



# RAINHILL HIGH SCHOOL

# ASSESSMENT POLICY





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SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

**STEPHENSON**

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### 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to formative and summative assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

### 2. Legislation and guidance

Schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment since the National Curriculum levels were removed in 2014.

This policy refers to:

- The recommendations in the [final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels](#)
- Statutory reporting requirements set out in [the Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005: schedule 1](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. Principles of assessment

Assessment reflects the formal and informal judgements made by teachers and students about standards of work, and is measured, where appropriate, against nationally agreed criteria. Formative, diagnostic assessment is used throughout the year to inform teaching and learning and identify any areas for improvement. Summative assessment is used to evaluate learning and progress by awarding an attainment mark, grade or outcome\* to a student. We believe that this policy will enable us to assess student progress in a coherent and consistent way and facilitate higher achievement for students across all levels of ability. Feedback in all of its forms underpins our assessment policy in order that all of our pupils know and understand the progress they are making and what their next steps are to continue to improve. It will also inform subject staff as to where there are gaps in students' knowledge and understanding.

Our assessments focus on how well our pupils know the Key Knowledge that has been defined in each subject. We have defined the Rainhill Standard in each subject at the end of Year 9; that is, key knowledge that each child needs to know, be able to apply and demonstrate confidently in that subject in order to progress on to KS4 and the study towards GCSEs or BTECs/Tech Awards. We follow the National Curriculum when defining Key Knowledge, taking into account our unique area and reflecting the needs and aspirations of all of our pupils.

Key Knowledge is defined in Y7, Y8 and Y9 to ensure that all of our children are taught what is important for them to be able to acquire the defined Key Knowledge at the end of Key Stage 3.

At KS4 and at KS5, the Key Knowledge required is defined using the specifications for the GCSE, A Level or Vocational qualifications. We ensure that this reflects our pursuit of excellence and that it places emphasis on areas of the specifications which have perhaps seen underperformance either nationally or in our own centre.

\* see below, section 6

#### **4. Assessment approaches**

At Rainhill High School, we see assessment in all of its forms as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use 3 broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment.

All forms of assessment are built to assess the degree to which a pupil has grasped the key knowledge that has been defined as being essential within that subject, that year. All Key Knowledge is on our website for reference.

##### **4.1 In-school formative assessment**

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

**Teachers** to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons

**Pupils** to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve

**Parents** to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

At Rainhill High School, formative assessment takes a range of forms:

##### **Low Stakes Testing**

Low stakes testing is effective in enabling us to gauge whether or not key knowledge from previous lessons has been retained, and where there are any misunderstandings or misconceptions either in the class as a whole or in individual pupils. They take place at the start of lessons, with pupils using their whiteboards to record answers for their teacher to feed back on. Low stakes testing can also occur at any point in the lesson to enable the teacher to gauge the retention of key knowledge before moving on.

##### **Targeted Questioning**

Questioning is a very important part of how we assess the effectiveness of learning in the classroom. Throughout every lesson, teachers will direct carefully constructed questions to individual pupils across the class with responses informing teaching that lesson or next, or highlighting where additional individual support maybe needed. This is especially important when used to complement low-stakes testing, perhaps to check whether misconceptions apparent earlier in a lesson have been addressed.

##### **Peer Marking**

This is routine expectation within a sequence of lessons and will enable pupils to review a partner's learning in order to reflect on their own. The process of articulating a concept or skill to a partner supports the transfer of knowledge

from the short term to the long-term memory. Again, this is a strategy designed to encourage independent learning and foster a sense of scholastic excellence.

### **In-class Assessments**

Twice a half term (English, Maths and Science and all subjects at KS4) and once a half term (KS3 non-core subjects), we will test the learning that has taken place in the immediately preceding period via in-class assessments

These tests, along with the end of year tests, are the only 'teacher marked' pieces of work. Written feedback is given to every pupil.

We have adopted a standard approach to in-class assessments:

- Tests are all 40 minutes long to ensure that those who are entitled to extra time are able to receive this during the lesson period.
- Every test will start with a section of multi-choice-questions that tests knowledge from the course as a whole – recall of prior knowledge is essential to long term retention
- There will be a mix of short and long response questions in every test
- Spelling, punctuation, grammar will be tested in all tests
- Reading skills will be tested in all tests

Research supports our assertion that the effectiveness of any marked work lies with the quality of feedback. Pupils will receive details of how and where they have done well and what they are expected to do as 'next steps' in order to address any areas for development.

