



# ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment drives quality teaching and learning. This policy sets out to consolidate our understanding of what effective assessment is so that as a school we can continue to develop a consistent approach towards assessment, improve individual practice in the classroom and raise students' achievement and standards. This policy is relevant for 2016-2017.

### Aims

We believe that every student really does matter and that every individual is on their own learning journey. The ability to accurately assess what a student is achieving in relation to their prior performance and potential is the key to personalised learning. Assessment drives teaching and learning; it is integral to planning the next steps in learning and judging progress is made. Involving students in the process empowers them to take ownership of their learning journey and involving parents/carers empowers them to be able to support their son or daughter effectively. This policy aims to explain how assessment at the Mary Webb School and Science College strives to involve all parties and make assessment the driving force behind quality teaching and learning.

### The Role of Assessment

Assessment is one of the most powerful educational tools for promoting effective learning. Assessment of learning used to simply judge the learning that has take place will not directly impact on learning unless it is used in a formative way. Assessment for learning is a powerful way of raising students' achievement based on the principle that students will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge). Assessment for learning is not an add-on or a project; it is central to effective teaching and learning.

"Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in relation to their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there"

*(Assessment Reform Group, 2002)*

Research indicates that improving learning through assessment depends on five key factors (*Assessment for Learning: Beyond the Black Box*). These are:

- the provision of effective feedback to students which leads to students recognising their next steps and how to take them;
- the active involvement of students in their own learning;
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment;
- a recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of students, both of which are crucial influences on learning;
- the need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

Further to these, assessment that promotes learning:

- is embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part;
- involves sharing learning goals with students;
- aims to help students to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for;
- is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve;
- involves both teacher and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

Therefore, staff must be involved in gathering information about students' learning and encouraging students to review their work critically and constructively by:

- observing students, which includes listening to how they describe their work and their reasoning;
- questioning, using open questions, phrased to invite students to explore their ideas and reasoning;
- setting tasks in a way which requires students to use certain skills or apply ideas;
- asking students to communicate their thinking through drawings, artefacts, actions, role play, concept mapping, as well as writing;
- discussing words and how they are being used.

Once this information has been collected, it needs to be used in a way that promotes learning. This involves decisions and actions, decisions about the next steps in learning and action in assisting the students in taking those steps. But it is important to remember that it is the students who will take the steps and the more they are involved in the process, the greater will be their understanding of how to extend their learning. Thus action that is most likely to raise standards will follow when students are involved in decisions about their work rather than being passive recipients of judgements of it. Involving students in this way gives a meaning to 'feedback' in the assessment process. What needs to be fed back to students is a view of what they should be aiming for: the standard against which students can compare their own work. At the same time, our role is to provide students with the skills and strategies for taking the next steps in their learning.

Therefore to be effective practitioners, staff are expected to:

- decide how and when to assess students' attainment as you plan work;
- be proficient in using a range of assessment techniques in the classroom;
- know what the standards are and have the ability to judge students' work correctly, making accurate assessments linked to descriptors<sup>1</sup>;
- ensure that judgements are consistent and based on a range of evidence;
- providing focused assessments that enable barriers to student progress to be identified and use that information to plan and discuss the next steps in learning.

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<sup>1</sup> At Mary Webb School and Science College we have retained use of the term 'level' to describe and measure progress at Key Stage 3 for Years 8 and 9. All subject areas have revised their level descriptors in light of the 2014 National Curriculum ensuring that they represent progression to aid students and staff to identify their next steps in learning. These levels are then sub-divided into a, b, c depending on where a student is performing within the level descriptor. Any reference to levels in this policy refers to the revised descriptors. Parents/carers have been informed.

For the current Year 7, descriptors are now age-related standards, following on from national reforms made to Key Stage 2 testing in 2016. The standards reflect continuity between the key stages and promote progression – the model can be seen as Appendix 1.

At Key Stage 4, descriptors are also being amended in line with new syllabi following changes due to national reform. These are being rewritten as the new courses are being developed.

