



Assessment Policy

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

January 2026

Policy review date: January 2027

Policy status: Non-statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Richard Foord Assistant Head Teacher

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 23

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 29

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Aims

Priestley Smith School aims to establish an assessment system which is designed to support strong educational outcomes for all children. All our pupils have a visual impairment and many have additional needs. A VI limits a child's incidental learning and many students with low or no vision will read at a slower speed than their sighted peers. So individual flightpaths through progressing at school will be different for each child, but must always be ambitious and challenging to ensure they meet their individual potential for their futures.

Our assessment should ensure that we give reliable information to pupils and parents about their performance individually and compared to other similar pupils. This allows for

- Meaningful tracking of pupils as they develop through each key stage
- Providing information which is transferable and easily understood based on formative and summative assessments
- Differentiating attainment between pupils of different abilities, giving early recognition of pupils who are falling behind and those who are excelling.
- Driving improvement for pupils and teachers and is closely linked to improving the quality of teaching.
- Ensuring feedback to pupils contributes to improved learning and is focused on specific and tangible objectives.

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
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Legislation and guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels and The Rochford Review.

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in the Education (Student Information) (England) Regulations 2005: schedule 1.

Principles of assessment

All assessments will be adapted to meet the VI and learning needs of each pupil. This may mean assessments are tactile, brailled or enlarged.

- The underlying principle of **assessment** at Priestley Smith School is to check and identify student understanding of the concepts and skills they are being taught in all subjects and to determine their next learning steps.
- Assessment is used to help the student to identify what they need to do to improve further and to enable the teacher to match a student's learning accurately to their ability and understanding.

- Assessment is carried out on a daily basis as part of every lesson and also on a thrice yearly basis where overall progress is summarised.
- Targets are set for the beginning of each term and the end of each Key Stage.
- Some students will undertake internal or external assessments, tests and exams during the academic year to measure their progress.
- Every child will receive a written report during the year, which focuses on the progress they have made.
- Parents have two Parents' Evenings per year and one annual review meeting where they discuss with staff their child's progress.

The Government has announced that schools need to create their own assessment systems involving the following principles:

1. **Give reliable information to parents about how their child, and their child's school, is performing.**
2. **Help drive improvement for pupils and teachers.**
3. **Make sure the school is keeping up with external best practice and innovation.**

Assessments form an integral part of teaching and learning at Priestley Smith School. The outcomes of assessments provide us with information on the learning and progress of students supporting us to identify intervention needs. For teachers this informs teaching practice and for students and parents it provides valuable insight into areas of strength and weakness.

Children who are aged 2-5 are assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework using the Development matters bands and Cherry Garden. Following the EYFS, most children will then be assessed against The National Curriculum targets, our assessment trackers and TEDS (Taught, Emerging, Developing and Secure) so that clear progression can be seen in a coherent way. Our Key Stage 4 and 5 assessments then measure progress through **Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2, GCSE and A levels**. (see pathways in curriculum policy)

Children in the early stages of learning (pre-progression steps) and no longer following the EYFS curriculum due to their age are assessed against the Engagement model.

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our specific students. Equally our assessment system is also bespoke, having been designed by skilled and experienced staff to measure the progress of students in very small steps within all areas of our curriculum. All students are given target grades for end of Key Stage as well as in KS3 and 4 in the individual subjects that they study. Target grades are generated based on a student's performance in their baseline testing and are forward estimates of how a student may perform in their future examinations utilising a flight path, taking into account individual SEND needs. Progress is measured against a student's target grade in a given subject.

Assessment approaches

At Priestley Smith School we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

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

IN-SCHOOL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

At Priestley Smith School we recognise that effective assessment for learning is fundamental to ensuring that the needs of our pupils are met and that every child makes outstanding progress. Effective in-school formative assessments can be carried out within the learning in the classroom and through the homework set weekly in Primary and every two weeks by individual subjects in Secondary. This ensures that:

- Teachers identify how students are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons
- Students measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve
- Parents gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

Teachers at Priestley Smith School use on-going formative assessment to identify short term intervention needs and to ensure that students are confident in all aspects of the curriculum. They use this method of assessment to identify gaps and misconceptions all of which are used to support learning. Students are involved in formative assessment throughout.

