



Assessment Policy

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Assessment Policy

Context

Assessment is the responsibility of all teachers, and academic progress is monitored by all members of staff. Assessment is on-going and recorded in mark books (electronic and/or paper) and other relevant assessment documents for reference. Whole school assessments and reports take place at specific points within the school year (as indicated later in this document).

Assessment enables us to celebrate talents, progress and achievements and guide students to fulfil their abilities, all of which is fundamental to the ethos of White Trees Independent School.

Aims

To use assessment as a tool for measuring achievement and progression; for diagnosing strengths and areas for improvement from which targets can be set to raise achievement:

- Staff will conduct regular and appropriate assessments in line with the schools Assessment Policy, the National Curriculum, GCSE and other qualification assessment criteria
- Assessment should inform students, staff and parents of levels of achievement and progression
- Assessment should be diagnostic, recognising progression and underachievement, and offer constructive advice on how to improve through specific individual targets
- Formative Assessment will be developed through Assessment for Learning strategies
- Students will be made aware of the assessment criteria and reflect upon the learning process through self-assessment, peer assessment and student evaluations
- Assessment will be systematically built into programmes of study, schemes of work and the broader curriculum
- Assessment and teachers' records will be supplemented by additional baseline, target setting and progress data e.g. FFT, CAT Data, Additional Needs register

Methods

A range of different assessment methods will be used at different times. For much of the time this will involve written work but portfolios, practical work, oral work and team work will also be used when appropriate. Methods of testing will also vary from individual pieces of work to projects, units or modules of work

Moderation and Monitoring of Assessment

- The moderation of colleagues' books/files/portfolios/ practical work helps not only with the process of assessment but also provides a window into the teaching methods and approaches used.



- It confirms the levelling/grading of students' work, helping both the teacher and the student learn from the assessment.
- We must ensure that there is consistency of grading of students' work, and we need to monitor that the marking undertaken by colleagues matches expectations
- Marking will be sampled and monitored as part of the on-going work towards improving provision

If problems do emerge with the quality of marking or moderation, an action plan will be put in place to remedy this.

It should be remembered that key characteristics of a well-managed subject area include:

- regular monitoring of the assessment of students and
- moderation of assessments to maintain consistency
- the teacher's mark book/student's work should indicate which student's work has been moderated and the date when it was done so.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning and progress.

Assessment for Learning :

- Is part of effective planning
- Focuses on how students learn
- Is central to classroom practice
- Is a key professional skill
- Is sensitive and constructive
- Fosters motivation to learn
- Promotes understanding of targets and criteria
- Helps students to know how to improve
- Develops the capacity for self-assessment
- Recognises all educational development

What does Assessment for Learning look like in practice?

Sharing of Learning Objectives

Students may be involved in the process of defining Learning Objectives but should certainly understand them in the context of the lesson. They should be differentiated to the range of ability within the class

- They should be returned to at points to assess progress made by students within the lesson
- Rich questioning
- Hands down, teacher selects student to answer
- Wait time – all students have opportunity to think before answering
- Students encouraged to consult in pairs/groups before answering
- Open ended questioning
- Use of wrong answers to develop understanding
- Students formulating questions to interrogate the topic
- Deep questioning opportunities – ‘Why?’ ‘How would?’ ‘What if?’
- Effective feedback and marking, both written and oral
- Feedback focuses on Learning Objectives
- Evaluative comments which indicate how to improve
- Opportunities made for students to follow up teachers’ comments i.e. make one focussed improvement
- Use of opportunities for oral feedback: plenary and mini-plenary sessions, on returning work/books, as teachers circulate the classroom
- Comments only, without grades
- Peer and Self- Assessment
- Opportunities for students to reflect
- Students requested to read through/mark their own work
- Mark schemes/ assessment criteria made explicit to students, who use these to evaluate their own work
- Use of model responses as part of peer assessment
- Use of response partners
- Groups marking work
- Whole class review of work e.g. in plenary
- Regulating Learning – circulating to assess and support while students are engaged in a task
- Teachers using time well to engage with a number of students in turn, whilst remaining aware of the needs of the rest of the class
- Teachers employing a range of AfL strategies as appropriate to the students’ needs e.g. questioning, feedback, redirecting learning, facilitating self-assessment, exemplification, scaffolding etc. which can lead to improved progress
- Judicious consideration of when to intervene in group work or the need for additional group or whole class teacher input
- Recognition of the specific needs of individual students, and supporting these
- Opportunities for structured independent learning
- Structured activities which allow students to investigate the topic and to make conclusions about the subject matter, thus developing independent learning skills
- Activities which can be individual, paired or in larger groups
- Activities which have time structures and focus leading to distinct learning outcomes



