

FAQs – Year 8 Learning Cycle Review



Q: What is a 'learning cycle?'

A: The school calendar is based around 5 learning cycles (which last 7 weeks each). During each learning cycle 1 formal learning assignment will be completed per subject.

Q: What is a 'learning assignment?'

A: Key assessments that take place once per learning cycle. Teachers give students written feedback to help them improve and students also write a comment evaluating their performance in the assignment. Learning assignments are not usually tests but they do focus on some of the key areas of work covered in the learning cycle.

Q: What does 'attitude to learning' cover?

A: This tells you about your child's effort with work (including home work), organisation and any issues relating to behaviour. Aspects that impact learning have been grouped together in this way to keep the learning cycle review simple.

Q: What is a 'national target level?'

A: These targets are produced by agencies outside of school. They look at the national picture of what children with similar KS2 SATs results went on to achieve at KS3. This information is then used to set a target that a child should be aiming for in a good school like King James's! This is not a maximum – some students will exceed their targets.

*Note: These may have changed since the previous learning cycle review. This is due to an alteration in the detail of how the targets are produced.

Q: What is a teacher forecast?

A: It is the level that the subject teacher thinks your child will achieve at the end of Key Stage 3.

Q: How often will my child get a learning cycle review?

A: Learning cycle reviews will come home once every 7 weeks – at the end of each learning cycle. During this period of time feedback will have been added to the learning logs at the front of students' exercise books. This means that both students and parents receive feedback very soon after key pieces of work.

Q: Are there any written comments?!

A: Written comments to help students improve their understanding are recorded on 'learning logs' at the front of all subject exercise books (except with DT and IT which have pages in the planner). We've set things up this way so students can refer to helpful feedback in class (instead of on reviews located at home).

The summer term learning cycle review will contain a written comment from form tutors.

Q: Why are there grades missing for Technology, Food Technology or Textiles?

A: Technology is taught by three different teachers. Only one of the teachers gives formal feedback on a learning assignment each learning cycle.

Q: What's with the colours?!

A: To make it immediately clear how your child is progressing teachers have used a traffic light scheme to indicate whether they think your child is on track to meet their end of Key Stage target level.

▲ Green	On track to meet or exceed target level.
↑ Orange	Almost meeting target level.
▼ Red	Making less progress than expected.

Q: Some learning assignment levels have gone down since the last learning cycle review. Has my child gone backwards?!

A: No, it's very unlikely your child has gone backwards! As each of the 'Learning Assignments' relate to different pieces of work it is quite normal for these levels to fluctuate. The traffic light system gives you a better indicator of how teachers think your child is performing.

Q: How concerned should I be about some orange on the review?

A: We are using the traffic light system to indicate potential problems while we can still do something about them. In the first instance discuss the situation with your child. If there seems to be a recurring issue it may be appropriate to contact the relevant teacher directly or make a note for discussion at parents' evening. Remember, we do set challenging targets at KJS!

Q: Why is the attainment level for Languages lower than the other subjects?

A: Our current students did not study Languages in detail until arriving at KJS and consequently start from a lower level. By the end of year 9 attainment levels should be comparable to the other subjects.

Q: Why are there no grades for Spanish?

A: National requirements are that only 1 foreign language is formally assessed at Key Stage 3. At KJS this is French as students spend more time studying this subject.

Q: How can I help my child?

A couple of ideas:

- help maximise the value of the comments in the learning logs by discussing them with your child.
- www.king-james.co.uk is a mine of useful links and resources – encourage your child to get the most out of it.

For further information you may wish to view a copy of the KJS marking policy on the school website (www.king-james.co.uk → 'Parents' → 'Policies').