IN-SCHOOL SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

- School leaders to monitor the performance of student cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure students 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

- Students 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

At key points during the academic year teachers undertake summative assessments of the levels pupils have achieved. Pupils are assessed using B-Squared Connecting Steps levels. These are scales designed to capture the progress and achievement of pupils with special educational needs, who are working below age-related expectations. In order to ensure that our summative assessments of pupils' progress and achievement are reliable and accurate the school undertakes bi-annual standardisation and moderation exercises to check the reliability of individual teacher's assessments. Summative assessments of pupil's progress and achievements are reported to parents/carers every year at their child's Annual Review Meeting.

NATIONALLY STANDARDISED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Students who are working at an age-appropriate level will be entered into the following nationally standardised tests or assessment results will be entered into the government online portal.

- End of EYFS data
- Year 1 – phonics screening
- Key Stage 1 end of year teacher assessment
- Year 4 – Multiplication test
- Year 6 – Key Stage 2 SATS
- Year 11 – GCSEs
- Year 13 – A Levels

Children who are working below these levels will be disapplied from these tests. At Ks4 and 5 alternative courses will be offered. In some rare cases, we may consider the RBA inaccessible to a pupil. In this case, disapplication may be considered. Disapplication is permitted for individual pupils who are unable to participate, even when using suitable access arrangements are in place.

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Our Assessment Tool

At Priestley Smith School, Teachers use Excel trackers and Cherry Garden (add on feature to Tapestry) to track and monitor pupil progress throughout the year. This allows for coverage of and a cross over between the Engagement Model, Pre-Key Stage targets and the National Curriculum Targets.

This method to track and monitor pupils allows us to:

- Give us an accurate picture of where our children are at in relation to age expected/related expectations
- Follows a TEDS (Taught, Emerging, Developing and Secure) approach, which allows us to show progress on smaller steps.
- Allows us to see where a child's gaps are in order to support interventions and planning to close gaps.
- Works on multiple levels for a pupil, showing their range of abilities
- Curriculum breakdown shows progress within levels
- Shows skills and knowledge achieved from Baseline to Summer across 3 different data points
- Enables progress to be shown for all – even those not accessing the National Curriculum
- Shows assessment points yet to be achieved, whilst also showing whether a skill/knowledge has been taught, emerging, developing or secure.
- % automatically updates for easy to track progress.

At Priestley Smith School:

- Teachers follow a yearly pathway in target setting, assessing, evidencing and tracking pupil progress (Appendix 2)
- Trackers provide an on-going document for live marking, as formal marking doesn't take place.
- "Data Drops" where levels are compared and analysed are 3 times per year: December, March and June
- All levels must be updated by these dates on trackers/Cherry Garden by teachers.
- Supporting evidence and observations are provided through the platform Tapestry.

Teachers report levels in the following areas:

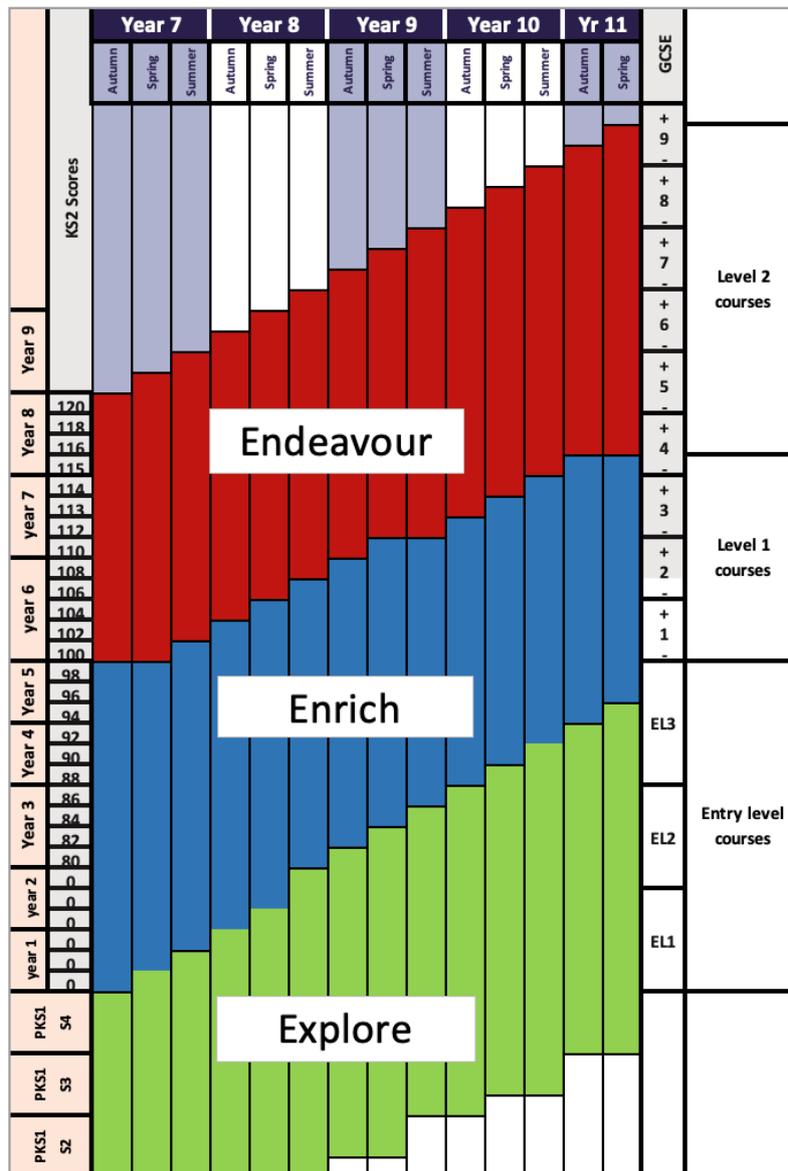
ENGAGEMENT STEPS

(THESE PUPIL ARE WORKING AT BELOW EQUIVALENT PRE-KEY STAGE 1 PROGRESSION STEP 1 AND NOT ASSESSED AGAINST SPECIFIC SUBJECTS)

KS3 to KS4 Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 grades

(level 1 and Level 2 grades are either GCSEs or BTECs)

Your child’s “working at grades” and their “predicted grades” for KS3 will help you map out their predicted grades for the end of KS4.....Remember the grades predicted are the minimum.....**They could gain better!**



KS5 Progression

Students attaining Grades 4 and above in 5 or more GCSEs including English and Maths can go on to study Level 3 courses (A Levels and Level 3 BTECs) Students who do not attain these grades will be supported in further Level 1 and 2 courses as appropriate.

Reporting to parents

Reporting to parents takes place through paper-based reporting, EHCP meetings and parents’ evenings All reports contain information on progress towards target grades and effort. Attendance is also reported at the end of each term.

TARGET SETTING

Teachers set targets for all pupils 3 times per year at the beginning of each term (Autumn, Spring and Summer). Teachers use the ‘Individual EHCP Outcomes and Educational Targets’ form to select appropriate National Curriculum/Engagement model targets that link to the outcomes identified on their EHCP. Each child will have targets linked to the four areas in EHC outcomes: Cognition and learning, Communication and Language, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory / Physical needs.

EVIDENCE

Evidence is added as an ongoing process throughout the year. Teachers use Tapestry to add a range of evidence such as photos, videos, observation notes and copies (photo of or scanned copy) of pupil's work.

Evidence must clearly identify the following:

- A range of evidence (photos, videos, pupils work, detailed observation)
- Which assessment point it links to on the National Curriculum Tracker
- Detailed description of what is happening in the evidence
- What level of support (if any) was given to complete the task/piece of work being submitted as evidence

Evidence may be linked to more than one assessment point.

