



Assessment and testing at SNS

A short guide for parents and carers

Assessing students' progress is a necessary part of teaching and learning. At SNS, we believe our assessment practice is fair and not overly onerous. Assessments are fit for purpose and form an integral part of teaching and learning.

Internal assessments and tests

Every subject has topic schemes of work that build towards carefully selected assessment tasks throughout the year. This is in addition to regular marking and oral feedback from the teacher.

Class tests, assignments, essays, practical assessments (including performance) and extended pieces of work such as coursework can all be used as assessments to test topic knowledge and skills.

Subjects plan for an average of two assessments per term for all year groups i.e. six assessments over the academic year. The exception is for subjects that have fewer than three lessons a fortnight where one assessment a term is sufficient.

The outcomes of assessments are used by class teachers to judge students' progress and identify gaps in learning. They help teachers to give feedback to students and plan for differentiated lessons.

Our KS3 assessment approach does not use GCSE grades or levels but qualitative judgements and is based heavily upon teachers giving students feedback and subsequent student responses.

Whilst these assessments are important, they are 'low stakes' in that they do not have significant consequences if a student does not perform well.

Timing of assessments

We do not hold assessment weeks at SNS for these assessments. Instead, we allow subjects to deliver assessment tasks at appropriate times for their schemes of work.

Subject teachers should inform students of their year plan so that they are aware when topics finish and assessments will be carried out.

All subjects' curriculum maps, which include assessment schedules, are available on our website: www.stokenewingtonschool.co.uk/learning/subjects-and-resources

Support and preparation for exams

All staff recognise that tests and assessments can sometimes be stressful for students. We aim to inform, support and prepare students well to minimise this.

- Students receive information about exams and revision techniques in year and key stage assemblies and in PPP lessons (Personal, political and philosophical studies, formerly Life Skills).
- Subjects provide extra support with tuition after school for GCSE and A level students in the run-up to exams.
- Subjects provide revision resources on our school website.

- The Inclusion department screen all students on the SEN register with a Specific Learning Difficulty for additional support and exam special arrangements.
- Tutors, Heads of Year and counsellors are available for students to discuss exam pressure and anxiety.
- Core subjects conduct 'walking/talking' mock exams, where staff read out questions then guide and go through answers for students.
- We hold pre-public exams to help students practise exam routine.

Pre-public exams

We hold two sets of pre-public examinations (PPEs) for GCSE preparation. One in year 10 and one in year 11. We hold A level PPEs in January. These are formal exams held in the exam hall, usually using past papers, and are common practice in most secondary schools. A second A level PPE is carried out in class during March.

The purpose of PPEs is to:

- Allow students, teachers and parents to know how well a student is currently performing in each subject.
- Allow teachers and students to identify gaps in knowledge and skills that need to be focused on for improved outcomes.
- Provide students with experience of a formal exam setting and to rehearse routines and exam technique. It is important that students know what to expect and how exams are run.

Further information to help manage exam stress

We have a guide for parents and carers to help their child manage exam stress on our website at: www.stokenewingtonschool.co.uk/learning/assessment