



Al-Hijrah School  
مدرسة الهجرة

# Al-Hijrah School Assessment and Recording Policy

# RATIONALE

## **What is Assessment?**

The assessment of student progress is an important part of the learning process and should lie at the heart of curriculum planning, teaching and programme evaluation. Effective assessment will give feedback about student needs and student progress. It will provide information and evidence of attainment for recording purposes and for reporting to students, parents and others. The student is central to the process of assessment and individual involvement in this process is to be encouraged, developed and valued. Assessment practice should have a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation, achievement and self-esteem.

In 2002, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) concluded that, "Assessment can make a significant, enhanced contribution to raising standards in schools if the focus is placed on the professional skills of teachers". The benefits to be gained from this include:

- Improved focus on the quality of teaching and learning
- Greater clarity of objectives and expectations in the classroom
- Clearer understanding of national standards
- Greater consistency and rigor in the assessment process
- Improved understanding among students of how they can learn most effectively
- Better appreciation among parents of how they may support their children's learning

## **The Aims of Assessment**

Assessment has a number of distinct purposes:

- **Formative** – this is the on-going process in which students' positive achievements can be recognised, discussed and recorded.
- **Diagnostic** – this form of assessment identifies learning difficulties which may be scrutinised and classified so that help and guidance can be provided
- **Summative** - provides a 'picture' of the overall achievement of a student at the end of a particular stage, phase or year.
- **Evaluation** – is a means by which some aspects of the curricular provisions of the school may be assessed. This process may result in the identification of any whole school needs whereby future targets can be set and built into the school's improvement plan
- **Ipsative** – this is the attempt to improve on a previous personal best.

Assessment is a continuous process at this school and we assess for different reasons:

- To identify specific learning strengths and weaknesses
- To indicate the next step in the learning process
- To provide a vehicle for feedback, diagnosis and action

- To measure students' attainment against National Curriculum attainment targets
- To measure attainment within a year group and/or against established criteria
- To highlight and record positive achievement
- To encourage students to take ownership of their own learning and personal development through target setting and self-assessment
- To help the teacher to evaluate the teaching programme
- To assist in the evaluation of the school curriculum
- To inform parents of their child's progress, attainment and achievement
- To provide employers, Further Education institutions and other outside agencies with a full picture of students' attainment, skills, attributes and achievements

## CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

### Assessment of Learning

Assessment of students' progress in a subject is fundamental to effective teaching. Assessment of learning tends to be summative and is carried out periodically. Often the results of these assessments are reported in grades, marks or levels and may even be set alongside national standards so that a student, parent, teacher or school can evaluate their performance against that of others.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) It is helpful if post-holders explore and understand the relevant assessment data*
- b) Subject leaders might attempt to interpret the performance of their students and the progress made by those students through the schemes of work.*
- c) Subject staff may want to share expectations and targets with students.*
- d) Students could be given the opportunity to mark, moderate and review test papers, review their performance against the test criteria, set personal targets and devise future test questions.*

The following table summarises the summative and formative practices which take place in this school.

<b>Summative Assessment (Measuring Attainment)</b>	<b>Formative Assessment (Enabling Achievement)</b>
Deciding WAGs/WALs	Clarifying learning objectives and success criteria at the planning stage
CAT (Cognitive Ability Tests)	Sharing learning objectives and success criteria with students
External examinations and termly assessments	Appropriate and effective questioning
APP(Assessing Pupils Progress)	Focusing oral and written feedback around the learning objective
Deciding grades for a piece of work or the end of a unit	Organising targets so that student achievement is based on next steps
Deciding Key Stage 3 Teacher Assessment levels	Involving students in self- and peer-evaluation
Recall questions which establish current knowledge	Raising student efficacy
Any data about student performance	
Preferred Learning Styles of all Key Stage 3 students – VAK questionnaires	

## **Assessment for Learning**

Assessment for Learning or formative assessment has been defined as:

*“The process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.”*

*(Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles, Assessment Reform Group, 2002)*

It involves a process of furthering student learning during the learning process, enabling targets to be met or the quality of learning to become apparent. Key findings from Black and William’s research (Assessment Reform Group, 1999), suggests that improving learning through assessment depends on five key characteristics:

### **1) Learning Objectives**

Learning objectives are usually seen in terms of skills, concepts and knowledge. These are the learning objectives which students need to learn for that lesson. The learning objective for that lesson must be appropriate and clear in order to enable the student to carry out the required learning effectively. Sharing learning objectives with the students in a way they can understand should now be common practice.