Evidence will be uploaded regularly by teachers and teaching assistants.

Evidence will be peer reviewed at the end of each half term. Teachers will be paired up and check that each student has a variety of assessment evidence. The Assistant Head (primary) and Progress Leaders (secondary) will then check this and provide any necessary feedback.

Parents will also have access to Tapestry so they can see what their child has been learning at school.

MODERATION

The purpose of Moderation is to ensure consistent levelling across the school. Moderation helps teachers to increase the dependability of the assessment information they gather. Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) are asked to join Moderation when looking at the evidence for pupils on Engagement Steps and areas of Progression Steps.

Making consistent, reliable and valid decisions across different points in time is important for the school to report student progress or compare cohort data with historical information or national expectations.

Through moderation, Teachers support and learn from each other. Individual learning needs can be identified when analysing the data or through the moderation and allows teachers to set targets for planning. Individual and collective student achievement trends become clearer.

Moderation aims to further develop individual teacher decisions to be made with increased confidence. Reliability, validity and fairness within the process are enhanced, so achievement decisions are more reliable.

Internal Moderation at Priestley Smith takes place twice a year in January and in July. The purpose of the December moderation is to track the interim progress of all children and identify any potential gaps in progress and/or barriers to learning. All teachers will have updated current levels on the National Curriculum Trackers, prior to the moderation exercise. Assessment coordinators will then identify any areas where pupils have made large or unexpected jumps, or not achieved the expected progress for that individual pupil.

During the moderation meeting, teachers and teaching assistants access the trackers in pairs or small group. The Assistant Head and Progress Leaders will have met prior to the moderation meeting to look at the data across the school and identify specific pupils and/or subject areas to focus on. Teachers will then check the pupils/subject areas and decide if they agree that the evidence clearly demonstrates what it is meant to be showing and that there is a range of evidence to support this.

If there is not sufficient evidence to support this, the level awarded will be discussed, and the teacher will need to either add more evidence or reduce the awarded level of achievement. If teacher's judgements are deemed as sound and fair, not all pupils need to have evidence for every step.

Assistant Head (primary) and Progress Leaders (secondary) will meet following the Moderation meetings to check any further pupils/subject area evidence and/or levelling that were not covered in the meeting – this is often a timely process and requires two people minimum to ensure fair judgement.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following the moderation process, the Assistant Head and Progress Leaders draw the data from the trackers across the school. Tracker data is presented as an Excel document and in a word document, presented in subject areas. Engagement Steps data is presented as individual pupil tracking through pupil summary, level progress and line graph. Teachers receive feedback on their pupils' outcomes, including any actions, such as subject areas that require additional focus when target setting and planning for that pupil moving forwards. Feedback will be given to teachers in one-to-one meetings once Assistant Head and Progress Leaders have checked all the evidence and levels. Teachers may be asked to add further supporting evidence or give more information to explain how the pupil meets that assessment point and subsequent level on the tracker.

Pupil progress will be monitored throughout the year. A Pupil Profile may be necessary to explain why the pupil has made significantly more/less progress than expected e.g. due to extended absence from school, period of crisis etc. If a pupil has made lower progress in a subject area without a clear explanation as to why, the pupil and the subject area will be raised and shared with the class teacher to ensure that there is a focus on that area in the planning and teaching for that pupil going forwards.

Progress will be reported to parents yearly at the Annual Review. Data will be presented showing the most recent recorded yearly progress in all subject areas.

Feedback on pupil progress will be prepared for the Management Team and Governors ahead of meetings twice yearly.

Support for all

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of the impact of a students' special educational need and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including tactile, brailled and enlarged materials, communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all students. However, this should account for the amount of effort the student puts in as well as the outcomes achieved. For students working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to student starting points, and take this into account alongside the nature of students' visual impairment and learning difficulties.

