

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

### **1 Introduction**

Enormous research has been undertaken in recent years into how assessment can actually improve future learning, rather than simply grade past achievement. Schools, of course, must concern themselves with both processes: assessment for learning and assessment of learning. This policy document acknowledges the existence, and importance of both assessment types.

At Finham Park, we have with effect from September 2004, an Assistant Headteacher with a lead responsibility in these areas; 2 further Assistant Headteachers (i/c 10-14 and 14-19) charged with contributing to the monitoring and development of assessment practices; a teacher i/c the development and monitoring of electronic assessment and reporting arrangements; a full-time member of the associate staff to act as Examinations Manager. The management structure for assessment has therefore been significantly strengthened. This policy document outlines the key aspects of principle and practice in these areas. It reflects the thinking of our in-house 'Assessment for Learning' focus group and the deliberations of the Leadership Team, as well as important aspects of local and national discussion and practice.

### **2 Assessment for Learning**

Listed below are eight activities vital to the growth of genuine assessment for learning. Each is followed by several bullet points with exemplary activities: these are not meant to be exhaustive. It is only when all teachers and learning-centred associate staff practise these activities on a systematic basis that the policy will come to life, for the benefit of all our students.

#### **1 Sharing Learning objectives with pupils**

- Share learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and, where appropriate, during the lesson in language that the pupils can understand.
- Use these objectives as the basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries.
- Evaluate the feedback in relation to achievement of the learning objectives to inform the next stages of the planning.

#### **2 Helping pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for**

- Show pupils work that has met criteria, with explanations of why.
- Give pupils clear success criteria then relate them to the learning objectives.
- Model what it should be like. For example, exemplify good writing on the board.

- Ensure that there are clear, shared expectations about the presentation of the work.
- Provide displays of pupils' work, which shows work in progress as well as the finished product.

### 3 Involving pupils in peer and self assessment

- Give pupils clear opportunities to talk about what they have learned and what they have found difficult, using the learning objectives as a focus.
- Encourage pupils to work/discuss together, focusing upon how to improve.
- Ask pupils to explain the steps in their thinking: 'How did you get the answer?'
- Give time for pupils to reflect upon their learning.
- Identify with pupils the next steps in learning.

### 4 Providing feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them

- Value oral as well as written feedback.
- Ensure feedback is constructive as well as positive, identifying what the pupil has done well, what needs to be done to improve, and how to do it.
- Identify the next steps for individuals and groups as appropriate.

### 5 Promoting confidence that every pupil can improve

- Identify small steps to enable pupils to see their progress, thus building confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourage pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos.
- Use classroom display to showcase progress.

### 6 Involving both teacher and pupil in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information

- Reflect with pupils on their work – for example, through a storyboard of steps taken during an investigation.
- Choose appropriate tasks to provide quality assessment information (emphasis on process, not just the correct answer).
- Provide time for pupils to reflect upon what they have learned and understood and to identify where they still have difficulties.

- Adjust planning, evaluate effectiveness of task, resources, etc as a result of assessment.
- That discrete groups and sub-groups are identified and targeted for further support as far in advance as possible.

#### 7 Involving parents in the formative assessment process

- Information and consciousness raising meetings and letters.
- Make full use of student organisers.
- Use parents' evening contacts to encourage partnership working.
- Contact parents
- Directly, or through tutor/Year Head, using a standard proforma in order to praise progress and identify areas for necessary improvement.
- See the annual report as part of an ongoing dialogue with each student's parents.

#### 8 Networking information and best practice (for Leadership Team and subject leaders)

- Ensure all teachers have adequate, accessible information about prior, current and expected achievement.
- Provide opportunities for staff to see examples of best assessment practice on a regular basis.

#### 9 Students with special educational needs

- Some of our students with SEN come into year 7 at level 2 NC levels or below. These students may not reach the next NC level for several years depending on the severity of their learning disability. It is therefore essential that we measure their progress according to finer, more specific criteria so that we recognise and reward such small-step improvements.
- All students with statements of SEN will have Individual Education Plans and their progress will be reviewed regularly.
- Students with literacy difficulties are assessed and their progress is monitored.