*Departmental/Directorate Strategies:*

- a) Share with students full coverage of the lesson on a separate flip chart or IWB – The big picture*
- b) Use these objectives as the basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries*
- c) Evaluate this feedback in relation to achievement of the learning objectives to inform the next stages of planning*

### **2) Success Criteria**

It is important to help students to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for in set tasks.

*Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) Show and display students' work that has met the criteria and provide explanations of why*
- b) Model what the success criteria should look like e.g. exemplify good writing on the board*
- c) Ensure that there are clear shared expectations about the presentation of work*

### 3) Questioning

Thoughtful questioning promotes the active involvement of students in their own learning.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) *Increase thinking time for student responses*
- b) *Ask for talking partner discussions for a short period of time before taking responses*
- c) *Snowballing can occur when talking partners form fours and take turns to explain their ideas to each other*
- d) *The Six Thinking Hats is an effective way of answering questions from a variety of perspectives*
- e) *Bloom's Taxonomy provides a hierarchy of questions*
- f) *Agree planned questions for a particular topic or plan a particular type of question e.g. problem solving.*

### 4) Peer and Self-Assessment

Where student involvement is high there is maximum opportunity for learning to take place. When students are involved in the analysis and constructive criticism of their own work or that of their peers, reflection, pride, modification and improvement become a natural part of the learning process. In all subject areas students can be given the criteria, exemplar material and the opportunity to make improvements with (or without!) input from the teacher.

Self-assessment is very powerful but to be really successful students need to be fully supported to make constructive comments against criteria.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) *A first stage might involve students marking their own work. Once students are confident about reflecting on their own work, this is followed by paired marking which involves a specific dynamic.*
- b) *Ensure that your learning objective is clear. Encourage students to identify with a highlighter their own success against the learning criteria.*
- c) *At a later opportunity the student might be asked to highlight not only one or two successes but also one area for improvement against the learning objective (the latter could be shown in a different colour.)*

Success criteria for lessons present a natural vehicle for self-assessment. When the former is concerned with right or wrong answers self-assessment is quite straightforward. But when the criterion involves an element of quality, e.g. debating, comparing, peer-assessment and exemplar material come into their own.

#### *Classroom Strategy*

*At the beginning of a new topic students are given a chart of facts or principles which they "traffic light" according to their present knowledge (green for clear understanding, amber for limited understanding and red for no understanding or have never heard of it). The exercise is repeated at the end of the topic.*

The advantages of peer-assessment are numerous:

- Students give and receive criticism in their “kid speak” i.e. age and time related.
- Peer-assessment can take as little or as long as the teacher decides
- Once the success criteria have been established the process can reduce student anxiety and fear.

## **5) Providing Quality Feedback**

### **5.1 Grading**

***“Key issues for schools – they need to improve the quality of routine assessing and marking, providing better feedback to students on their progress and attainment”. Subjects and Standards, OFSTED, 1994-5***

***“Students of all ages used feedback to improve performance. Constructive criticism was helpful where it told students how to improve work. Simple comments, ticks and “good work”, signified approval but didn’t help students ‘bridge the gap’ between present performance and future goals”. LEARN project, 2000***

There are three generally accepted ways of giving written feedback to students in schools:

- Marks/grades
- Comments
- Marks/grades and comments

Just giving marks/grades for every piece of work can lead to complacency or demoralisation on the part of the student. This is mainly due to the fact that a mark/grade focuses on the level of their ability compared to their peers. It compares a student with the norm or average for all students.

There is a place for this form of feedback and it is generally carried out at the end of a unit, year or phase of education although even when work is given a mark/grade and comment, research suggests that students see only the former and not the latter. Work marked with only comments can increase the motivation and achievement of students.

It is therefore good practice to use marks, numbers and grades where appropriate but staff are also encouraged to use comment only feedback as well. These should relate to attainment and effort. Although this does not have to be done for every set piece of homework there must be evidence of diagnostic grading for each student. National Curriculum levels will be given at the end of the Key Stage. Also during the review process levels maybe discussed and recorded so that students are aware of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to raise their attainment.

It is more helpful for staff to use comments that are constructive and to include targets for improvement that relate to attainment and effort. However, in formal assessment when there is a mark scheme marks/grade should be given to enable students to understand the criteria behind their award.

#### Starting Points

- Effective feedback focuses on the lesson objectives. While presentation, quantity, grammar/spelling and effort are all important, if references are made to these aspects only, the main focus of the lesson has been marginalised
- Suggestions for improvement must focus on how best to close the gap between current and desired performance
- Give guidance about how to improve with specific strategies on how to move on
- students must be given the opportunity for improvement to become embedded and applied in a different context
- Aim to respond to written work within two weeks.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) Departments should be clear about the criteria for the giving of grades/marks and these should be made clear to the students before a piece of assessed work is undertaken. A folder could be developed which exemplifies good marking and contains samples of work at particular levels/grades.*
- b) Annotated exemplars of work could be displayed in classrooms*
- c) Identify the next steps for either groups or individuals as appropriate*

Marking of pupils' work should be according to the school's Marking Policy.

