

“Achieving success. Valuing Others”**Aims****Achieving Success**

Encouraging high aspiration and a love of learning
 Maximising progress and potential
 Providing rewarding learning experiences
 Offering diverse opportunities
 Recognising and celebrating all achievement
 Preparing for independence and future challenges

*by***Valuing Others**

Contributing to a safe school environment
 Showing tolerance, respect and fairness
 Listening to and respecting others' views
 Appreciating and embracing diversity
 Being an active member of our school and local community
 Co-operating with others

Rationale

It is a key aim of Helsby High School to group students in a way that ensures that all students perform to the best of their ability and make good progress.

In Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, grouping models will be decided based on student progress data and researched based evidence. This might be in mixed ability groups, or where appropriate, groups set based on students' prior attainment.

Within each group, set or mixed ability class, there will be differences and students will exhibit a wide variety of strengths and areas for development. Influential research shows that grouping that is assertive, thoughtfully planned, rigorously monitored and evaluated in order to be able to assess the impact on students' achievement and progress, can have a significant and a positive effect on students' progress.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that grouping in the school is based on a clear and open system that is focused on the needs of learners and ensures that learners are making good progress. To do this the system must ensure:

- all relevant data including historical and current data is used when adjusting groups or sets to inform the professional judgements of teachers.
- group and set movements do not take place without relevant consultation and documentation.
- clear explanations are communicated to students and their parents/carers for their groups and sets.
- a system of regular review and adjustment of groups and sets, where necessary, is in place.

Principles and Practices

To operate this policy effectively there are a series of principles and practices by which it should be judged. These principles and practices form the success criteria by which the policy can be evaluated:

- Within each group, whether mixed ability or set, teachers tailor their preparation, teaching styles and content to meet the needs of individuals and differentiate work as appropriate to ensure that all students make expected progress or better.
- In every taught group students need the opportunity to work with others in a fashion that is appropriate to the task and topic. Teaching needs to stimulate

student's higher-order social and academic skills through interaction that takes place between group members, creating an appropriate level of challenge and so accelerating their progress.

- Resources in lessons will be targeted effectively and matched to the individual students' needs. Additional staffing will be directed to enable increased flexibility for small-group tuition. The effective use of other adults in the classroom, both to support specific groups and individuals, will be utilised where possible to enable the teacher to devote extra time to guided work.
- Where grouping students by rank order, it should be by ability and not behaviour. Students are grouped according to their summative assessment information but also taking KS2 prior attainment and other ability indicators in that subject into account. Particular care is taken when naming ability groups to ensure that the name of the group does not become a limiting factor with regards student achievement and progress. School Leaders monitor grouping decisions and changes to ensure that students' motivation and self-esteem remain positive.
- Whether grouping is mixed or according to ability, consideration will be given to the number of students in each group. This is to ensure the teacher-student ratio is such to allow for effective teaching and learning within the classroom, and that students can make at least expected progress.
- In mixed ability grouped and set classes alike, teaching methods and pace are tailored to the individuals. All teachers are expected to enable students to benefit from teaching pitched just beyond their level of development so that students can be appropriately challenged and can be motivated by peers of similar and other levels of ability.
- Department Leaders monitor the composition of groups and sets for gender, ethnicity and vulnerable students to ensure that grouping decisions are based on progress and attainment data and not influenced by other factors.
- Department Leaders use monitoring, evaluation and review (MER) procedures to ensure that grouping arrangements allow students to make expected progress or better.
- Department leaders wishing to make changes to the grouping arrangements in their subject need to ensure that they follow school procedures for consultation before a final decision is made. Consultation should take place as follows:
 - Discussion with Senior Leadership Link
 - Briefing paper written and shared with SLT
 - If appropriate - Briefing paper amended, and shared with Governors
 - Agreed grouping changes implemented

Appendix A**Procedures for 2018-2019****Key Stage 3****Year 7**

- On entry to the school data from the partner primary schools will be collected by the Year Leader and key Stage Leader for Year 7 assisted by the SENDCO where appropriate.
- This data will include the raw marks and levels for KS2 Standardised tests, teacher assessments, cognitive ability test (CAT) scores and any other information deemed appropriate by the Year 7 Pastoral Team.
- This data will be presented to the SLT with responsibility for Curriculum, who will share it with Department Leaders in order to produce a recommendation for grouping decisions to go for ratification by the Senior Leadership Team.
- The SLT with responsibility for Curriculum will make a recommendation on the maximum and minimum size of groups to Department Leaders and Senior Leadership Team based on the size of classrooms and the needs of the students.
- In many subjects, including English and PSHCE, students are taught in tutor groups to aid transition and help them get to know other members of their tutor group.
- Setting decisions for Maths and Science departments can be recommended by the Department Leader but in other subjects where subjects are linked in the timetable structure, consultation will be necessary amongst different department areas.
- The recommendations that go to the Senior Leadership Team need to include a rationale for the grouping decisions and an indication that the evidence is in place to explain the decisions to parents.
- The initial grouping decisions will be reviewed twice in Year 7. In the first week in December following the first Student Profiles (progress reports) all subjects will be invited to recommend urgent changes. These changes should be restricted to only very clear cases of mis-grouping. They should be submitted to the SLT with responsibility for Curriculum and if approved will be enacted at the start of term in January.
- Grouping will be reviewed at the end of Year 7 according to the procedure outlined in Appendix B. It is extremely important that Department Leaders collect the evidence to support any group change request and ensure that teachers in their departments have communicated effectively over a period of time with the student and parents likely to be affected by a group change. Group changes decisions should not come as a surprise and should they be challenged by a parent the Department Leader will be required to meet the parents to share the evidence and explain the decisions. It is very important when the decision is a joint one between more than one department that the Department Heads have liaised effectively and all understand the rationale for the decision.
- In English, assessments taken across the year will be considered as part of the grouping review to ensure a consistent mix of abilities in each group.

