

Assessment, recording and reporting policy

Effective from 1 September 2024

Rationale:

Through our curriculum and assessment practices, we aim to build a love of learning and a drive for success, with students believing there is no limit to what they can achieve when they aspire high and are hard-working, confident learners with real self-belief.

Heckmondwike Grammar School underwent a curriculum update in the academic year 2020 that is continues to evolve to ensure our curriculum continues to be fit for purpose. It demonstrates clear intent, implementation and impact in line with the Ofsted Framework. It aims to inspire students to develop a lifelong love of learning and to build the knowledge, skills and aptitudes that they need to be successful when they move beyond HGS in the 21st century.

In line with this, it was essential that our assessment practices were reviewed to reflect the best practice to support learning in our curriculum offer. Assessment practices are crucial for successful learning and must complement the ongoing teaching and learning practices that exist throughout the year to create and support an effective climate for learning. This policy seeks to outline our new assessment, recording and reporting systems to give greater clarity for staff, students and parents around the ways in which our students are assessed and how that is to be recorded and reported to parents across the school.

Guiding Principles:

- Assessment represents feedback to students, parents and teachers and is inextricably linked to learning and teaching;
- Assessment enables students to reflect on what has been learned and how it was learned. This reflective practice is a key element in students devising effective learning strategies to increase attainment and achievement;
- Assessment should enable teachers to make their teaching as effective as possible with appropriate intervention strategies implemented and monitored;
- Assessment should enlighten students as to the current standard of their work and should give clear guidance as to what they could do to improve or take the next steps;
- Learning should be personalised to the individual pupil or student in response to their needs;
- Assessment should lead to information for parents that enables them to support the progress of their child(ren) via reporting opportunities including performance reports and parents' evenings;
- Information from assessment should be open and accessible to all;
- Good assessment is a key element of the process of guiding and motivating students towards fulfilling their potential;
- Good assessment practices promote enhanced levels of independent learning.

Assessment practices

Evidence for assessment:

Teachers will collect evidence from two different types of assessments:

- SteppingStone Assessments (Formative)
- MileStone Assessments (Summative)

These assessments are designed to provide different information for students, teachers and parents as described below.

SteppingStone Assessments

SteppingStone assessments are short tests done within the lesson and are based on work recently completed by students. For example, they maybe low stakes quizzes, or tests on the unit of work recently covered in class. They are used to find out what students have and have not understood in order for interventions to be put into place and hence misconceptions can be addressed swiftly. Written and/or verbal feedback is provided on SteppingStone assessments and the associated percentages are recorded centrally, but there are no associated grades, and they are not reported home.

This formative style of assessment is a key element of learning and teaching and will be used within lessons to provide students with immediate feedback on their learning – what they know, understand and can do – such that teaching is responsive. It will also be used by the teacher to inform planning. There will be a minimum of two SteppingStone assessments per term.

MileStone Assessments

MileStone assessments are larger synoptic tests and exams. They cover and draw from all of the work covered in that subject up to that point hence MileStones are synoptic assessments. Due to the synoptic nature of the MileStone assessments, we can use grade boundaries to assign either GCSE or A 'level grades to each assessment (see below for further information).

These grades are recorded onto SIMS and form part of the report sent home to parents.

Written and/or verbal feedback is provided on MileStone assessments and many subjects will use question level analysis where appropriate to diagnose and analyse common misconceptions.

There will be just one MileStone Assessment for each year group per term. The last MileStone assessments conducted in an academic year are known as Finals and represents the culmination of all the work to date for each subject in all examined subjects.

Attainment grades – all years

We believe that HGS students have an inherent desire to do well and have high aspirations, given they have already had to demonstrate this to gain a place in our school. We need to build their confidence quickly and establish the best possible learning habits to underpin future success.

The grades awarded represent the grade the student is likely to achieve should they continue to work at their current level.

