

The Future

At the top of schools' 'wish list' is a scheme to support effective assessment and approaches to tracking pupil progress at Key Stage 3, moving towards standardisation to enable benchmarking and greater confidence in baseline assessment into Year 7.

"In the interest of fairness, it is only right that all schools have standard baseline tests in each subject to support the transition between primary and secondary," says Bethanie Goodliff, Leadership Coach at Ridgewood School. "You can't use English, maths and science tests to judge what a pupil is capable of in all other subjects. With subjects like art and music we didn't know where pupils were when they walked through the door. We're fortunate in that we have a whole week of primary transition here but modelling in creative subjects has been very difficult and we often amended our baseline and targets after initial teacher assessment. So we need an effective way of giving all pupils a chance to be measured when they come in."

"There are still gaps, and secondary schools generally are massively inconsistent in benchmarking new pupils in Year 7," acknowledges Sarah-Jayne Whyand, Assistant Headteacher - Data and Assessment at King Edward VI School. "It is also about what we are being asked to measure. Standard baseline tests in each subject to support the transition between primary and secondary phase would still be useful. However, for us there are two phases with our system. We are working with our middle school to decipher where pupils are and where we envisage them to be. Next year we will extend this to primary schools and eventually everyone will be talking the same language."

"We also have concern about interpreting the data coming up from Year 6 - what does this tell us?" asks Neil Maslen, Area Advisor at Plymouth CAST. "Most secondary schools, including our own, will need to run their own baseline tests." John Henrys, Executive Principal at Brooke Weston Trust, agrees: "For the last four years we have undertaken baseline testing for Year 7s, and we will continue to do that for the next 12-18 months at least. Not because we don't trust the data coming from primary schools, it just gives us something consistent to deal with. It also seems to me that most schools are using the 9-1 scale, and working back from the top end, but there is no uniform approach. For us, we are always keen to benchmark against other schools outside the Trust, but if everybody is doing their own thing it's hard to get an accurate reading."

"My own concern is around standardisation," admits Nic Spearman, Assistant Headteacher at King John School. "If every school does something differently how can they be compared at Key Stage 3?"

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Maslen concurs: “It’s about having a consistent approach in Years 7-9. What does progress mean for the child? What do they understand? How do they get there? There also needs to be consideration to teacher induction – most schools are using different systems, and new arrivals coming to Plymouth CAST will have to get to grips with ours.” Goodliff adds that it is “also hard to measure someone coming in from another school which might be using a different system”.

The longer term situation, as ever, is unclear. “The other fear is are we genuinely doing the right thing?” says Spearman. “We’ve had no form of directive and if a new standard system is introduced then all our hard work is wasted. That could happen, of course, with a new government. Autonomy is good, but without a clear national directive on how we should be measuring attainment and progress, there is always going to be a doubt that where we are now is where we will be in a few years’ time.”

Maslen also says there is anxiety around “what might happen”: “Will Ofsted have their own preferred system? Schools must justify the systems they are using and the benefits for pupils. We’ve been disappointed by the lack of guidance and the DfE has seriously underestimated the problems this whole transition has caused.”

Stephen Munday, Chief Executive at Cam Academy Trust, summarises where the sector is in July 2016: “Everything has changed. All key stages and the national assessment level system have completed changed. Key Stage 2 SATs were clear but now they are in the bin. The new SATs scaled score system has thrown up questions on what these results mean and what that tells us about pupils coming into Year 7. There is no prior benchmark and this will take time to unpick. We are going to see more uncertainty. How can we get a handle on expectations on progress when we have got something new? For the last 15 years we have undertaken CATs in Year 7 and we might need to use them. We know where pupils have got to and are pleased to have that at least. We’re not sure what the new SATs say, but we have a more reliable way of benchmarking for now.”

For Mark Woods, Chief Executive of Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, there is a much bigger conversation to be had. “The DfE or Ofsted now need to look at what we have created, what Key Stage 3 curriculum looks like and recreate a system that makes sense. They could commission a group of MATs or teaching schools, but we need to understand what is needed between Year 6 and 11 and a sense of what good practice looks like. I do, unfortunately, think that the re-introduction of Year 9 tests is on the horizon because Ofsted/DFE will want to see hard accountability data – as opposed to something we actually find useful as educators. We want to identify and address shortfalls in student learning. We are encouraged to obsess over student outcomes in quite narrow, often poorly devised tests.

One has been done for you
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(b) The table below describes what function the **Nic Spearman** perform

Nic Spearman
 Assistant Headteacher
 King John School

Number	What the pl
4	makes food u
	produces pol
	receives polle
	attracts insect

“There also needs to be consideration to teacher induction – most schools are using different systems, and new arrivals coming to Plymouth CAST will have to get to grips with ours.”

Neil Maslen

Area Advisor
 Plymouth CAST

It is no way to develop an education system. There is lots of work to be done going forward and we can only hope for greater clarity, and soon.”

Despite these questions, former Secondary Director at The White Horse Federation, Steve Colledge, says there are some certainties. “Years 7-11 all did levels. The CAT tests haven’t changed. With the CAT scores teachers will know what a high, middle and lower ability student looks like. But how they will do in exams we don’t know.” However, Colledge is also seeking clarity as we enter a period when schools will again be challenged to ‘do more with less’. “There will be big financial cuts in schools at a time when new work and resources are required for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5,” he says. “Schools won’t be able to afford to send out staff for training and they will increasingly seek collaboration with others for free. Results will be volatile, and in some cases pointless. It is generally accepted that schools can’t demonstrate year-on-year improvement using the new forms of assessment. Hopefully we will see sharing and understanding of the English and maths GCSEs so that Year 10 is taught better, and we will have appropriate preparation for other subjects.”



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Mark Woods

Chief Executive
Cambridge Meridian
Academies Trust

(b) The table below describes what function these parts perform. Write the correct number of each part of the human digestive system.

Number	What the part does
4	makes food usable
	produces polypeptides
	receives polypeptides
	attracts insects

SCOLASTIC

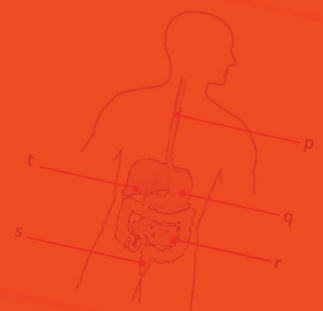
starch

fat

protein

sugar

Which part of the human digestive system does each of these?



Which part of the human digestive system does each of these?

starch? _____

fat? _____