Year 8

The grouping decisions in Year 8 will follow the same pattern as in Year 7:

- The initial grouping decisions will be reviewed twice in Year 8. In the first week in December following the first Student Profiles (progress reports) all subjects will be invited to recommend urgent changes. They should be submitted to the SLT with responsibility for Curriculum and if approved will be enacted at the start of term in January.
- Grouping will be reviewed at the end of Year 8 according to the procedure outlined in Appendix B. It is extremely important that Department Leaders collect the evidence to support any group change request and ensure that teachers in their departments have communicated effectively over a period of time with the student and parents likely to be affected by a group change. Group change decisions should not come as a surprise and should they be challenged by a parent the Department Leader will be required to meet the parents to share the evidence and explain the decisions. It is very important when the decision is a joint one between more than one department that the Department Leaders have liaised effectively and all understand the rationale for the decision.

Year 9

It is expected by Year 9 that there will be few group changes as the progress of students should have been clearly reflected in previous decisions. After the options process many students will be moving into courses where grouping arrangements will change. There will be an opportunity particularly in Maths and Science to make changes on the same model as Years 7 and 8.

Key Stage 4**Core Subjects**

In KS4 setting is most prevalent in the core subjects of Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages. Changes in these sets will be based on the same principles as Key Stage 3 but can happen at different times usually determined by data produced by formal assessments. Students will be set in these subjects based on their KS2 prior attainment and their achievement in this subject area over KS3, but also ensuring that they are in an appropriate set to reflect the correct level of challenge to follow their Expected Attainment Pathway. Students are taught in mixed ability groups in English, because research by organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)ⁱ has shown that higher ability students are not disadvantaged by mixed ability groups, and that middle and lower ability students make better progress in mixed ability groups. In mixed ability groups though, students will work on tasks differentiated to suit their ability when appropriate.

Option Subjects

Setting in the option subjects is far less common as the numbers in each subject often do not allow it. Where setting is operated in an option subject it will be largely based on the formal assessments from KS3.

Appendix B

Key Stage 3 Group Change Procedures and Schedule

WHO	ACTION	DEADLINE
Subject Teacher	Subject teacher uses exam marks and departmental assessment procedures to identify students who should be considered for group changes and send to DL	Early June
DL	Receive names to create a list of students to be considered for group changes	
Student Profiles (progress reports)	Subject teachers who have Student Profiles to complete may make reference to the fact that a student is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working below target • Not achieving expected levels • Demonstrating a poor rate of progress 	End of June
DL	Provide SLT link with the department list of suggested group changes. This will be discussed by the ELT at a meeting in early July.	End of June
KSL/YL/DL/SLT	DL send classlists to YL/KSL to review for potential pastoral issues and suggested changes. DL to consider ELT observations, YL comments and consult with SLT Link for final decision. Send final list to Data Manager/Office Manager to prepare mailing. Inform DL who can confirm group changes to subject teachers.	Beginning of July
DL	Arrange with subject teachers to explain to students the group change decisions. The need to do this personally and sensitively is paramount particularly if the movement is down. DL will liaise with YL/KSL/FT on sensitive cases.	First week in July
Admin Staff	Collate group changes into the standard letter format. These to be electronically signed by SLT with responsibility for Curriculum.	First week in July
SLT/DL	SLT with responsibility for Curriculum will process initial parental email/phone enquiries but DL will have to return phone calls, provide written responses and make appointments for parents if necessary.	Second week in July

Appendix C**Possible grouping models across KS3 and KS4****Model 1 – Mixed Ability**

Students will be placed in mixed ability groups with consideration for Gender, Disadvantaged, SEN and other factors to ensure these reflect the overall cohort for the school.

Model 2 – Rank Order Ability

In Year 7 students will be grouped in rank order in each half year group using primarily their KS2 Scaled Scores and other performance indicators. Students will then be placed into ability groups taking into consideration Gender, Disadvantaged, SEN and other factors to ensure appropriate provision for all students. As students progress through the school, the grouping will remain largely based upon their KS2 Scaled Scores, performance indicators and consequently their Expected Attainment Pathway, but will also take into consideration their attainment and progress over time within the specific subject area.

Model 3 – Ability Banding

Students will be placed in a rank order primarily using their KS2 Scaled Scores and consequently their Expected Attainment Pathways. Students will then be divided into a higher or lower tier band to reflect the GCSE Expected Attainment Pathway. Where the attainment and progress of a student is borderline between these two bands, students will be placed into a higher band to ensure they are not disadvantaged should this be the final tier of entry for that student. Once students are placed into these bands, they will then be grouped by mixed ability with consideration for Gender, Disadvantaged, SEN and other factors, to ensure appropriate provision for all students.

Model 4 – Rank Order and Ability Banding

This model is similar to Model 3, however students who have high KS2 Scaled Scores and consequently high Expected Attainment Pathways, are grouped together first before the mixed ability banding takes place.