**Paramount International Academy**

**Curriculum and Assessment Policy**

Aims and Principles

**At Paramount Academy we aim to provide a curriculum to develop inquisitive, independent thinkers with a love of learning. We understand that the curriculum, both within taught lessons and beyond them, should create an environment where questioning, academic risk-taking, creative thinking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged. We intend that our curriculum should imbue in our students these qualities: responsibility, independence and a sense that learning can excite and invigorate throughout life.**

The curriculum should be seen in its widest sense as the entire planned learning experience, plus the ‘hidden’ curriculum, that which children pick up through our interactions with and expectations of each other. This includes formal lessons as well as events, routines, and learning that take place outside the classroom. The Curriculum Policy should be seen within the overall aims and ethos of the School, which are at the core of its objectives.

Our curriculum is designed to allow each student to:

* achieve the best possible academic qualifications and standards, whatever their ability;
* ensure high levels of engagement, enjoyment and personal development.

Our curriculum provides a broad and balanced education which allows students to become:

* **Successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve their academic potential;
* **Confident individuals** who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
* **Responsible citizens** who can make a positive contribution to society.

**We aim for our curriculum to develop successful learners who:**

* can appreciate human achievement in the fields of languages, mathematics, science, technology, humanities, physical and aesthetic pursuits and creative and expressive arts, and to experience a sense of personal achievement in these fields during their time at school;
* are able to link areas of knowledge in a spirit of enquiry and can transfer skills from one area to another;
* are able to pursue courses appropriate for their stage of learning and particular abilities in order to achieve their personal best, in lessons which differentiate for student need;
* are able to learn independently and with others;
* can acquire the study skills and self-knowledge necessary to realise their learning potential, and are motivated to achieve the best they can, now and in the future;
* can show resilience in their learning, persevering even when tasks are difficult and understanding how to access help when needed;
* are reflective learners who understand their strengths and how they can be used; who can identify areas for development and know what to do in order to make progress;
* are creative, resourceful and able to solve problems.

**We aim for our curriculum to develop confident individuals who:**

* show courage and compassion in their dealings with others;
* can respond positively and with resilience to the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
* can develop for themselves an active and healthy lifestyle;
* can evaluate risk, take managed risks and stay safe;
* can relate well to others;
* have secure values and principles to distinguish right from wrong;
* will become articulate, confident players on a global stage;
* are increasingly independent, able to show initiative and organise themselves;
* are willing to try new things, are ambitious and able to make the most of opportunities;
* are open to the excitement and inspiration offered by the natural world and human achievements.

 **We aim for our curriculum to develop responsible citizens who:**

* can participate as effective, respectful citizens within a global society;
* acquire an understanding of the social, economic and political issues of the world and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;
* can challenge injustice, are committed to human rights, and can strive to live peaceably with others;
* understand the complex human interaction with, and dependence upon, the local and global environment, and develop a caring and responsible attitude towards the environment;
* can change things for the better, taking into account the needs of future generations in the choices they make.

**Curriculum Delivery**

We believe strongly in the importance of the basic key skills of literacy and numeracy, as these form the foundation for achieving good progress in all subject areas and success in adult life. We are an English-medium school, although we recognise and welcome the importance of other languages, cultures and beliefs (please refer to our ESL Policy).

We believe the Cambridge Curriculum offers the best match for our approach to education. It has high expectations for each age group and is relevant internationally. It provides top quality teaching and assessment resources, including the Cambridge Checkpoint Examination at Year 6, which is an internationally recognised qualification.

Other subject areas are based on the U.K. National Curriculum, adapted for the context of the country we are living in. Cultural links are also developed through the study of Chichewa, one of the main national languages of Malawi.

Differentiation is an important aspect of our curriculum delivery as being key to ensuring that *all* students make or exceed expected progress. Alongside planned differentiated activity and learning, we set for phonic groups to ensure appropriate content levels for all ability ranges.

We also offer additional support for those pupils who may need it at some time to help them strengthen areas of weakness or difficulty.

Extra-curricular learning, values and PHSCE underpin our curriculum, offering additional opportunities relating to emotional and social development. We offer wellbeing and social education classes in curriculum time and after-school clubs, covering a broad range of wider opportunities.

