

# Assessment Policy



Published by the Governors of Priestlands School



Prepared for Governors by Pete Main and Julia Emmel

Ratified by Board of Governors: February 2018



Learn more... Do more... Be more...

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, the statutory use of National Curriculum levels to assess students at KS3 was discontinued. Instead, schools have been encouraged to develop their own systems that target key concepts and areas of knowledge to be taught in more depth. Priestlands School has carefully considered its approach to the national changes to ensure stability whilst welcoming the flexibilities offered by Life after Levels.
- 1.2 In addition, the school has looked carefully at the DfE Workload Review findings to ensure that assessment is “meaningful, manageable and motivating” ([Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking](#): report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, March 2016). All assessment activity required by teachers will be monitored to ensure excessive workload does not lead to unnecessary teacher stress and overload and, most importantly, that it has the desired impact on enabling student progress.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 The term “assessment” refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. It includes all aspects of gathering evidence, recording, reviewing and reporting, which make up an inter-related sequence of events that are integral to the teaching and learning process.
- 2.2 The school is committed to “Assessment for Learning”, a process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.
- 2.3 The school also believes in the principles of Growth Mindset and dialogue and feedback will reflect this.

## 3 How will progress be measured?

- 3.1 Appendix A summarises the assessment process adopted from Year 7.
- 3.2 In all years and for all subjects, a flight path will be allocated to each student based upon information from KS2. This will inform grade benchmark-setting and expected KS4 outcomes. Benchmarks are set for internal monitoring purposes only. All subjects will have identify the specific skills and qualities that need to be developed to succeed in each pathway and teachers will give feedback and set targets linked to these objectives.
- 3.3 Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) will also be used to fine tune our placing of students on particular flight paths given the need to ensure as robust a baseline as possible. In the first half term of Year 7, all students will also be internally assessed using a range of indicators to again ensure robustness and roundness for their subsequent tracking using the flight path system.
- 3.4 All Year 7 students will also be assessed for Spelling and Reading Ages.
- 3.5 In Years 7 - 11 expected progress will be compared to the benchmarks derived from the KS2 data.
- 3.6 If a student does not have any KS2 information we will use CATs and internal assessment as their baseline. In-year admissions will be robustly tested using a range of assessments, including CATs to establish a baseline.
- 3.7 Interim summative judgements will be collected and centralised for all subjects and year groups three times per year. Parents will receive three reports per year. The first report for Year 7 will not give progress information, rather a baseline assessment and indication on whether students have started their KS3 courses successfully. Data will be collected more frequently in Year 11.

- 3.8 SISRA and internal data systems will provide information and key findings/trends will be discussed/analysed by Middle Leaders (including Heads of Year), the Senior Team and the Board of Governors. Interventions will be determined and organised from this data.

## 4 Setting benchmark grades

- 4.1 At Priestlands we have high aspirations for all pupils and in keeping with the principles of Growth Mindset we believe that all pupils are capable of achieving outstanding GCSE exam success irrespective of their starting point at secondary school.
- 4.2 Pupils will be set a benchmark grade in the Autumn term of Year 7. We will use data from Fisher Family Trust (FFT) Top 20%, Key Stage 2 assessment data, Priestlands departmental baseline assessments and CAT tests. All of these data sources will be used to set every pupil an aspirational benchmark grade for every subject area.
- 4.3 Benchmark grades will be reviewed and amended where appropriate in the Summer term of Year 9 and grades will be agreed between SLT and Heads of Department for Year 10 & 11. Heads of Department will have the opportunity to ask for grades to reviewed and amended at this time.
- 4.4 Staff at Priestlands will not explicitly share benchmark grades with students and we will use the grades for internal monitoring of pupil progress and for ensuring we are challenging all pupils to reach and exceed their potential.
- 4.5 When discussing a pupil's progress with either a pupil or parent, staff will use language such as 'working below expectation' or 'working above expectation' rather than making explicit mention to a pupil's benchmark grade.

