

19th January 2017

STEPS and the Step Grid Handbook

Dear Parent / Carer

As someone with a son or daughter in Year 8 you may be aware that the government abolished 'levels' at KS3 from September 2014. Darrick Wood School was one of the very few schools that quickly set about working on an alternative. Indeed, the School were at the forefront of developing a new system of assessment and progress monitoring to take its place.

Our work, now entitled "*STEPS – Strategic Targets for Educational Progress and Success at KS3*" has been nationally recognised and is somewhat ground-breaking, but with innovation comes a degree of uncertainty and we have worked hard to improve our system, amend inconsistencies, and tweak imperfections. Over the last twelve months we have also worked very closely with Scholastic Publishing Ltd. to produce our package commercially; it is now available nationally, with all schools in the country able to purchase what we at Darrick Wood have developed.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience over the last year; your sons and daughters have been part of a very exciting project, and we haven't always got it right first time! We have had to make several adjustments and realignments to different parts of the process, but as a result the system has become better and more accurate for everyone.

We continue to develop STEPS and make minor alterations, but this year there have been some significant rewrites of some of the Step Grids, particularly in the light of the publication of new GCSE specifications. This work has meant that in some subjects you may notice a distinct shift in current attainment or progress made from Year 7. There is no need to be alarmed by this, but it is essential that you now view the assessments alongside the latest Step Grids; for this reason we have included an updated handbook with this letter and would advise you to keep it safe but destroy your last one to avoid any confusion.

You will also find your child's latest STEPS Summary Report from the end of December; in future you will be receiving one of these in the last week of every term.

Finally, we have also included an overview of the changes to each subject to enable you to stay abreast of the numerous alterations since your original handbook was issued. Hopefully, this will answer many of your questions, but please contact me directly at the School should you have something specific to the system which needs further explanation.

Yours sincerely

M J Smith
Assistant Head Teacher