## Assessment in Practice

It is expected that all assessments are planned and used formatively to inform planning for progression. Use is made of the three linked aspects of assessment: Transitional, Periodic and Day-to-Day.

### ▪ **Transitional Assessment**

This is assessment data shared at key transitional points, such as end of key stage data as students move from one phase to another. This data may be derived from a single formal assessment or be the final judgment made based on a collection of evidence. Although seemingly summative, transitional data is used formatively to inform next steps and future end of key stage targets. Transitional assessment data is also used to judge progress made by the cohort / student groups / individual students, to quality assure the curriculum and identify areas of strength and development at school and subject level. The transitional assessment data held by school comprises student individual Key Stage 2 validated results, Key Stage 4 validated grades and internal Key Stage 3 levels (at the end of Year 9).

Students arrive with their validated Key Stage 2 results<sup>2</sup>. These are used along with other indicators to set targets in all subjects at Key Stage 3. Targets are set in consultation with students and should aspire to reflect two levels of progress. Key Stage 4 targets are also based on validated Key Stage 2 levels along with other indicators, but are reviewed in light of Key Stage 3 level. Targets are set in consultation with students and should aspire to reflect two levels of progress from Key Stage 3 and at least three levels of progress from Key Stage 2.

Final Key Stage 3 levels are awarded and moderated within subject areas and submitted into Assessment Manager. Subject areas are responsible for determining the evidence base on which the final assessment is made. Final Key Stage 4 grades are determined through the results of external examinations

### ▪ **Periodic Assessment**

Periodic assessment data is derived from a bank of evidence generated by ongoing assessments within a key stage. This periodic review of evidence is used to track student progress towards their target and to inform and shape future planning, identify targets for improvement and initiate intervention where necessary. At a school level, periodic data is collected termly from subject areas in the form of sub-levels at Key Stage 3 and grades at Key Stage 4 through Assessment Manager.

Periodic assessment data is collected at the beginning of each term for the preceding term, ie Year 7 Spring Data will be collected at the beginning of the Spring Term in Year 7 so it will be the data based on evidence collected during the previous Autumn Term. Subject areas are responsible for determining the evidence base on which the sub-level/grade depends and moderating the sub-levels/grades submitted. It is expected that the evidence base includes any internal examinations such as Year 10 and 11 mock examinations. Parents/carers receive a copy of the periodic data for their son or daughter.

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<sup>2</sup> For Years 8-11, Key Stage 2 validated results were levels awarded by tests in GVPS (Grammar, Vocabulary, Punctuation and Spelling), Reading and Mathematics along with teacher assessments in Writing, Mathematics and Science. Each level is worth a number of points and the test levels in Reading and Mathematics are averaged to give an Average Point Score (APS) from which targets are set. For Year 7, Key Stage 2 validated results are against age-related standards. Students have a test result giving them a standardised score in GVPS, Reading and Mathematics where 100+ is having met the standard, and a teacher assessment in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science as to whether the standard has been met or exceeded. Test results have been averaged to give an average standardised score from which targets are set.

Subject areas are responsible for using periodic assessment data in their own student tracking procedures amending curricular targets and initiating intervention where necessary. At Key Stage 3, the sub-level<sup>3</sup> entered into Assessment Manager is compared to the last sub-level entered, and against expected progress towards the final target. At Key Stage 4, grades are tracked on subject marksheets in Assessment Manager. An overall summary of performance across all subjects compared to expectations is analysed at cohort, subject, and student group level to identify issues and initiate intervention.

▪ **Day-to-Day Assessment**

This is the ongoing assessment that takes place everyday within the classroom. Targets, periodic assessment data and the outcomes from ongoing formative assessment, based on well-planned activities that take place during lessons along with marking and feedback, are used to shape the next steps in learning.

Based around feedback, day-to-day assessment includes peer, self and teacher assessment, both oral and written. Day-to-day assessment is expected to take place in all lessons and evidenced in lesson observations and work scrutiny. The decision on what records need to be kept regarding the outcomes of day-to-day assessment, ie comments made, marks awarded, is delegated to subject areas. Ongoing day-to-day assessment supports the evidence bank required for periodic assessment.