## 5 Whole School Assessment Minimum Expectations

- 5.1 We recognise that different subjects will sometimes require different approaches to the nature and frequency of marking but that also parents and students appreciate some level of consistency and familiarity across their curriculum. The following are our minimum requirements.
- 5.2 Subject teachers will ensure that:
- All lessons allow for continuous checking of progress in a manner which is meaningful for students but does not involve copious over-assessment at the expense of real learning.
  - Lessons planned remain flexible and allow all students to make ambitious progress.
  - As a general rule, work will be “quality marked” every 8 single lessons taught by an individual teacher. This may be varied if there are pre-agreed reasons in an individual subject area why this system would not be in the best interests of student progress and outcomes for that subject and in such cases this will be made clear in the department's own minimum expectations.
  - Quality marking will not necessarily require “whole” pieces of work to be marked intensively. It will be considered more productive to target individual teaching/learning points/misconceptions to allow students to consider and reflect in a concise and manageable way and will link to the subject assessment grids and flight paths. For example, one or two paragraphs might be intensively marked in an essay or one or two questions in a maths or science homework will be commented upon in detail with the rest simply marked as correct or incorrect.
  - Whole school codes will be used to simplify the marking process, for example literacy symbols; ticks/crosses; alphabetical letters; references to particular learning objectives (see Appendix 1). Individual subject areas will have some flexibility with these where necessary and they will always be clearly displayed in classrooms or student books.
  - Teachers will mark key pieces of work using the agreed school policy.
- 5.3 A wide range of marking techniques can be used in lessons as appropriate. For example, peer, self, live, verbal feedback. As much emphasis as possible will be on addressing misconceptions as early as possible, in the classroom rather than relying on extensive written comments afterwards when a time delay has occurred.
- 5.4 Assessment will frequently and appropriately involve students reflecting on their progress. However, not all marked work will necessitate lengthy written feedback if it is deemed more appropriate to deliver feedback orally during class teaching. The overriding principle will be that all subjects provide opportunities “for student reflection time” in the manner which is most appropriate for their subject.
- 5.5 At KS3, comment-based assessment will tie in with an individual assessment grid using the principle of “next steps” being identified for the student to work on in order to improve. Students will also receive a PPG (Professionally Predicted Grade) that will indicate what grade the student would go on to achieve if they continue at their current rate of progress.
- 5.6 At KS4 the same principles will apply as above– however students’ work will frequently be assessed against specific examination requirements for the subject. Marks awarded may be a simple “x out of y”, depending on the nature of the task.

- 5.7 At the formal assessment points, students will be assessed according to their overall progress against flight path benchmarks and a refined, sub-levelled PPG reported to parents/carers three times per year.
- 5.8 Appropriate records will be kept of students' progress, their attitude to learning, strengths and areas for development, as well as their completion of classwork and homework.

## 6 Role of Heads of Department (HoDs) and Subject Leaders

6.1 HoDs and subject leaders will ensure that:

- Individual teachers follow the whole school minimum expectations above.
- Departments adapt as appropriate these expectations to ensure their own subjects is assessed as meaningfully as possible.
- Schemes of Learning (medium and long term plans) include regular opportunities for developing assessment for learning and providing quality feedback to students. All Schemes of Learning will be produced collaboratively. (See Teaching and Learning Policy).
- Schemes of Learning are flexible and ensure that all students have the opportunity to make ambitious progress.
- Each formally assessed Scheme of Learning/Assessment grid will have a clear structure which signposts progression, with increasingly more difficult tasks and content including differentiation by input, with clear and transparent success criteria.
- The use of "student reflection time" is used in a manner that encourages student dialogue.
- Formal opportunities are provided for teachers to monitor and moderate their summative assessments for consistency.
- A range of targeted intervention programmes is provided for different groups of students as identified by the whole school Wave Model for tracking progress.
- Progress data is analysed to ensure that students and/or groups of students identified as vulnerable or at particular risk are making appropriate progress and that all students are suitably stretched.
- Books are sampled from all staff across the age range as per school monitoring calendar ensuring that this allows for triangulation regarding "progress over time".
- Information gained from the monitoring and review cycle is analysed and discussed in detail with SLT line managers and the Headteacher where appropriate.
- Support and further monitoring for those staff highlighted as falling below the minimum expectations by the monitoring process is arranged.

## 7 Role of the Senior Team

7.1 The Senior Team will ensure that:

- Collect evidence of monitoring outcomes from linked HoDs and discuss interventions and support training as required.
- Conduct "lesson drop-ins" as per school monitoring calendar.
- Sample books and/or folders of targeted subjects and year groups as per the school monitoring calendar and also conduct "blind" work samples to ensure robustness.
- Provide support and further monitoring for those departments not meeting the required standard.
- Arrange meetings to analyse the Learning Landmark and other data with HoDs to ensure that all students and all groups of students are making appropriate progress. These timetabled "Laser" meetings will be planned for the beginning of each term and use the Data Dashboard covering the progress reports for all the year groups in the previous term.

