



Newsletter

The White Hills Park Trust

Friday 11th September 2020

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Issue Number 258

Assessing Pupil Progress

As you know, one of the unusual aspects of the start of this school year is the fact that none of the pupils at our schools took part in external exams or tests last term. At this point in the year in all of our Trust schools, staff teams would normally be carrying out a detailed analysis of results, whether that is results from KS2 SATs at Florence Nightingale Academy, GCSEs at Bramcote College and Alderman White School, or A levels at Bramcote College 6th Form. Over the years, we have come to regard this information as vital – apart from the use we make of it in school, it decides the information published in school performance tables and sets the agenda for any external inspection that might happen.

However, the fact that this process has not happened in the same way as usual does not of course mean that we lack information about the performance of our pupils and their achievements. Up to the point when schools closed to the majority of pupils, teachers were going about their usual business of assessing the progress of their classes in a variety of ways – through marking work, carrying out regular low-stakes tests and quizzes, setting end of unit or end of topic assessments, observing children in class, and many other activities, all of which go towards forming an accurate and rounded picture of progress.

The key purpose of assessment for teachers is to establish how well pupils are doing, where there are strengths and weaknesses and, crucially, what to do next. It is this information that will make a difference. Knowing a grade or a level does not in itself help a pupil learn – the teacher's skill in using that information to diagnose barriers and decide how to overcome them is what's important. This is what drives assessment policy in our Trust schools.

Obviously other organisations need information about the overall achievement of a young person when they are seeking a university or college place, or applying for a job, and it is our duty to make sure that this is as accurate as possible. We have absolute confidence that the process we followed to produce Centre Assessed Grades, and the information we have passed on about pupils is fair, complete and accurate.

It's very difficult to predict the way we will be working over the rest of this year with any certainty. We have been told that exams and external tests will take place as normal, but as we have seen at the moment, plans are sometimes overtaken by events. The priority at the moment is to ensure that pupils come back to a safe school environment and get back to the pattern and rhythm of school. Over the course of this half term, teachers will make judgements about the levels that their classes are working at, establish whether any gaps have emerged over the last few months, and plan their learning accordingly. Formal assessments will be made in due course, and shared with parents, but we will not rush to judgements whilst there are other important priorities to be dealt with.

Dr. Paul Heery
Chief Executive Officer