## **4.2 In-school summative assessment**

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

**School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment

**Teachers** to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching

**Pupils** to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve

**Parents** to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period

### **Annual Summative Test KS3**

All pupils will be tested on the key knowledge and skills they have accessed from years 7 up to that point. We will support your child with revision and preparation for these exams, which will be held between May and June every year, for all year groups. The outcomes of these tests will inform the following year's curriculum and will also inform any review of setting for the following year. As with the tests that take place within the classroom during the year, feedback will be detailed and all pupils will receive information as to how to efficiently and effectively tackle their 'next steps'.

### **KS4**

All pupils will be tested on the key knowledge and skills they have covered from the GCSE or BTEC/Tech award syllabus up to that point.

In Year 10, pupils will sit formal LP examinations in the sports hall during term 3. In Year 11, pupils will sit three formal LP examinations in the sports hall in half term 2, 3 and 4. We will support your child with revision and preparation for these exams.

All tests in KS3 and KS4 are Quality Assured to ensure both consistency in levels of challenge and content across all subjects, and to ensure that all key knowledge taught is tested equitably. Furthermore, a rigorous standardisation and moderation process is undertaken within each subject area to ensure that all tests are

marked to the same standard.

In addition to this, at KS3, we triangulate our own judgements against national benchmarks every year through using GL Assessments with a cohort of pupils in each year.

### 4.3 Nationally standardised summative assessment

Nationally standardised summative assessment enables:

- **School leaders** to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- **Teachers** to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context
- **Pupils and parents** to understand how pupils are performing in comparison to pupils nationally

Nationally standardised summative assessments take the form of GCSEs and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4, and AS levels, A-levels and other post-16 qualifications in Key Stage 5.

## 5. Collecting and using data

We will record data from in-class assessments on a central management information system. This data is used for analysing in order to gauge progress and areas for development, and is shared once per term with parents.

Workload, and avoiding unnecessary workload, has been a key consideration in the formation of this policy. Data is collected once onto a mark book which is then managed by the data team to create reports and analysis.

## 6. Reporting to parents

Parents will receive a report three times a year, at the end of each term. This report will give information about attainment against key knowledge and where their child can go / what they need to do to address gaps in their knowledge or understanding – their strengths and areas for development.

In addition to this, parents will receive Attitude to Learning (ATL) grades for each subject, based on a 1-5 score, and information about attendance in school.

- Attendance will highlight
  - The total number of possible attendances for that pupil, and
  - The total number of unauthorised absences for that pupil, expressed as a percentage of the possible attendances
- ATL is graded as follows:



There is an annual Parents' Evening where parents can discuss their child's progress with subject teachers. These are on the school calendar which is published to parents.

At **KS3**, we do not issue grades. Reports are issued at the end of each term that state whether a pupil is:

- **on track** to achieve an understanding of the key knowledge that has been defined in every subject
- **Working towards** an understanding of the key knowledge that has been defined in every subject, or
- **Working beyond** an understanding of the key knowledge that has been defined in every subject.

At **KS4**, a report is sent at the end of every term that tells parents the GCSE or BTEC grade that their child is currently working at, following tests in class or more formal LP exams. These reports also contain details of the aspirational target that their child should be working towards. Like the KS3 report, parents will receive information about what they can do at home to support their child on their GCSE or Vocational Qualification journey.

## 7. Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points, and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

## 8. Training

Teachers will be kept up to date with developments in assessment practice, and will be able to develop and improve their practice on a regular basis through a coordinated programme of CPD. This takes place throughout the year and includes:

- Initial INSET in September of each year
- Weekly dedicated CPD time within Faculty or Pastoral meetings
- Fortnightly Middle Leaders' Meeting
- Half termly staff meeting

All of our teachers are encouraged to examine externally in order to develop both their awareness of assessment and approaches to teaching and learning.

L Aylward, Assistant Headteacher, is responsible for ensuring that the annual CPD programme reflects developments in assessment theory or practice.

## 9. Roles and responsibilities

### 9.1 Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data

## **9.2 Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

## **9.3 Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

## **10. Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by W Segal, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. It is the role of the Head of Faculty, Head of Department and KS Coordinators to ensure that the policy is followed.

W. Segal will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through QA of assessments, lesson visits, learner work reviews, pupil progress meetings, pupil voice and teacher voice and, where applicable, Curriculum Area Reviews and Targeted Area Reviews.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This assessment policy is linked to:

- Curriculum policy