



Ref: Admin/comm/lets/SLT/17-18/LLA/Progressreview

6th November 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Progress Reviews 2017 – 18

Ahead of the first Progress Review reports on Friday, the information attached to this letter is to remind you of the changes we have made to the assessment systems in school this year.

National Curriculum Levels have been removed

Nationally, there are no longer any National Curriculum levels. At Culcheth High School, all assessments in Year 7 and 8 are marked against set criteria for the unit/ subject. The percentage score achieved on these assessments will be reported to you.

Key Stage 4 has changed at Culcheth High School

The Key Stage is now three years long, starting in Year 9 and lasting up till the end of Year 11. All students in Year 9 – 11 will receive a GCSE Progress Review. All GCSE subjects will report the target grades for the end of Year 11 and the GCSE grades they achieved in assessments so far. Please note that Core PE and PD are not GCSE examined subjects and therefore will not be assessed using GCSE grades. The teachers of these subjects will continue to use percentages.

WAGs have been removed from Progress Reviews

In the past, you have always received “Working at Grades”. This was an average grade that tried to sum up overall where your child was up to with their learning. However, for example in a subject like Science with lots of different topics across Biology, Chemistry and Physics it didn’t tell you which were areas of strength for a student and which were areas that needed further work. Often, it was also a combination of class work as well as exams. To reflect the changes to the structure of GCSE exams, where exam performance is now the only measure for many subjects, we have changed our systems accordingly.

QMAs are now being used in Progress Reviews

A Quality Marked Assessment is an exam or assessment your child has taken in lesson time. It is a specific piece of work for which they should have revised or prepared. These are the “milestones” of assessment and quality feedback during the school year. Although there is some variation for subjects with smaller curriculum time at Key Stage 3, most subjects will complete six QMAs during the year. In Year 7 and 8, QMAs will be reported in percentages. In Year 9 – 11 QMAs will be reported in GCSE grades.

Year 11 Parents - Beware of the “QMA Affect”

It is expected that the change to using QMAs for the Progress Reviews, for Year 11 especially, will look like overall student performance has fallen. It hasn’t, it is just more honest. There is no “estimation” involved taking several pieces of work into account (some stronger than others) or combining the higher performance in class time versus examination performance. The QMA results you will receive will be the marks your son or daughter has achieved in the first half term of work this year in test conditions. If you or they feel their marks have dropped, it is important to act and look at what needs to change; is it more time on revision, seeking support from revision classes in school, getting revision guides for the subject and working at home or completing past paper questions and seeking teacher feedback. All of these actions were covered at the recent Learning Strategies Evening held in school.

GCSE Fine Grades have been introduced

To help you as parents, and students understand performance, and look for progress or areas for further work, we will report GCSE grades as fine grades. For example a GCSE Grade 5, will be reported as a Grade 5+ indicating that they have achieved at the top of this band, a Grade 5= indicates a performance in the middle of the band and a Grade 5- indicates a performance at the lower end of this boundary and therefore less secure than the other grades.

PPEs are taking place as normal, these are not affected by the changes to assessment

Pre Public Exams are essential opportunities for all GCSE students to practise and develop the confidence to sit the new, more challenging GCSE subjects. These exams are taken, like the real exams in the school hall, under real conditions. Students will have all their marks collated and a “mock” results day in school, designed to help students plan for next steps and college applications. Year 11 have two PPEs in December and April; Year 10 in December for English Literature, and June for all other subjects; Year 9 have their PPEs in May.

Progress Reviews will be issued to students and reviewed in “Ready to Learn” time with their tutor

Students will receive a paper copy of their Progress Review and be requested to glue this into their planner for future reference. They will use the Progress Ladders to review their progress against their targets and find out if they are “on track” to reach or exceed their targets.

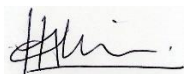
Progress Reviews will be sent direct to your Mobile Phone, four times a year

The new school app means that we are now able to send the Progress Review direct to your smart phone. If you have been an app user for a while now you will know that this is the way we are communicating with parents. All school “text messages” go direct to the app. When a Progress Review is released, we will send you a link direct to the app for you to click on and review at your leisure. *Please note the Progress Review link can only be sent to the parent registered as Priority 1 parent on our school systems.* If you do not have a compatible device to use the app, most of its features are available on our school website and we are happy to email Progress Reviews to you directly if you let us know.

We have always sent Progress Reviews three times a year, we have increased this to four times to increase the number of opportunities for you as parents to be informed and engage with your child's progress.

Hopefully, the summary of key changes above and the attached infographic help to outline the changes to the assessment systems and procedures at school. Should you have any questions about the new systems please contact myself at school. If, from Friday you have questions about your child's overall performance in their first Progress Review please contact the relevant Progress Leader for your child.

Yours faithfully



L Lakin (Mrs)
Assistant Headteacher