- Work with HoDs to use external validation of systems where appropriate.
- Use current research into assessment, both in school and externally, to ensure best practice is followed.

## 8 Role of students in their assessment

8.1 A fundamental principle that underpins formative assessment is student involvement. If students are not involved in the assessment process, formative assessment is not practised or implemented to its full effectiveness. Students need to be involved both as assessors of their own learning and as resources to other students. They should:

- Act upon the advice given to them via formative teacher comments by making a response in the “yellow box”/highlighted areas in their work, etc., thereby engaging a positive and ongoing learning dialogue.
- Feedback constructively and honestly to staff when giving their “perceptions of the work and their progress”.
- Submit work on time, adequately attending to interim draft and final deadlines without exception.
- Follow deadlines for large assignments to ensure adequate progress and maximize potential.

## 9 Role of Parents / Carers to support progress

9.1 Parents who take on a supportive role in their child’s learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. To support children in making good progress in schools, parents should:

- Take an interest in the work their child is completing for school.
- Provide a quiet area where their child can work at home or contact the school for assistance if they need help in providing a quiet place for their child to work.
- Take an interest in the feedback given to their child via the formative assessment process in exercise books and other work and the feedback that their child provides back to their teacher.
- Ensure they read all Reports and Learning Landmark results and attend Parents’ Evening to discuss progress.
- To monitor work set through showmyhomework.

## 10 Role of Governors

10.1 The Assessment Policy plays an important part in ensuring improvements in student progress in all areas of the curriculum. A key role for governors will be analysing the impact of the school’s Assessment Policy and practice.

10.2 They should therefore:

- Analyse and question all scorecards and other data presented to them.
- Read and question assessment policy updates against recommendations made in the Workload Review to ensure teacher well-being is being maintained.
- Consider departmental assessment procedures as part of link governor visits as per protocol.

## 11 Monitoring and Review

11.1 This Policy will be regularly assessed for impact on progress at all levels in the school in accordance with the above roles and responsibility and also via external moderation procedures/reviews to ensure robustness.

# Appendix A

## A guide to assessment and reporting at Priestlands School

This booklet contains an overview of all the key elements students in Year 7 will be assessed on in each subject. We are currently phasing in new GCSEs with new specifications based on the new 1-9 grading criteria.

All subjects have reviewed their programmes of study from year 7 through to year 11 to enable the best possible preparation and learning journey for students going on to take GCSE and beyond.

The first report:

In the first half term students will be assessed on what they currently know and in their report there is a column; baseline assessment.

This will be one of the following grades:

<b>Accomplished</b>	Demonstrates deep learning with fluent application of skills in all strands of the curriculum for this stage.
<b>Secure</b>	Demonstrates skills confidently and is able to apply them to meet the challenges of the curriculum for this stage.
<b>Developing</b>	Demonstrates the ability to apply skills in some aspects of the subject but still finds some areas of the curriculum challenging.
<b>Emerging</b>	Demonstrates some basic skills but needs support to access most areas of the curriculum.

You can see the key assessment objectives for each subject for each of these grades in this booklet and the teachers will assign a grade that is a best fit based on the evidence from all the work produced during the first half term.

Students will not receive a grade on each piece of work that they do as we believe that formative feedback (written comments) with targets linked to more challenging objectives from the assessment grids are more effective in helping students make progress and this approach is supported by strong research evidence.

All future reports:

As the year progresses further reports will come home in the Spring and Summer term. These reports will have a PPG (professionally predicted grade) for all subjects. This is the grade the teacher believes the student is on track to achieve if they continue to work and

progress as they have been up to that reporting point. In year 7 and 8 this will actually be 2 grades as we believe it would be unrealistic at this stage to accurately project a single grade. E.g. 5/6 would mean the teacher believes that on current form the student would go on to achieve a grade 5 or 6 at GCSE.

We will use this table as a guide to support these professional predictions:

Baseline Assessment	PPG	Old GCSE Grade
Accomplished	7-9	A/A*
Secure	5-7	B/C
Developing	3-5	C/D
Emerging	1-3	E/F/G

When you are looking to support your children at home we would encourage you to look at the subject descriptors in this booklet to help them identify the specific things they need to develop to progress further in each subject.

If you would like more information about what they need to be doing then you will be able to find this out at the Parents evenings. Alternatively you can contact the teacher by phoning the school reception and we would endeavor to respond as swiftly as possible.