

OLDHAM HULME GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT POLICY

This policy is applicable from EYFS through to year 13

School aims

The relevant school aims in this context are:

- To evaluate pupils' achievements through appropriate assessments
- To offer pupils varied and challenging opportunities for learning
- To operate an effective policy of praise, reward and commendation

The school's framework for evaluating pupil performance against these aims includes regular common assessments, tracking and intervention, work scrutiny and lesson and child observations.

Fundamental principles

What are the fundamental principles and purposes of assessment? We consider that whilst elements of an assessment programme will be summative in nature, the vast majority of assessment activity should be in some way formative, in that it is effective in supporting pupils to make progress. Although the end of unit tests and internal exams do gauge what a pupil has achieved at the end of a period of learning, this is only of value if the assessment is used to identify what individuals or groups have or haven't mastered, and if this is fed back into the learning process. External examinations are probably the only truly summative assessments.

So the primary purpose of assessment is to facilitate and enhance learning: at one level this simply involves regular diagnostic marking that makes clear to the pupil the strengths and weaknesses of that piece of work; and what they need to do to improve. (see Marking Policy) End of unit assessments should be used to gauge the extent of learning and progress of that topic, serving as a 'comma' in the punctuation of the scheme of work. Crucially however the results need to be analysed to identify both group and individual strengths and weaknesses. And the conclusions of this analysis need to be the basis of intervention strategies for either individuals or groups, and to plan and modify provision so that pupils can progress and achieve their potential.

Whilst a single set of assessment data can be useful in at least raising questions, it is far more meaningful to set this in the context of the cohort (i.e. relative performance), whether this be school or national norms. The pupils' ability (as measured by national norm baseline data) also needs to be factored in for a meaningful analysis; this is the basis of target grades, against which assessment data can be analysed. Prior attainment in previous assessments in that subject, also needs to be accounted for, hence the need for tracking over time.

We also need to distinguish between the different audiences in terms of what data is relevant for whom: in particular what should be shared with pupils and/or parents, and what is primarily for internal school purposes.

MPTA grades

The Senior School uses a grading system referred to as MPTA grades. The Junior school operates a similar MAQ model as detailed in section 4.

Senior School grading September 2017

Years 7-13		Years 7-11		Years 12-13	
Motivation & attitude towards work	Punctuality with homework	Target grade (adjusted Midyis/Yellis)	Attainment grade (projected to GCSE)	Target grade (adjusted Alis)	Attainment grade (projected to A level)
Exceptional (Ex)	Always punctual (AP)	9	9	A*	A*
Very good (VG)	Nearly always punctual (NA)	8	8	A	A
Good (G)	Usually punctual (UP)	7	7	B	B
Requires improvement (RI)	Rarely punctual (RP)	6	6	C	C
Serious Concerns (SC)	Never punctual (NP)	5	5	D	D
		4	4	E	E
			3		U
			2		
			1		

All grades relate to the period (usually circa 6 weeks) since the last set of grades. End of year full report comments relate to the whole year.

Motivation & Attitude (M) towards work, as evident in the classroom and in homework, is an important aspect of assessment and reporting given its impact on learning and achievement. This is not in itself a behaviour indicator, since behaviour issues are recorded separately from academic reporting via Daybook, although there will of course often be a correlation between behaviour and attitude/effort towards work. In awarding the M grades teachers make a judgement based on the best fit descriptor. **Exceptional** is precisely that; most pupils will probably be judged **Very good**, or **Good**.

Punctuality is in essence reliability in meeting homework deadlines, which is something we consider to be an important quality in our students. Teachers award grades based on objective evidence of late homework from markbooks.

Target grades: for all Senior School year groups we establish a target grade for each subject, which is viewed alongside current attainment (see below).

At A level and GCSE we use Yellis/Alis baseline data as a starting point, but adjusted in the light of pupil/teacher dialogue and professional judgement to set a target grade on the relevant exam grade scale. Target grades are set to be challenging but realistic. All target grades are subject to review. For the first set of grades in year 12 an **Alis grade** is

reported. This shows the average grade achieved in the past in that subject by students with the same overall GCSE points score. The agreed target grade is also shown.

