



ST PAUL'S SCHOOL  
Juniors

# Assessment Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to all forms of assessment, feedback, recording, and reporting across St Paul's Juniors (SPJ). Its intrinsic aim is to provide support to teachers in making informed decisions based on pupils' learning, fostering continuous and sustained academic progress and achievement.

It is important to recognise that assessment alone does not improve learning; instead, it is the actions taken based on assessment that make a difference in enhancing learning outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Policy (which includes the approach to homework), the Learning Support Policy and departmental assessment procedures contained within departmental handbooks.

At SPJ, we aim to achieve the following:

- Provide continuous assessment opportunities for teachers to gauge pupils' progress, identifying existing knowledge whilst pinpointing any gaps, informing planning and responsive teaching;
- Utilise assessment to guide teaching to focus on necessary concepts and content, ensuring pupils acquire necessary domain-specific knowledge and skills;
- Provide constructive, meaningful feedback to shape pupils' self-efficacy, fostering belief in their capabilities, and supporting motivation, resilience, and academic success;
- Develop pupils' metacognition skills, empowering pupils to be self-aware of their learning processes and encouraging meaningful reflection;
- Prompt pupils to engage in thought-provoking exercises that stimulate critical thinking and create opportunities to check depth of understanding;
- Identify pupils in need of specific/additional Learning Support, providing timely and targeted support;
- Promote consistency in assessment practices to ensure reliable evaluation of pupils' progress and performance, ensuring the ability to effectively track and monitor pupils' progress as they transition through SPJ and onward to the Senior School;
- Maintain regular and transparent communication with parents/carers, ensuring they stay informed about their child's progress and nurturing a supportive relationship.

## **2. Types of Assessment**

At St Paul's Juniors, our assessment approach encompasses the following types:

- Formative assessments: Evidence-informed strategies teachers use to support learners' progress, identifying gaps in knowledge and understanding for targeted feedback and instruction during the learning process.
- Summative assessments: Infrequent tests under standard conditions, aiming to test a sample of a wide domain of knowledge and distinguish performance levels relative to peers, mainly used for formal recording and reporting at the end of the learning process.

- Nationally standardised summative assessments: Standardised tests administered uniformly across the country to evaluate students' performance and compare their achievements on a national level.

In addition to the assessments above, in consultation with appropriate specialists and parents/carers, the school will make use of additional diagnostic assessments to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils in need of specific/additional Learning Support.

### **3. Feedback/marking**

Providing feedback that moves learners forward is one of the five key strategies that Wiliam and Leahy (2015) write about to support the effective implementation of formative assessment.

As expressed in departmental handbooks, each department has its own feedback/marking policy, following Assessment Policy guidance as below and reflecting the nature of the subject. The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring consistency in the standard of marking across the department, overseen by the Deputy Head Academic. The Head of Department carries out at least one work review a term, looking at work from a sample of pupils across a class and from different year groups.

#### *3.1 Feedback/marking guidance*

In providing effective feedback, the following guidance should be considered:

- All feedback provided should be understandable, helpful and actionable;
- Feedback should be designed to require more effort from the recipient than the donor; teachers should allocate time for pupils to respond and where appropriate/necessary, model how to respond;
- Feedback should focus on moving the pupil forward, emphasising what's next rather than focusing on what has passed;
- Feedback should be part of a system – prioritising its importance over the intensity of the process; not every single piece of work needs to/should be marked/given feedback;
- Praise should be given deservedly, appropriately, and related to factors within the pupil's control, avoiding excessive/lavish praise.

### **4. Summative assessments**

Throughout the year, summative assessments are conducted at regular intervals. The following provides an overview of the summative assessments/tests administered in each year group:

#### *4.1 First Years*

The Lower and Upper First Year pupils have regular testing throughout the year. Pupils sit school assessments in mathematics and English towards the end of the Summer Term, before the School Exams. Results are taken into consideration when awarding grades in the final grades session.

#### *4.2 Second Years*

The Lower Second and Upper Second Year pupils have regular testing throughout the year. In the Summer term, pupils sit examinations in English and mathematics in the Lower Second Year and English, maths and science in the Upper Second Year. Results are reported to parents/carers and stored in iSAMS. Pupils in the Lower Second Year sit InCAS assessments in the summer term. These standardised assessments support the identification of learning needs and they focus on six developmental areas linked to later academic outcomes: reading; spelling; mathematics; mental arithmetic, developed ability and attitudes. Results are stored in iSAMS and are not usually reported to parents/carers.

