Sacred Heart High School



Assessment at KS3

Information for Parents

**Dear Parents/Carers**

In the past couple of years a number of substantial changes have been made to the National curriculum programmes of study at KS3, 4 and 5. As a result, GCSEs have become tougher and new style A level examinations have been introduced.

The new National Curriculum places a greater emphasis on the knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as the opportunity to study the big ideas of a subject in greater depth. At KS3 National Curriculum levels have been removed and schools have been given the autonomy to design their own assessment model . This has given us the opportunity to provide a more appropriate KS3 curriculum and assessment model which provides the basis for study at KS4. It is important therefore, that KS3 and KS4 are not viewed separately, but as a continuum.

From September 2016 the new model of assessment will be used in years seven and eight. The new model focuses on:

* Setting the bar high for every pupil
* Key Skills and Knowledge needed to prepare pupils for GCSE study
* Thresholds which describe learning moving from surface to deep
* Using regular assessment and feedback to give all pupils the chance to develop a secure understanding of the key ideas.
* Ensuring challenge and breath
* Greater emphasis on progress towards GCSE outcomes from the beginning of KS3
* Incorporating high quality assessments which help pupils develop the skills need to tackle GCSE questions.
* Assessment based on progress made – so celebrates effort of all pupils with different starting points.

With Best Wishes

Mrs S O’Donovan

Deputy Headteacher

New GCSEs from 2017 onwards

**From September 2017 new GCSE programmes of study will be taught in all subjects at Sacred Heart.**

**What are the key features of the new GCSEs?**

The Department for Education (DfE) has made a number of changes to the characteristics of the new GCSEs.

Key features include:

* A new grading scale that uses the numbers 1 – 9 to replace the A\* - G scale for identifying levels of performance
* ‘Students will be assessed at the end of the course and subject content will not be divided into modules
* Assessment will be made by external exam, except where non-exam assessment is the only way to assess certain skills

Students will only sit exams in the summer. Students will only be able to resit exams in November for English language and maths if they were at least 16 on the preceding 31August.

**How is the new grading scale different?**

The new GCSEs will be graded using the numbers 1 – 9, with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

Where performance is below the minimum required to pass a GCSE, students will receive a U.

The chart below compares the new GCSE grading structure to the one currently used for the old ‘legacy’ GCSEs. For example, a C sits between a 4 and 5 in the new grading structure:



The changes mean that there are more grades at the top end and fewer grades at the lower end.

Assessment at KS3

Assessment at KS3 will consist of Assessment for Learning and summative assessment.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AFL) is an integral part of the learning process and it is is essence, the techniques use by teachers to generate feedback about learning. AFL happens every day, in every classroom. Often, AFL will involve checking progress activities and responding to detailed marking and feedback using a green pen during a process called dedicated improvement and reflection time. (DIRT)

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is the process of recording a student’s overall achievement – this usually takes the form of end of unit tests, end of year exams and formal examinations. Summative assessments are usually a substantive piece of work.

Summative Assessments:

* Provide a summary judgement about what has been learned by each pupil at a specific point in time.
* Show what pupils can achieve without support
* Inform any subsequent interventions.

Summative assessments may differ in varying subjects. For example, it is more likely in English, history or RE this might take the form of an extended piece of writing. In Maths and Science this is more likely to be a test.

Threshold Descriptors

Threshold descriptors has been introduced as part of the new model, designed to describe how well pupils have understood units of work based on their performance over a term. The scale is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Excelling** | The pupil is excelling in the knowledge, understanding and skills well beyond the age appropriate standard expected. |
| **Deepening** | The pupil is exceeding the age appropriate standard expected of knowledge, understanding and skills. |
| **Securing** | The pupil has a secure knowledge and understanding of the age appropriate skills expected. |
| **Advancing** | This pupil is advancing towards the age appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. |
| **Beginning** | This pupil is beginning to work towards the age appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. |

The table below places the threshold descriptors in the context of Age Related Expectations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age Related Expectations** | **Threshold** | **Descriptor** |
| **Exceeded** | **Excelling** | **This pupil is excelling in the knowledge, skills well beyond the standard expected.** |
| Deepening | This pupil is exceeding the standard expected of knowledge, understanding and skills. |
| **Met** | Securing | This pupil is developing a secure knowledge and understanding of the skills expected |
| **Working towards** | Advancing | This pupils is advancing in the basic knowledge and understanding of the skills expected.This pupil is beginning to demonstrate the basic knowledge and understanding of the skills expected. |
| Beginning |

When pupils join Sacred Heart based on their KS2 scores in Maths and English and other cognitive tests carried out by the school, they will be assigned a threshold descriptor. Other subjects either use Maths or English KS2 scaled scores, or an average of these (Science, History and Geography) or create their own baseline assessment (Computer Studies, Music, Art and Design, Design Technology, PE and Modern Foreign Languages) to assign pupils a baseline threshold.

The table below shows an example of approximate KS2 scaled scores in English and Maths and the corresponding assigned thresholds.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KS2 Score** | **Descriptor Threshold** | **GCSE Prediction/Flight Path** | **Old GCSE grade equivalent** |
| **120-115** | Excelling | 8-9 | A\* |
| **114-109** | Deepening | 6-7-8 | A/B |
| **108 -101** | Securing | 5-6-7 | B/C |
| **100-94** | Approaching | 4-5 | C/D |
| **Below 94** | Beginning | 1-4 | E and below |

For example, if a pupil joins the school with a KS2 scaled score of 105 for English, she will be assigned a baseline threshold level of Securing. Using this data we can look forward to her potential learning journey (or flight path prediction) and expect a minimum attainment of a level five or above in GCSE English.

**How will judgements about progress be made at KS3 using the threshold descriptors?**

As a result of each round of assessment at Sacred Heart, the outcomes will generate a threshold descriptor percentage for every subject, based on an individual pupil’s performance.

Judgements about progress in each round of assessment will be based on how each individual pupil’s performance compares with their baseline threshold. It is important to note that assessments gradually become more challenging as pupils move from year to year, so pupils can continue to achieve ‘securing’ for example and still be making expected progress and therefore, be on track. For example, if a pupil’s baseline threshold is Securing in Maths and her performance in her Maths assessment falls within the percentage range of the Securing Threshold, her progress will be described as good.

**Individual Pupil Monitoring**

As part of each individual round of pupil monitoring (termly) you will be reminded of your daughter’s performance in English and Maths in relation to her flight path/prediction for the end of KS4.

The report will give you a clear indication of your daughter’s progress in each subject in relation to her baseline threshold and will also include her individual percentage mark and the percentage range for each threshold. Your daughter’s progress will be highlighted using the following key.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Excellent | 2 above threshold |
| V Good | 1 above threshold |
| Good | Meeting expected threshold |
| Satisfactory | 1 below threshold |
| Requires Improvement (RI) | 2 below threshold |

If your daughter’s progress is two below her baseline threshold in any suject and requires improvement, individual subject teachers will indicate in a comment on the report what intervention has been put in place to support the process of getting your daughter back on track.

**Pupil Annual Reports**

You will also receive an annual written report for your daughter in which teachers will outline progress in key knowledge, understanding and skills and set targets for improvement.

**Contact Details**

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