From September 2014 we have also used target grades for KS3 pupils. This allows us to relate progress to national norms and attainment to potential. All year 7 pupils sit the CEM Midyis test in October. The Midyis results, which include GCSE predictions, are shared with subject teachers who can adjust the Midyis grade to establish a target grade on a 9-1 scale. This is an objective measure of ability; it gives an indication of expected attainment in due course at GCSE.

Attainment grades indicate the current level of performance or achievement on the same scale as the target grades. The Attainment grades reflect the whole picture of the available evidence; common assessments will be the central element, but grades should also account for assessment evidence from more ‘routine’ class and homework. For GCSE and A level year groups the relevant scale of exam grades is used to indicate attainment. The grades reflect the standard of current work, but allow for expected progression. In essence this indicates that current work suggests they are on track to achieve that grade. This projecting forward is particularly appropriate early in GCE/GCSE courses, where they are unlikely to be up to the potential standard. For Attainment grades at KS3 we also use the 9-1 scale. There are departmentally agreed criteria for awarding attainment grades. This linkage to national norms or GCSE outcomes is closer in some subjects than others. At GCSE we typically see 15-20% A*, and 50% A*-A at GCSE so the spread of grades 5 (15-20%), 4 (30-35%), will usually broadly reflect this distribution.

Junior School MAQ grading

MAQ Grades	Exceptional	Very good	Good	Requires improvement	Poor
	5	4	3	2	1

In Key Stage 2, the MAQ grades measure Motivation, Attainment and Quality. As in Senior school, all grades relate to the period since the last set of grades. End of year full report comments relate to the whole year.

- Motivation & Attitude (M)** towards work. As in Senior School, Juniors teachers make a judgement based on motivation and attitude displayed in classroom behaviour and in punctuality and effort apparent in homework.
- Attainment (A)** reflects the children’s attainment when considered against previous assessment grades.
- Quality (Q)** may reflect the quality of written work, the quality of listening skills in discussion work **or** the ability to speak confidently in front of peers.

In Key Stage 1, the children receive a written report twice a year. The Autumn report focuses on the four core subject areas along with a class teacher comment. The end of year report contains a comment on all of the subject areas and includes the level that a child has attained in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Common Assessments & Internal Exams - senior school

Common assessments are a crucial element in our approach to assessment. Whole cohort assessments allow us to gauge group and individual progress and to take additional intervention steps to address particular issues.

Models of common assessment can vary; they do not all need to be traditional ‘learning tests’, although there is a place for these. Students working towards external GCSE and A level exams do need to be assessed under exam conditions periodically. Assessments should reflect the content, skills and learning objectives of schemes of work so that together they give an overall picture of pupil progress. The key is that they are taken by a cohort. In subjects **setted by ability**, pupils will not be covering precisely the same work over the same timescale (that is the logic of setting) so departments are able to set **different or ‘common’ assessments** where appropriate, but comparable sets (eg Set 1 boys/girls) should do the same assessment.

In terms of frequency we consider that a **minimum of 3 per year plus end of year exam**, and at least one per term is reasonable. We do draw a distinction between the main academic subjects and, for example, more creative subjects,

where there is often less curriculum time allocated. Departments have the flexibility to place the assessments at the appropriate points in their Schemes of Work.

Internal examinations occur after Summer Half Term for years 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12. This gives all pupils an opportunity to develop the skills needed for success in examinations well in advance of GCSEs, both in terms of how to prepare as well as techniques in the exam itself. They also serve as the most significant assessment of a child's progress and learning within the academic year.

Trial examinations occur in the Spring term for years 11 & 13. The timing is designed to balance ensuring that groups are close to completion of the course, but leaving sufficient time to address and rectify any issues that arise.

During the COVID 19 pandemic the school has adopted a 'data informed' approach to the awarding of centre assessed grades. The system has used standardised data measuring attainment across several data points during GCSE and A Level courses.

In Senior School, subject teachers record **raw percentages** directly onto Schoolbase, as the most logistically straightforward method of recording, which avoids double data entry or complex and time consuming import routines. We also routinely standardise scores with a cohort of more than 30; either to a mean of 100 (SD 15) or increasingly a mean of 6.5 (SD 3) which converts to a 9-1 scale.