Ongoing day-to-day formative assessment within lessons will be evident where strategies to regularly review the learning taking place has been a) planned for and b) capitalised upon when opportunity presents. Learning needs to be structured so that both the class teacher and the student can recognise the progress that they are making; questioning needs to be effective to illicit students' knowledge, understanding and skills.

Feedback given through marking student work is an integral part of day-to-day assessment. Marking needs to have positive effect and support progression in learning. Written activities that are well designed provide teachers with feedback on a student's knowledge, understanding and skills, including those for literacy and numeracy. All written feedback must be diagnostic; written in green ink providing students with a tick (something that has been done well) and a target (the next step for the student). Marking and feedback needs to contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy. The best marking will be against shared success criteria. Work must be marked regularly: the exact frequency to be determined by subject area policy. Homework must be marked. Students are expected to proofread and amend their work prior to submission. Opportunity must be given for students to respond to the feedback in red ink for maximum learning gains to be made. The agreed marking symbols<sup>4</sup> and approach to support development in spelling<sup>5</sup> must be used for consistency in supporting students with their response to feedback across the school. Quality assurance of marking and feedback is through directed termly work scrutiny sessions.

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<sup>3</sup> In Year 7, the new Standards Model (Appendix 1) is used: staff make an evidence based judgement as to the standard a student is working at in relation to their age. The standard is recorded on Assessment Manager and tracked against the relevant target.

<sup>4</sup> **Marking Symbols**

- sp = spelling issue (highlight green)
- ww = wrong word used
- P = punctuation issue
- c = capital letter issue
- // = new paragraph
- ? = check for sense

<sup>5</sup> **Spelling Strategy**

Maximum of 5 words during a period of marking. Students expected to write out identified mis-spelt words three times using the 'look, say, cover, write, check' method.

## Additional Assessment

- **Cognitive Ability Testing (CAT)**

All of Year 7, and any student joining the school outside of Year 7, take the CAT within their first half term. The tests provide an opportunity to benchmark the cohort in terms of their reasoning ability against the national picture and moderate the Key Stage 2 results whilst providing further diagnostic feedback on an individual's strengths, areas to develop and learning preferences. Scores are generated in four areas along with their mean. The national average for each is 100.

- **Accelerated Reader**

All Key Stage 3 students are enrolled onto Accelerated Reader. Termly STAR testing provides students with a reading age and a ZPD score which is used to direct next steps in reading development. Quizzes are taken to monitor progress.

- **Screening**

All Key Stage 3 students are screened every other term using the New Group Reading Test in addition to Accelerated Reader for moderation of standards. Students performing below the expected standard take a further Diagnostic Reading Analysis which directs intervention. The results of this testing informs Examination Concession applications.

All Key Stage 3 students are screened every other term using a Diagnostic Spelling Assessment. Students performing below the expected standard take a further Spelling and Reading test, the outcome of which directs interventions.

Further additional tests in areas such as processing are available and completed by individual need.



# The "Standards" Model

6	85 90 89 94	95 100 99 104	105 110 109 114	115 120 119 124
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7	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
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8	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
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9	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
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KS4	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
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NOT GCSE 9-1: links old levels and new language. Links KS2 to KS4.

**Numbers at KS3 for tracking purposes only: not to be shared with students.**

**You must be clear about what expected looks like.**

These are NOT levels: the numbers have no relative ordinality but merely represent where a student is within the standard.

Maintains two levels of progress. →  
 Maintains three levels of progress. →

- To make progress is to maintain the status quo
- Supports target setting at KS3/4
- Links KS2 language to KS4 numbers



Appendix 1:

# **(*SUBJECT*) ASSESSMENT POLICY**

## **Aims**

## **The Role of Assessment**

## **Assessment in Practice**

- Transitional
- Periodic
- Day-to-Day

## **Marking and Feedback**