#### **5.2) Oral feedback**

This is perhaps the most frequently used and interactive form of feedback. It is used more readily in practical subjects and has a range of purposes which include, appraising, seeking clarification, redirecting learning and encouraging reflection.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) Allow classroom time for individual dialogue between teacher and student e.g. at the end of a unit. This is however dependent on the nature of the group and the experience of the teacher.*
- b) Give GCSE students specific course criteria in written format and student speak. This enables them to track their own progress and play a part in the dialogue about their work*

### 5.3) Marking Techniques

There are a number of techniques which could be employed over a short period of time:

Acknowledgement Marking - Often only a tick/initial is appropriate to record achievement and it suggests that the main objective of the lesson was met

Sampling - Over a period of time, say half a term, choose specific pieces of work for in-depth marking, self or peer assessment and random sampling.

Whole-Class Marking - All students grade their work at the same time to enhance learning possibilities.

Comment Only Feedback – Provide time for students to make improvements on their actual work after comment only feedback is given.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies*

- a) Look for three successes and one improvement against the learning objectives. This will equip students to become independent judges*
- b) Use “SIT” to identify **S**trength, an area for **I**mprovement and a **T**arget for the next steps in learning. This must be in relation to the learning objectives, bullet pointed and easily understood by the student and parent*

### 6) Review

This involves both the teacher and the student in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information.

#### *Departmental/Directorate Strategies:*

- a) Reflect with students on their work, e.g. through a storyboard of steps taken during an investigation*
- b) Choose appropriate tasks to provide quality information (with emphasis on process as well as the correct answer)*
- c) Provide time for students to reflect on what they have learned/understood and to identify where they still have difficulties*
- d) Adjust planning, evaluate effectiveness of task, resources etc. as a result of assessment*

## **Recording**

Recording needs to be ongoing, manageable and useful. Within each subject area, an agreed set of attainment information is collected either in mark books or electronically on a computer.

The purpose of recording is to:

- Help in arriving at WAGs/WALs for all pupils
- Monitor pupil progress against targets
- Recognise achievement and celebrate this with the parents and pupils (Achievement assembly, pupil noticeboards/ halftermly newsletters)
- Aid memory: we cannot remember everything so it is best to write it down, especially to note specific achievements, quick progress, gaps in learning etc.
- Note strengths and weaknesses
- Document evidence
- Inform planning
- Form a basis for reporting to:
  - Pupils
  - Parents
  - SLT
  - Governors
- Provide a summary for discussion

## **Reporting**

Reporting not only fulfills legal requirements but also is vital part of our relationship with parents and the wider community, serving to support and promote the student's learning.

Reporting is seen as a whole school process and all staff work together to communicate with appropriate audiences.

### **Reporting to Pupils**

- A formal process of reporting WAGs/WALs to pupils is used through a system of stickers (twice in the Autumn term and once at the end of the Spring and Summer terms).
- Pupils are also informed of their targets and the progress being made towards meeting them.

### **Reporting to Parents**

- A mid year report written to parents with current WAGs/WALs and targets
- Annual written report to parents
- Discussion with parents on twice-yearly parents' evenings
- Children sharing achievements publicly (Achievement Assembly) and via the school noticeboards/halftermly newsletter.
- Relevant supportive evidence is shared with interested parties (e.g. parents, other teachers within school)
- Governors' Annual Report to Parents and Open Evenings.

### **Reporting to Governors**

- Headteacher's report to Governors.
- SEN coordinator report on SEN provision.

### **Reporting to Wider Community**

- Active participation and reporting on our involvement on community events and projects of interest to the general public and/or other schools.
- Year 11 teachers liaises with the further education colleges/sixth forms in order to ensure progression and continuity

## **Target Setting**

- Targets are based on KS2 SATs levels for english, maths and science and baseline assessments for the foundation subjects.
- Targets are calculated on two levels of progress in each key stage.
- These targets are reviewed each term and can be raised if a pupil has achieved their target. Targets cannot be lowered.
- Pupil progress is monitored against their targets
- Pupils who achieve their targets are celebrated through Achievement Assemblies and pupil notice boards
- Targets are shared with pupils through the use of stickers and with parents through the mid year and end of year reports

## **Management and Monitoring**

- Data will be collected according to the School's Data Collection Calendar
- Monitoring of this policy will occur through the Protocols and Procedures for the Collection, Distribution and Analysis of Data