Speaking and Writing would score $4 + 4 + 5 + 5 = 18$. $18/4 = 4.5$. This pupil would be assessed at National Curriculum level 5.