Roles and responsibilities

GOVERNING BODY 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 students
- Holding school leaders to account for improving student and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data

HEADTEACHER

The Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher for Primary (following LMM with Progress Leaders) reports directly to the Headteacher, supporting the Headteacher with responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards across the key stages
- Analysing student progress and attainment, including individual students and specific groups (EAL / PP / MV / ethnicity / Boys / Girls / specific SEND need)
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of student progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

LEADERSHIP GROUP

- To provide subject teachers with the information, support and guidance they need to best support and maximise the performance of all students
- To monitor processes and procedures in order to ensure completion of summative assessments

PROGRESS LEADERS

- To use data to inform progress and punctuality intervention use this to focus 'progress walks'
- To identify students and action intervention; 'horizontal' underperformance across subjects in year groups to include progress and effort data along with attendance and punctuality
- To drive a positive culture and ethos
- To drive the rewards process (effort and progress along with improvements in both areas) through displays and assemblies
- To engage parents of those students who are progress concerns and meet with the parents of progress concerns at parent meetings and workshops

TEACHERS

- To develop appropriate assessments, that enable assessment across all ability groups
- To ensure assessments are completed

- To mark the common assessments, and provide feedback to students
- To undertake appropriate standardisation of assessments
- To ensure that moderation of assessments takes place.
- To undertake analysis of the outcomes of the assessment, and take action as appropriate via interventions.
- To log data within Excel sheets before the given deadline.
- To upload evidence onto Tapestry

PARENTS

- To use the reports to discuss progress with their child
- To use the report to highlight any concerns they may have
- To attend parents evenings and workshops as an opportunity to discuss reports with the class teacher

STUDENTS

- To use the reports to self-assess, and for discussion about progress with their teacher

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by SLT. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body
All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy.
Senior leaders will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through moderation, lesson observations, book scrutinies, student progress meetings and learning walks

Links with other policies

This assessment policy is linked to:

- Curriculum policy
- marking/feedback policy
- Examination policy
- T&L policy
- Attendance policy

Assessment and Moderation Yearly Pathway

All teachers have their own access to the trackers, Cherry Garden and Tapestry. They can access this from school and from home therefore they will use this throughout the academic year to set targets and plan lessons.

September – all teachers will baseline students set short term targets linked to pupils EHCP Outcomes. If a target is mastered before the next target setting date, a new target should be set in its place. The reviewing of targets is on-going throughout the term, not limited to the end of each term when new targets are set for the following term.

Evidencing – throughout the year teachers will add evidence to show pupil progress and to support the level that they are currently working at. Teachers are expected to add a range of evidence (photos, videos, observations, photos of worksheets can be added to Tapestry). This will be peer reviewed at the end of each half term. When reviewing the targets previously set at the beginning of the term, both ongoing (throughout the term) and at the end of the term, teachers must add supporting evidence to clearly demonstrate to what extent each pupil has achieved their target. National Curriculum trackers and Cherry Garden are used to assess and evidence children’s achievements and plan for next steps as part of ongoing marking.

Moderation:

Evidence will be moderated twice yearly in December and in June.

“Data Drop” dates have been set as:

- October – baseline
- December
- March
- April (yr 11&13)
- June (rest of school)

All levels must be updated and supporting evidence must be added by these dates.

Data will then be extracted from the Excel document and analysed.

All pupils in primary and KS3 will be assessed throughout their time at Priestley Smith using National Curriculum trackers and Cherry Garden. Alongside this, some pupils in KS4 will also use these trackers, others will be assessed against examination board content.

Post-16 assessment will also include a combination of the trackers/Cherry Garden - Skills4Life, Asdan and examination board content.

Data analysis: AHT Quality of Education and the MLT, will look for any areas of concern e.g. little or no progress made since the last data drop and highlight these pupils/areas. Teachers will be spoken to individually to establish the reasons why this pupil appears to have made little or no progress. A Pupil Profile may be required to explain reasons, e.g. pupil in period of crisis or absent from school. Good pupil progress will be determined on an individual basis as not all pupils make progress at the same rate.