**Curriculum Subject Areas**

**Literacy across the Curriculum**

We aim for all of our students to become literate and articulate communicators. In all subjects, pupils should be taught to express themselves correctly and appropriately on paper and orally, and to read accurately and with understanding. Pupils should be taught to recognise and use Standard English. In writing, pupils should be taught to use correct spelling and punctuation and follow grammatical conventions. They should also be taught to organise their writing in logical and coherent forms. In speaking, pupils should be taught to use language precisely and cogently. Pupils should be taught to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively. In reading, pupils should be taught strategies to help them read with understanding, to locate and use information, to follow a process or argument and summarise, and to synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading. They should be specifically taught strategies to aid revision, including how to retain information long-term for deep understanding.

**Numeracy Across the Curriculum**

The mathematics curriculum framework explores five content areas: number, geometry, measure, handling data and problem solving. This curriculum focuses on principles, patterns, systems, functions and relationships so that pupils can apply their mathematical knowledge and develop a holistic understanding of the subject.

Similarly, all subjects are responsible, where appropriate, for developing students’ numeracy when opportunities arise during the course of the lessons. This can be done through asking students to use mental maths, basic mathematical formulae, tables and graphs to present data, and estimates and calculations.

**Science**

This curriculum framework covers four content areas: scientific enquiry, biology, chemistry and physics. Scientific enquiry is about considering areas, evaluating evidence, planning, investigating, recording and analyzing data. Environmental awareness and some history of science are also part of the curriculum.

**Use of ICT Across the Curriculum**

Pupils should be given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects.

**Health and Safety**

All subjects have a duty to ensure appropriate compliance with Health and Safety guidelines, but specific responsibilities lie with science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and design, and physical education. When working with tools, equipment and materials, in practical activities and in different environments, including those that are unfamiliar, pupils should be taught:

a. about hazards, risks and risk control.

b. to recognise hazards, assess consequent risks and take steps to control the risks to themselves and others.

c. to use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risks.

d. to manage their environment to ensure the Health and Safety of themselves and others.

e. to explain the steps they take to control risks.

**Curriculum Plan**

**Subject area Number of hours**

Phonic Groups (sets) ½ hour daily

English one hour daily

Mathematics one hour daily

Science three hours weekly

ICT one hour weekly + cross-curricular time

History one hour weekly

Geography one hour weekly

Art & Design one hour weekly

P.E. one hour weekly

Swimming one hour weekly

French ½ hour weekly

Wellbeing / Social Education ½ hour weekly

Chichewa ½ hour weekly

Library ½ hour weekly

**Assessment**

What do we mean by assessment?

Assessment is the process by which we as teachers – and our children as learners – make judgements about their work in order to gauge progress. It enables learners to understand and feel confident about what they do, and highlights the skills they need to consolidate and develop in order to make progress.

Accurate and systematic assessment not only highlights learners’ awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, but also informs our planning. In addition, the formal grading or levelling of written outcomes guides us in structuring our teaching groups and in determining the nature and levels of support that children require.

Increasingly, the focus is on assessment as part of day-to-day work. Research indicates that students are better motivated to learn and make faster progress when they are actively involved in the assessment process. In recent years, it has become part of good classroom practice to share learning objectives with pupils – to shift the emphasis from the teacher to the learner – so that pupils can better understand what they are learning, why they are learning it and how the activities might develop their skills. The more reflective the children become, the more responsible for their learning they are likely to feel, and the more enthusiastic they are to improve. (AfL)

“Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.” (Assessment Reform Group 2002)

Types of assessment

There are four main types of assessment.

* **Formative Assessment**

The process by which a teacher observes, evaluates, discusses or marks a piece of work and identifies specific strengths and weaknesses in order to provide a focus for teacher/student discussion and student self-analysis / reflection. It can also show what pupils already know about a particular topic or unit of work.

* **Diagnostic assessment**

Results from formative assessment, i.e. we use the feedback to determine the pupils’ needs and how s/he needs to plan to meet them. Diagnostic assessment might also take the form of tests specifically developed to measure a child’s particular difficulties (e.g. Sandi).

* **Summative assessment**

The feedback given to the student at the end of a marked piece of work which highlights strengths and weaknesses to be addressed. It is also a term which can be used to describe more formal end-of-unit or end of phase tests.

* **Continuous assessment (AfL)**

Day-to-day assessment – a process which is concerned not just with outcomes, but with promoting the whole learning process. By establishing a classroom climate in which both teachers and learners are actively engaged in this process, assessment has more impact and value.