It is essential that we use Years 7 & 8 to ensure students develop the skills, confidence and baseline knowledge to access examination courses successfully and thrive in a challenging school where demands are high. For this reason, the curriculum and assessment model in Years 7 & 8 focuses on providing students with the widest possible experience across the curriculum and assessments are based on the varying demands of the subjects delivered.

Students in Years 7 & 8 focus on developing the best possible learning and behaviour habits to maximize their chances at GCSE and beyond and, in succeeding with this, attain results that are the best they can relative to their target grade. In line with this, and to prepare students fully for KS4, students will receive a GCSE equivalent grade in all subjects.

MileStone Assessments for years 7, 8 & 9 are likely to take place in classrooms, and could occur over several lessons.

Year 9 indicates the start of our students' journey towards external examinations and by this time the best possible habits relating to learning and behaviour will have been established. Work across the curriculum will be assessed in line with examination mark schemes and a GCSE equivalent grade awarded. Because the amount of work covered in each MileStone assessment increases, there could be some degree of fluctuation in these grades.

Year 10 & 11 is a continuation of the GCSE courses and GCSE grades are awarded in the same way. In Year 11, the MileStone assessments are the mock examinations that take place in November and March.

In Years 12 & 13, tests will be based on A-level exam questions and specification content. This will be covered in a cumulative/progressive way throughout the course. Mark schemes for A-level will be used with A 'level grades awarded for MileStone Assessments. In Year 13 Milestone Assessments are the Mock examinations in November and March.

Target Grades

Having something to aim for is key to success in life. In this regard, all students are supported in aiming to be the very best they can be and pushing themselves to work hard in line with the school's motto 'Nil Sine Labore'.

Target grades are part of the tools we use to help motivate students to push themselves are used to establish a generic and intrinsic drive for success. Targets are set using past exam performance at KS2 and GCSE as well as a challenge factor applicable for high attaining students. Targets are aspirational, yet achievable and from September 2023 all new targets will be set using the ALPS Minimum Expected Grades.

Reporting to parents

Termly reports will be published to students and parents both electronically and on paper. Students will receive a folder in which to keep their reports as they move through the school years. They can then build up their portfolio of reports for the future so they can look back on their progress with pride.

Reports are published towards the end of each term following the MileStone Assessments and will include the following information:

Target Grade
Milestone Assessment Percentage
MileStone Grade
Attitude to Learning
Areas for Development

It will also include House Reward information such as:

Ethos Points
Classwork Excellence Points
Participation Excellence Points
Homework Excellence Points
1898 Points
Academic Achievement Points
Negative Points
Net Total Points
Bronze, Silver Gold Headteacher's Award Dates
Overall School Attendance
Extra-Curricular Engagement

MileStone Grades will be colour coded green if they are on or above target or Red if they are below target for each subject.

Attitude to Learning Descriptors

1. Always meets expectations, always engages in lessons, and is always well prepared for learning.
2. Usually meets expectations, usually engages in lessons, and is usually well prepared for learning.
3. Sometimes meets expectations, sometimes engages in lessons, and is sometimes well prepared for learning.
4. Too rarely meets expectations, too rarely engages in lessons, and is too rarely prepared for learning.

Developments

This is what a student needs to develop to improve their Attitude to Learning and their Attainment Grades. These are brief descriptions of areas to address with further information available from the subject teacher and are as follows:

- Classwork
- Homework
- Participation
- Organisation
- Conduct
- Equipment
- Punctuality
- Independent Study
- Literacy

Contact with parents

The schedule for data collection and parent's evenings is designed to maximise the contact with parents relating to each child's performance across their school career. Data collections are designed to give an overview of attitude to learning and relative attainment/progress on a termly basis, thereby giving staff, students and parents a 'big picture' of student performance.

Parents' evenings are scheduled throughout the year and are designed to be an opportunity for teachers to meet parents and students to discuss subject specific information from within the report.