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ASHLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Assessment Policy

This policy was adopted: September 2019

This policy will be reviewed: September 2021

**Lead Teacher: Diane Wilson**

**Assessment & Target Setting**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at Ashley High School. It provides a framework for identifying, monitoring and communicating students’ attainment and progress, identifying areas for further development and setting challenging targets.

**1. Ashley High Curriculum Stages**

Since September 2014 schools have been free to create their own approaches to assessment. At Ashley we have chosen to go with a curriculum stages approach through Year 7 to 9 as we feel that this provides a clear and rigorous framework for monitoring attainment and progress, setting targets and communicating progress with students and parents. Our Ashley Curriculum Stages are firmly rooted within the National Curriculum, ensuring that there is the same breadth and depth of study as is found in mainstream secondary schools. We’ve broken down National Curriculum content into stages which progress from 13 to 36.

When reporting a student’s level at Ashley High we refer to the stage that the pupil is working within.

In Year 10 students begin nationally accredited qualifications in all subjects. Our current suite of qualifications includes GCSE, BTEC, Entry Level Certificate, Functional Skills, and ASDAN all of which have unique grading systems. We therefore do not report pupil progress to parents through the use of curriculum stages into Year 10 and beyond and we therefore measure attainment using the appropriate predicted qualification grades.

**2. Benchmarking**

Key Stage 2 assessment data should be available for all students arriving in Year 7. Experience shows us that, for various reasons (poor retention of knowledge and skills over the summer break, anxiety over the move to a new school, a high level of one-to-one support in primary school etc) a significant minority of students do not perform at their reported level when they arrive with us. Whilst we acknowledge that the reported KS2 data will be used in the Department of Education’s KS2-KS4 progress measure, it would be doing students a disservice to stick rigidly to unrealistic levels of attainment when setting our own progress targets, indeed the discrepancy would be compounded year on year as we set increasingly more unachievable targets.

We therefore carry out a benchmarking exercise during the first few weeks of Year 7. All students take a range of English and Maths assessments. The outcomes of these assessments are compared with the reported end of KS2 data and students are assigned an Ashley High Curriculum Stage. If there is a significant difference between reported KS2 attainment and our assessments then a decision to benchmark a student accordingly is only taken after consultation between subject leaders (English and Maths), form teachers and the Assessment Lead

**3. Target setting**

Accurate assessment and analysis of year-on-year progress allows us to generate challenging and aspirational targets, which show what we expect our students to attain. Comparing current attainment against targets allows us to measure the impact of teaching and learning and intervene when necessary to support learning.

Two groups of whole school targets are set for every student:

* KS2-KS4 targets for English and Maths are set at the start of Year 7. (These form the basis of predicted grades at Key Stage 4)
* Year-on-year (ie. September – July) targets for all subjects.

Our targets are based on the performance of our highest achieving students in previous years. We’ve analysed the year-on-year progress of students against the Department of Education’s KS2-KS4 expectation and used this as the basis of our ‘expected progress’ measure. This approach ensures that our expected progress measure is challenging and rigorous.

*Every student’s initial KS2-KS4 target is moderated by comparing it with personalised national target setting data generated by FFT Aspire*

Once set, targets are reviewed regularly by the Assessment Lead and teaching staff. If a student is consistently exceeding their initial target we consider them to have an *accelerated growth capacity* and their targets will be adjusted upwards. If a student is not meeting their expected target then an intervention programme is put in place.

*We recognise that our targets have a lower expectation of progress than is expected of mainstream students but the very nature of our students’ learning needs means that their retention of knowledge and skills is below the national average and more curriculum time is needed to embed knowledge and consolidate learning. However, we have every confidence that for the reasons outlined above that our targets are aspirational.*

**4. Expected progress**

**a. Expected Progress in Years 7-9**

**Standard Progress**

We expect every student to progress from their benchmarked starting point at the beginning of Year 7 by a minimum of one stage per year through Years 7 to 9. We consider this to be good progress. Any student making more than one stage progress would be making outstanding progress.

**Accelerated Progress**

Should a student make outstanding progress in a subject over the course of a full academic year then they will be put on an Accelerated Progress target for the subsequent year, this has an expectation of two stages progress over the year.

**b. Expected progress in Years 10 & 11**

As explained above KS4 targets are set in line with the grading system used for the qualification being followed eg. GCSE subjects use grades or 1-9, Entry Level Certificate subjects use levels 1-3, BTEC use Pass, Merit, Distinction etc.

At the start of Year 10 a student’s end of Year 9 curriculum levels are converted to start of KS4 equivalent grades. These equivalences can be seen in our Ashley High Stage Grades comparison chart.

Some subjects offer both GCSE and Entry Level courses. In assigning a student to the appropriate course consideration is taken of the growth capacity that student showed during Years 7-9.

**5. Tracking progress**

Subject leaders are responsible for moderating and recording assessment data within their subject area. Core curriculum meetings provide a forum for sharing, discussing and moderating assessments.

Attainment data is recorded, tracked and monitored across the whole school using Onwards and Upwards with data updated and analysed termly. The targets of students who are consistently exceeding their targets will be reviewed at this point and intervention plans will be put in place for those who are not achieving expected progress. A full and final analysis of the progress of all students and the impact of any intervention is undertaken as part of the summer term analysis.

**6. Tracking specific groups of pupils**

We currently analyse the performance of the following specific groups of students as part of our termly evaluation:

* Students in receipt of Pupil Premium
* Looked After Children (LAC)
* Gender

It should however be noted that due to the relatively small size of some of these cohorts meaningful comparisons are not always possible and data must be interpreted with care.

**7. Moderation & quality control**

Moderation of assessments for each subject takes the following forms:

* Our Ashley High Curriculum Stages system has explicit curriculum descriptors that all teachers are familiar with.
* All units of work have an assessment task or piece of work.
* Moderation of work is a feature of curriculum meetings (at least one meeting every term).
* Leadership and Management team carry out learning audits that involve lesson observation, planning scrutiny and book scrutiny.

*As mentioned previously we use a range of external data sources to benchmark and moderate our judgements:*

***Fischer Family Trust Aspire (FFT Aspire)***

*FFT Aspire provides key target setting and self-evaluation information. A useful facility for us is the ability to generate targets for individual students based upon the school’s performance over the past three years.*

***Performance Tables***

*The Department for Education Performance Tables only take into account GCSEs and focus on the expected performance of students in mainstream schools. Whilst many of our students do achieve GCSE , the relatively small number is such that, in line with all special schools, our Progress 8 measure is effectively meaningless. At the same time we also offer a wide range of other qualifications, such as Entry Level Qualifications, Functional Skills, BTEC qualifications, Asdan courses etc, which are not recognised in the Performance Tables. We tackle these problems in these ways:*

* *Year-on-year comparison of KS4 Performance Tables data ie. performance of current Year 11 with last year’s. Although this has limited value due to our small cohort sizes (meaning it only takes one or two students to significantly skew data) broad trends are evident and we generally use the past three years’ performance data for comparative purposes in order to minimise the impact of ‘rogue’ data.*
* *We carry out an annual Performance Tables Comparison in which we compare our performance with that of similar special schools across the northwest in parameters such as number of students achieving GCSE English and maths and number of students achieving at least one GCSE.*

**8. Reporting**

Attainment and progress in meeting annual targets is reported to parents via:

* Termly progress reports
* An Autumn and Summer Term Parents Evening
* An annual EHCP review report