Simply praising children’s work has no formative or diagnostic value; equally, correction of every error is likely to undermine a pupil’s self-esteem and prevent them from seeing clearly their priorities in terms of targets to work on.

How does assessment help children?

Assessment helps children improve **skills** by:

* Providing them with a **context** and **purpose** for their current learning
* Reinforcing their knowledge / understanding of content and skills
* Enabling them to **reflect** on their learning in order to utilise it in other contexts
* Helping them to **modify their approach** to learning where appropriate

Assessment can **motivate** children by:

* Heightening their **awareness of progress** made – providing encouragement whilst recognising targets for improvement
* Offering them a ‘**teaching’ role** via peer assessment – it is claimed that we remember 70% of what we explain to others

NB:

* Although children appreciate praise, surveys have shown that the most important part of teacher feedback is the identification of what they need to improve and advice about how to do so.
* Reflection time – by providing ‘time out’ from ‘doing’, reflection time helps pupils to consider modifications (allowing learning/ internalisation to take place).
* By making teaching & learning criteria transparent, assessment can also inform parents and encourage a supportive dialogue between parents and children – and home and school.

How does assessment help teachers?

Assessment **empowers** teachers by:

* Helping them to **understand learners** as individuals and to recognise and understand individual / group / class strengths and weaknesses
* **Monitoring rates of progress** and raising awareness of difficulties in assimilation which can help identify areas where consolidation and support are needed.
* Creating **structure** for feedback dialogues.
* **Informing detailed planning**.

Assessment supports other teachers by:

* Creating a detailed profile of development which helps teachers new to the class to plan using prior knowledge

Assessment for learning – summary

AfL is a form of continuous assessment which:

* Can be used in a **variety of learning contexts**
* Is an **integral** rather than separate part of lessons
* Can be used **at any point** in the learning process
* Focuses on the process of learning, not just the end result
* Provides learners with **useful feedback** in a form which helps them to recognise what they have already achieved, what they need to do to improve further and how they can achieve this improvement

AfL enables teachers and pupils to work together in an assessment partnership which:

* Involves learners by sharing **what, why and how** they are learning
* Help both teachers an learners to **check current understanding and progress** and **make informed judgements** about what to do next
* Enables children to become more **reflective and independent learners** through **self and peer assessment**.

**How does assessment and reporting to parents work at Paramount Academy?**

In addition to the on-going Afl approach detailed above, we assess formally at the end of each term. This allows assessments which are levelled internationally and enables students and teachers to see how pupils are performing in comparison to pupils of similar ages across the world, and compared to Cambridge expectations at the end of each year.

At the end of each term, parents are given an End of Term Assessment Sheet which details the areas of the core subjects that each child made good progress in, and those that they found more challenging.

At the end of each academic year parents will receive a detailed report showing how their child has progressed and developed over the year. Twice a year, during the first and third term, parents will be formally invited to a Parent-Teacher Conference, in addition to informal meetings which will be on-going throughout the year. In the second term, parents will be invited to a meeting by teachers who have concerns about their child’s progress.

**Monitoring and Teacher Development**

Marking and quality of work is monitored regularly and thoroughly at Paramount. Moderation sessions include scrutiny of books to monitor the quality of marking and feedback, assessment, presentation and level of challenge.

Records are kept of pupil progress throughout their time at Paramount Academy, and any plateaus or drops are investigated and interventions put in place, if necessary.

Teachers are observed at least twice a year and appraisal meetings are held with the Head Teacher each year. They also undergo self-appraisal and carry out peer observation. Any INSET needs are added into the INSET programme.

INSET is held for two weeks before the commencement of the school academic year, and weekly thereafter.

**Monitoring, evaluation & review**

The Leadership Team continuously monitors the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that:

* Curriculum is appropriate, challenging and relevant whilst following guidance from CIE.
* The curriculum is delivered successfully through the monitoring and development of good and outstanding teaching and learning.
* Staff appraisal is used to ensure that standards in all areas of this policy are implemented to a high level.
* This policy is reviewed annually, utilising parent consultation and feedback to ensure all views are considered on how we report progress.
* All national guidance on changes to curriculum and assessment are reflected in our curriculum and assessment models.
* Targets are challenging and broken down into small steps.

Date: 18th September 2017

Date for review: September 2018