In the Infants and Junior school, in addition to our regular subject assessments and end of year English and Maths assessments, pupils are tested using the GL Assessment 'Complete Digital Solution' National Group Reading tests and Cognitive Abilities tests (Juniors only). These assessments do not measure what has been taught and consequently enable us to measure children's reading ages (in the Reading test) and reasoning skills (in the CAT). We also use them: to help us to identify abilities that have not otherwise presented themselves through our teaching of the National Curriculum; to inform differentiation strategies; and to plan intervention groups.

The Infants and Junior school use **shared Google Sheets** for the ongoing monitoring of pupil progress.

In Senior school, we report assessment percentages **twice a year**: firstly on interim reports (usually the mean of common assessments to date); and secondly on the final summer report which gives the end of year exam result. These are raw percentages, but are accompanied by a **median grid** which allows parents to see the result in the context of the cohort and to account for variations in difficulty. We are looking at how we might report standardised exam scores alongside or in place of raw scores.

Tracking and intervention

The recording of assessment data is only of value if it is subsequently used for analysis of individual and group attainment and subsequent actions to address issues of concern. This is particularly the case where a pupil is performing significantly below expectation, or where attainment has shown deterioration over time. Primary responsibility for doing this lies with the class teachers in the Infants and Juniors and with departments and HoDs in the Senior School. Class teachers and HoDs are expected to share evidence of such use of assessment data with the Head of Nursery and Infants, Head of Juniors or Assistant Principal Academic. Pastoral managers also access and analyse the data, following each set of MPTA grades to get an overview of individual pupils across the curriculum and identify and address particular causes for concern.

There are 2 functions within Schoolbase which can be used to do this.

Report analyser – this allows us to generate excel spreadsheets from any one set of assessments held in Schoolbase, at any point from the moment it is entered. So for example one could extract the 4 assessments for a term for a whole year or form. We include target grades (ie baseline expectations) to be visible alongside the assessment percentages.

Tracking – this allows us to access data from a series of assessments eg over an academic year or longer. This is only available once the data is complete and transferred to the Tracking facility, so for example for the Autumn term assessments this would be from the start of January.

Intervention/ support strategies

Where departments identify individual students who are underachieving or are otherwise a cause for concern, steps are taken to address this. The tone should be supportive rather than punitive. No one approach will suit all situations but could include the following:

- Feedback to student on what they need to do to improve
- Record this on Schoolbase (so we have evidence of our response)
- Advise / require attendance at support session (record attendance on SB)
- Refer to academic peer mentor
- Re-sitting a test/ or aspects of an assessment
- If a pattern or serious concerns emerge that department should directly inform parents

Pastoral staff also invite students in for academic reviews - all year 11 in September and year 12 and 13 students who are falling behind. In the Junior school, regular intervention sessions are organised to support children who have been identified as under-achieving. These sessions are planned to boost confidence and consolidate basic skills.

Assessment in the Early Years' Foundation Stage

The Early Years' department uses the statutory guidance in the EYFS Profile handbook to assess the Early Years' children. The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics, set out below:

The prime areas of learning:

- communication and language;
- physical development;
- personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas of learning:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design.

The learning characteristics:

- playing and exploring;
- active learning;
- creating and thinking critically.

Assessments are based primarily on observation of daily activities and events. These observations are collated in each child's personal 'Learning Journey' which is accessible to parents throughout the year as well as at parents' evenings. The Early Years' team review and track the children's progress three times during the academic year, when they judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected.

At the end of the Reception year, the team will make a judgement about whether the child has met the expected level criteria (expected), whether they are exceeding this level (exceeding), or whether they are not yet reaching this level (emerging).

In order to ensure judgements about each child's attainment are accurate, the Early Years' team hold regular moderation meetings, they also participate in external moderation events.

These judgments about the children's attainment are communicated to parents twice a year in written reports and parents get the chance to discuss the reports at two parents' evenings.

Other relevant policies

Marking policy

Homework policy

Curriculum policy

SEND policy

Assessment policy reviewed: September 2023

Next Review Due: October 2024