- Plenaries used to assess learning and progress within the lesson
- Mini-plenaries may occur to assess progress at varied points within the sections of the lesson
- A final plenary at the end of the lesson to be used to assess progress against the lesson objectives
- Plenaries should be inclusive, involving the whole class e.g. interactive quizzes, evaluation tasks, mini whiteboards
- Plenaries to be used for forward planning , for the whole class and individual students

Student Evaluations

Twice in the academic year (November and April), all students will be involved in their own evaluation of a unit of work, summarise the findings and submit a report of those findings for discussion by the school staff. The results of these student evaluations should play an important role in Assessment for Learning and for curriculum development planning.

More frequent evaluations may be used where appropriate.

The student evaluations may be electronic or paper but must include the following aspects:

Opportunities for students to express:

- What they have enjoyed or found less enjoyable in the unit of work
- Skills which they have used/developed in the unit
- Self-assessment against skills criteria
- Target setting by the student against skills criteria

Student evaluations should then be kept as a vital part of AfL within exercise books or on file to monitor progress as part of a self-assessment process.

Reporting to parents

Reporting to parents, forms part of our legal obligation dating back to the 1988 Education Reform Act. It is the professional responsibility of each individual teacher to ensure that their reports are of high quality and completed on time. High quality reports are accurate, personalised to the individual, grammatically correct, spell-checked and give a true reflection of progress made and set precise targets for future development.

Best practice involves a commentary addressing:

- General progress
- Strengths and development needs
- Personal development.



Targets should be written as three bullets, avoiding vagueness and be easy to understand and precise in what the student needs to aim for. The last one should have a full-stop.

The School Manager will oversee the report process, and support all staff as required.

Assessment and Effort Indicators points

There are to be three scheduled effort indicator/ assessment collection days. These points are in October, December and May.

Effort Indicators

☐ A five point scale is used from 5 (high) to 1 (low)

Subject teachers

To score highly in subject areas students should:

- participate fully and constructively in lessons;
- be respectful to staff and students;
- complete all classwork/homework set to the best of your ability;
- arrive to lesson on time, bring appropriate books, equipment and look after them properly.

The 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 scaling would correspond with:

5 = always meets expectations on all four criteria

4 = usually meets expectations on all four criteria

3 = often meets expectations on all four criteria

2 = occasionally meets expectations on all four criteria

1 = rarely meets expectations

Students may score highly on a 'Pastoral' scale if they:

- arrive on time
- comply with uniform rules
- bring planner every day, look after it and use it appropriately
- behave respectfully and cooperate fully.

The 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 scaling would correspond with:

5 = always meets expectations on all four criteria

4 = usually meets expectations on all four criteria



3 = often meets expectations on all four criteria

2 = occasionally meets expectations on all four criteria

1 = rarely meets expectations

NB/ Attendance should not be used as a criterion for effort indicators.

Intervention for low and high scores

There will be records of students indicating which stage they are on, at each of the 3/5 data collection points in the year. The stages will be:

- Stages 1-5 positive for average effort indicators of 4.5+
- Stage zero for an average indicator between 3.0 – 4.4
- Stages 1-5 negative for average indicators of 2.9 and below.

Intervention for various stages will be discussed with student, staff and School Manager. Agreed formative steps will be applied and monitoring continue. Student Council will agree on interventions for high scores.

Target setting and student progress

Year 7 and 9 students take NFER cognitive abilities tests (CAT) in September. The tests measure ability in three areas: verbal, quantitative and non-verbal skills. Results from the two sets of tests can be checked to ensure reliability and to assess any value added from years 7 to 9.

Each student receives a Standard Age Score (SAS) for the three areas above. These lie between 69 and 130+. The average for the national population is 100.

The results may be used by teachers:

- to assist with marking/responding to work/differentiating tasks and materials
- to help monitor progress and set targets for improvement
- in reviewing students

The CAT scores give a baseline of information from which potential KS3 levels and GCSE grades for each student are indicated by NFER. They provide additional information on raw cognitive ability.

Discussion of targets and Assessment for Learning strategies will be used as a means of enabling students to understand their targets and what they must do to achieve them.

Student Reviews



At White Trees Independent School we know how important a reviewing strategy can be in raising attainment for some students. We recognise the benefits of reviewing, as a strategy for establishing strong and meaningful partnerships with those supporting the students' learning. Academic reviews will take place on a regular basis and at the time of the Annual Review if appropriate.