#### *4.3 Third Years*

Pupils follow a broad curriculum determined by Heads of Department at St Paul's Juniors in liaison with their counterparts in the senior part of the school. Pupils sit school examinations in classics, English, French, geography, history, mathematics, science, and theology and philosophy (Upper Third Years only) in the Summer Term. Results are reported to parents/carers and stored in iSAMS. Pupils in the Lower Third Year sit standardised, computer-adaptive ability and aptitude tests (MidYIS), which are designed to help identify strengths and areas for development, in addition to our own examination results and teacher assessment. These exams also provide an indicator of likely success in future public exams. Results are stored in iSAMS and are not usually reported to parents/carers.

#### *4.4 Study skills/revision guidance*

To support the wellbeing of pupils, the school has developed and designed a study skills programme. As part of this, pupils are provided with the tools and strategies to support their independence and metacognition, and are provided with specific revision guidance for formal exams which is available to pupils in the Lower Second to Upper Third Years on Google Classroom. The timing of sharing these resources is considerate and supportive of pupils' wellbeing.

### **5. How assessment outcomes are collected and used**

Pupils' progress in all subjects is closely monitored to ensure they are achieving at a level commensurate with their ability. As expressed in departmental handbooks, departments offer various strategies for monitoring and recording pupil progress in subjects, following Assessment Policy guidance and reflecting the nature of the subject. Results in informal formative/summative assessments are held by subject teachers; block test results across whole year groups are held by departments centrally and are used to support correct setting and the accurate award of attainment grades.

### *5.1 Attainment grades*

The assessment cycle at St Paul's Juniors focuses on providing regular planned points for grades to be awarded based on formative and summative assessment throughout the academic year. Grades are a measure of a pupil's attainment. They do not reflect one test or examination result.

These points where grades are awarded (see the SPJ Handbook for the grades and reporting deadlines) provide an opportunity for the extent of learning and progress that a pupil has made to be clearly communicated to the pupils and parents/carers; this is in addition to the regular formative feedback opportunities within lessons.

No quota is assigned to the number of grades which can be awarded and the grade and since the grade assessment is based on a combination of formative and summative assessment, it is not linked to a percentage average.

Subjects awarding an attainment grade use a five-point scale as indicated below and given the highly academic nature of the school, a pupil will be doing well if he is 'meeting expectations' at SPJ. When a grade of "some concerns or not meeting expectations" is awarded, teachers are expected to write a brief comment to provide some context.

- Well above expectations
- Exceeding expectations
- Meeting expectations
- Some concerns
- Not meeting expectations

### *5.2 Effort grades*

As an academic community, we attach as much importance to a pupil's approach to their work as we do to their results. In order, therefore, to support good scholarly working habits, to motivate pupils and give better, more objective feedback we measure how much a pupil:

- **takes care over work:** all forms of work submitted; hand-written; typed; slides; video; presentations; practical and creative work;
- **demonstrates high levels of personal organisation:** consider punctuality to lessons, work submitted correctly and on time, timely communication with a teacher when there is a question or problem, and arrival with the appropriate equipment;
- **actively engages in lessons:** consider evidence of self-motivation, paying attention, following instructions, asking sensible questions;
- **contributes to lessons:** consider all possible opportunities for contribution, such as: paired work, small or larger group activities. Acknowledge voluntary contributions and those given when asked directly by a teacher. Take into account one-on-one interactions, ensuring an equitable consideration of contributions of more introverted pupils.

These criteria are measured by frequency:

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- rarely (triggers explanatory text)

The award of an effort grade is used to encourage pupils wherever possible. It is based on the model used in the senior part of the school.

### *5.3 Grade moderation*

Within departments, specific time is allocated for staff to meet and discuss pupil assessments and moderate outcomes. This meeting time is deliberately planned prior to grades being awarded as detailed above. These moderation meetings take place at least termly to ensure that assessment is accurate, robust and timely.

### *5.4 Data analysis and tracking*

An analysis of assessment and tracking data is undertaken by the Deputy Head Academic, Assistant Director of Studies and Heads of Year. Where appropriate, information is passed to Heads of Department, Form Tutors, the Head of Learning Support, subject teachers and the SPS Deputy Head Academic and Director of Admissions. The Heads of First, Second and Third Years disseminate information to parents and at any time a pupil may be recommended for further learning support. The Head of English, in liaison with the Deputy Head Academic, recommends pupils for support in English as an Additional Language.

After every grade session and following the end-of-year examinations in the summer term, the Teaching and Learning Committee (comprised of the Head, the Deputy Head Academic, the appropriate Head of Year, the Assistant Director of Studies, the Head of Learning Support and the SPS Deputy Head Academic and the Director of Admissions) meets to review the progress of all pupils at St Paul's Juniors.

