

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

### **PREAMBLE**

Assessment has a number of functions at Park High. One function is to enable us to comply with a number of official guidelines, particularly with regard to accountability; another is to enable teachers to determine how successful their approaches have been. However, its central function is to enable staff, parent and students to work together to maximise opportunities for individual students to progress and achieve as much as they can.

Assessment policy and practice is established, monitored and reviewed by the Assessment Working Group, made up of representatives of all curriculum areas and chaired by a Deputy Head. Issues are discussed, then taken back to departments; members report back to the working group with departmental responses. Departmental assessment policies are based upon the whole-school assessment policy, yet need to incorporate internal reviews of their own. The work of the Assessment Working Group is planned a year in advance; its tasks include a review of policy and practice, setting the following year's assessment calendar and discussing current issues.

### **MAKING ASSESSMENTS**

#### **RATIONALE**

Some form of assessment is integral to all meaningful teaching and learning experiences. Learning objectives should feature prominently when schemes of work are planned; the perceived outcomes of these objectives, following review, should themselves inform future planning. If this assessment "loop" is to be meaningful, with clearly stated learning objectives at the heart of the process, it is crucial that pupils are aware of learning objectives as a matter of course.

We should be aware of the breadth and range of assessment possibilities, just as we have become increasingly aware of the value of adopting a wide range of teaching and learning approaches. While the most common approach to assessment may be teachers marking written tasks, we should as a matter of policy strive to broaden our assessment methods as much as possible. A scheme of work might specify learning objectives which might be realised by both formal and informal assessments, written or oral/aural, carried out by staff, pupils and/or their peers.

Not all assessments need to be recorded, yet we need to be aware of maintaining an important balance. For example, curriculum areas will vary in the number of summative assessments they need to carry out, but should be aware of the need to place equal if not more emphasis upon formative assessments. With regard to marking, we aim to be as consistent as is possible across the school while ensuring flexibility for subject areas, and a separate marking policy is available.

### **POLICY INTO PRACTICE**

If the achievement and progress of individual pupils is central to our assessment policy, we must stress the importance of both attainment and effort, as the relationship between them is what we must constantly refer to when establishing individual achievement. However, the two concepts are fundamentally different in the ways that they are assessed, recorded and reported.

Curriculum areas deliver their content in a range of ways; attainment is consequently assessed differently across the school. It would be impractical to suggest uniformity with regard to assessing attainment as each curriculum area clearly has its own requirements. Some areas make summative assessments and give levels regularly, whereas others make only occasional summative assessments and rely on a range of formative methods. However, no curriculum area is required to put a National Curriculum level on any piece of work before the end of Key Stage 3 or 4.

In practice, departments find it useful to make "best fit" judgements with regard to levels and how pupils and parents are to be informed of progress. Moderation and the development of portfolios are important here. There is also a concern with regard to compatibility of grades or levels across subject areas; attainment, particularly in terms of skills, should be comparable across the school, and we shall as part of our annual cycle of monitoring and reviewing, aim to relate our assessments between departments.

Yet if it is impractical to make a school-wide policy on the assessment and reporting of attainment, it is possible to be consistent with regard to effort. When we use the agreed set of letter grades and criteria when assessing individual pupils' effort, we can rationalise much of our rewards system while giving pupils a clear and consistent indication of how much we perceive they are putting into their work. All departments should use the agreed effort grades (criteria appended) when appropriate and link them with assessments of attainment to establish individual achievements