GCSE MATHS PARENT & STUDENT GRADE PROGRESSION GUIDE

Understanding estimated progress with 2 hours of focused 1:1 tuition each week

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ESTIMATED GRADE-TO-GRADE PROGRESSION

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide explains the approximate amount of focused 1:1 tuition that may be needed for a student to move between GCSE Maths working grades. It helps students and families understand the journey, set realistic expectations and review progress regularly.

These are planning ranges rather than guaranteed completion times. Some students will progress faster and others will need longer.

Grade progression	Estimated 1:1 tuition	At 2 hours per week
1 -> 2	10-20 hours	5-10 weeks
2 -> 3	15-25 hours	8-13 weeks
3 -> 4	20-35 hours	10-18 weeks
4 -> 5	25-40 hours	13-20 weeks
5 -> 6	30-45 hours	15-23 weeks
6 -> 7	35-50 hours	18-25 weeks
7 -> 8	40-60 hours	20-30 weeks
8 -> 9	50-70+ hours	25-35+ weeks

EXAMPLE

Grade 3 -> Grade 4 may require around 20-35 hours of focused 1:1 tuition, or approximately 10-18 tuition weeks at two hours per week.

WHERE IS THE STUDENT WITHIN THEIR CURRENT GRADE?

Two students with the same working grade can be at very different starting points. We therefore consider whether a student is Low, Secure or High within the grade.

Position	What it means	How we use the estimate
Low	Recently reached the grade and still has important gaps.	Plan nearer the upper end of the range.
Secure	Consistently performing within the grade.	Plan around the middle of the range.
High	Consistently close to the next grade boundary.	Plan nearer the lower end, subject to assessment evidence.

What can affect the speed of progress?

May support faster progress	May mean more time is needed
- Strong prior knowledge and secure basic skills	- Significant gaps from earlier years
- Regular attendance	- Missed or irregular tuition
- Consistent independent practice	- Limited practice between lessons
- Good retention between lessons	- Difficulty retaining previous content
- Strong engagement and correction of mistakes	- Difficulty interpreting exam questions
- Secure arithmetic and algebraic fluency	- Weak core number or algebra skills
- Effective exam technique	- Timing, accuracy or exam-technique difficulties

TUITION AND INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

The ranges refer to direct 1:1 tuition. Appropriate independent practice between lessons is an important part of progress. The amount of additional work will vary according to the student's needs, age, school workload and stage of the programme.

HOW PROGRESS IS REVIEWED

Progress is not judged from one test alone. We consider assessment results, topic knowledge, retention, accuracy, problem solving and exam technique.

Stage	What happens	Why it matters
Initial assessment	Establish the working grade and priority gaps.	Creates a realistic starting point.
Tuition programme	Teach, practise, revisit and apply skills.	Builds knowledge and confidence.
6-8 week review	Review assessment evidence and progress.	Checks whether the student is ahead, on track or needs more time.
Updated plan	Adjust priorities and the target window if needed.	Keeps the plan responsive to actual progress.

Working grade vs final GCSE target

> CURRENT WORKING GRADE -> NEXT TARGET WORKING GRADE -> FINAL GCSE TARGET Example: Grade 3 (High) -> Grade 4 -> Final GCSE target Grade 5

We normally focus on the next realistic working-grade milestone rather than treating the final GCSE target as one large jump. This allows progress to be recognised in manageable stages.

What does 'on track' mean?

Status	Meaning	What happens next
GREEN - On track	Evidence is consistent with the planned progression window.	Continue and review again as planned.
AMBER - Review needed	Some areas are slowing progress or need extra attention.	Refocus priorities and review the target window.
RED - More support/time needed	Evidence is below the expected trajectory.	Reassess key gaps and agree a revised plan.

FOUNDATION AND HIGHER TIER

Tier	Focus
Foundation Tier	Grades 1-5. The focus is on securing core GCSE knowledge, fluency and the skills needed for a standard or strong pass.
Higher Tier	Grades 4-9. Progress increasingly requires deeper reasoning, stronger algebra, unfamiliar problem solving and mathematical precision.

A note about grade boundaries

GCSE Maths grade boundaries are not fixed percentages. They vary by exam board, tier and examination series. A student's distance from a previous boundary can be useful evidence, but it does not guarantee the same boundary in a future examination.

Questions students and parents often ask

Does the number of hours guarantee the next grade?

No. The figures are planning estimates. Final GCSE grades depend on examination performance as well as knowledge and preparation.

If a student is already close to the next boundary, could it take less time?

Yes. A student securely at the top of a working grade may progress more quickly than the full range suggests.

Why might the estimated timeframe change?

New assessment evidence may show faster progress, additional gaps, missed tuition, weak retention or a need for more exam practice.

Do school holidays count as tuition weeks?

No. The estimates refer to weeks in which the planned two hours of tuition actually take place. Calendar time may therefore be longer.

Why can higher grades take longer?

The mathematical depth, precision and problem-solving demand generally increase through the Higher tier, so progression is not perfectly linear.

> **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**
>
> The tuition-hour and week ranges are professional planning estimates. They are not an official exam-board formula and do not guarantee a particular GCSE grade. Progress varies between students and the plan should be reviewed whenever new assessment evidence becomes available.

STUDENT PROGRESS SUMMARY

This page can be completed after an assessment or progress review and shared with the student and family.

Student	
Date of review	
Exam board	
Tier	Foundation / Higher
Current working grade	
Position within grade	Low / Secure / High
Next target working grade	
Final GCSE target	
Estimated tuition range	
Tuition received so far	
Current progress status	Green / Amber / Red
Next review date	

Current strengths

Priority areas for the next stage

Agreed independent practice

ASSESS -> PLAN -> LEARN -> PRACTISE -> REVIEW -> ADJUST