Assessment data is collated and analysed according to SPJ's self-evaluation cycle, providing opportunity for the review of individual pupil, group, subject and cohort progress. The Senior Leadership Team uses this assessment information along with all other relevant information on areas of accountability to support comprehensive pupil support, support professional development initiatives and inform the strategic development of the school's improvement plan.

### *5.5 Data analysis and tracking*

Pupils at St Paul's Juniors hold a place at St Paul's School and transfer automatically at the end of Year 8 subject to good work, conduct and them being able to comfortably meet the academic standards of St Paul's School;

there is no particular exam or hurdle which pupils have to pass to move from the Juniors to the Seniors. See St Paul's School Admissions Policy for further details.

## **6. Setting and Forms**

Pupils who enter St Paul's Juniors at 7+ (Lower First) are split into forms and pupils are largely taught in these groupings. Lower First Years transferring to the Upper First Year join new 8+ entrants in classes comprised of a mixture of 7+ entrants and 8+ pupils. Once again, pupils are mainly taught in their forms. During our pupils' time at St Paul's Juniors, we strive to broaden their educational experience and all pupils are encouraged to participate in our co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes. Rearranging form groupings regularly further broadens the attitudes and outlook of pupils.

Pupils are set in mathematics from the Lower Second Year and in French in the Upper Third Year. Setting is reviewed frequently to ensure pupils are placed correctly according to their ability. English, geography, history, science and theology and philosophy (T&P) are taught in form groups.

Pupils are split into smaller, mixed ability groups for engineering. Drama is taught in form groups until the end of the Upper Second Year and in the final two years, pupils are split into small, mixed ability groups that are rotated with engineering.

## **7. Reporting to parents/carers**

At St Paul's Juniors there are three methods of communicating pupil progress to parents: grades, full written reports and parents' evenings. Parents are informed regularly of their child's progress throughout the academic year.

### *7.1 Autumn term*

Effort grades are issued before the Autumn Term Remedy and parents/carers meet with form tutors to discuss the pastoral progress of pupils.

Towards the end of the Autumn Term, effort and attainment grades are issued.

At the end of term, new pupils receive reports which are made available to parents via the Parent Portal. First Years receive a Form Tutor report with a comment from the Head and new pupils in the Lower Third Year receive subject reports in addition to a Form and Head's report.

### *7.2 Spring term*

Effort and attainment grades are awarded during the term. There is a subject parents' evening for pupils in the Lower Second to Upper Third Years and a Form Tutor parents' evening in the Lower and Upper First Years. Pupils in the Upper Third Year receive a full set of written reports including a comment from the Head at the end of term.



### *7.3 Summer term*

There are School Examinations for pupils in the Lower Second to Upper Third Years. All examination results are stored electronically in iSAMS and made available to parents via the Parent Portal, as are those grades which are issued in non-examined subjects.

A full set of written reports is made available to parents via the Parent Portal at or towards the end of term for Lower First to Lower Third Years. The Head of First Year comments on the Lower First Year and new Upper First Year pupil reports. The Head of Second Year comments on Lower Second Year reports. The Head comments on 'old' Upper First Year and all Upper Second Year reports and the Head of Third Years comments on the Lower Third Year reports.

## **8. Written reports**

Pupils receive full written reports from each subject teacher, as well as comments from the Form Tutor and Head annually. In addition, new pupils joining the school receive a brief report at the end of the Autumn Term. Reports are produced and stored using the school's information system, iSAMS and disseminated to parents via the Parent Portal

## **9. Parents'/carers' meetings**

There are two designated evenings each year for parents/carers to meet with staff.

### *9.1 Form Tutors' meetings*

At the end of the first half of the Autumn Term, after the award of effort grades, parents/carers have the opportunity to discuss their child's pastoral progress with Form Tutors. Subject teachers supply appropriate comments for Form Tutors to inform the discussion. To assist with a pupil's progress, parents/carers and Form Tutors need to work in partnership. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss concerns and common problems.

### *9.2 Subject Teachers' meetings*

In the Spring Term, Lower First and Upper First Year Form Tutors meet with parents again, as they teach younger pupils for the majority of the time. In the Lower Second to Upper Third Years, there are meetings with subject teachers in the Spring or Summer Terms. In these meetings, progress in particular subjects can be discussed in greater depth. Five-minute appointments are allocated, as time is limited.

If parents/carers wish to make a longer appointment, or to see any of their child's teachers at another time, they may contact the school to arrange an alternative appointment.