### 3 Marking, Progress Checks and Reports

#### Marking

Research has made it clear that simple summative marking (marks/grades, whether accompanied by a generalised and non-diagnostic comment or not) has little positive impact on students' learning, and may actually demotivate many students. Positive and formative feedback on the other hand makes a significant positive difference to student performance. We do not expect, therefore, every department to adhere to a common whole school scale and formula for all routine marking tasks. On the contrary, we believe that there is scope for a greater range of approaches to the business of routine marking – eg students' inter-marking/partial marking to reflect the learning priority etc to be agreed and implemented at department level and for this to be reflected in department handbooks.

However, there are some important guiding principles which we believe need to be followed in practice. They are:

1 Written comments and oral feedback are communicated clearly and appropriately to individual pupils. Feedback should indicate Level of performance and strategies for improvement to allow parents to take an active role in their child's education. It should be positive and encourage dialogue.

2 Marking is regular and thorough.

3 Evidence from marking should be fully integrated with the House points rewards system.

4 Steps are taken to act on missing, incomplete or poorly presented work.

5 Work is returned promptly to pupils.

6 Pupils are required to carry out corrections to work where appropriate.

7 The marking/recording process should allow for an easy transfer of marks from pupil's work, to their Progress checks, Reports and National Curriculum records.

8 Pupils are well informed about the Progress Check and Reports grading system and a copy should be included in their Personal Organisers.

9 Marking of work will take into account the level of literacy and confidence appropriate to the students.

10 Spelling Policy : Guidelines for Teachers

- Do not ignore incorrect spelling in pupils' work.
- Where a pupil makes a lot of mistakes, limit the number of errors identified – no more than six for a piece of work, and choose to mark commonly used words, or subject-specific words FIRST.

- Expect pupils to correct errors by writing incorrect spellings accurately at the end of marked work – using dictionaries.
- Encourage the use of dictionaries in lessons. At least one dictionary should be available in each teaching room.

### Progress Checks and Reports

Progress checks will be done in two of the terms during the year. Reports will be completed in the other term. The data will be collected from the Progress Checks and Reports using the TEAM system to form part of the Pupil tracking system which is under development. As the IT systems are continually developing and changing, training will be given as and when it is necessary.

All staff need to ensure that for Progress Checks and Reports:

#### 1 Attitude to Learning Grade and an Achievement Grade

Attitude to Learning Grade – using a six point scale (see attached sheet for definition of this scale)

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 6 | Excellent              |
| 5 | Very good              |
| 4 | Good                   |
| 3 | Satisfactory           |
| 2 | Unsatisfactory/Concern |
| 1 | Poor/Concern           |

### Achievement Grade

#### Key Stage 3

Identify progress through National Curriculum levels, using a three point scale:

- |    |                              |
|----|------------------------------|
| 5+ | Performing at a High Level 5 |
| 5  | Performing at level 5        |
| 5- | Performing at a Low level 5  |

## Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5

Identify grades for GCSE or AS/A2 using a three point scale. This should be the grade they are currently working at, not the predicted grade.

B+ Performing at a High grade B

B Performing at grade B

B- Performing at a Low grade B

## GCSE

A\* A+ B+ C+ D+ E+ F+ G+

A\*- A B C D E F G

A- B- C- D- E- F- G-

## AS/A2

A+ B+ C+ D+ E+ F+ U+

A B C D E F U

A- B- C- D- E- F- U-

## Six Point Scale

### 6 Excellent

Attitude to learning has been excellent. Quality and presentation of classwork and homework are of a very high standard and are always complete. Student is always able to listen and follow instructions. The student is well aware of what constitutes excellent work and regularly meets this standard.

### 5 Very good

Attitude to learning has been very good. Quality and presentation of classwork and homework are of a high standard and are mostly complete. Student is able to listen and follow instructions. The student is well aware of what constitutes very good work and often meets this standard.

### 4 Good

Attitude to learning has been good. Quality and presentation of classwork and homework are of a good standard and are mostly complete. Student is able to listen and follow instructions. The student is well aware of what constitutes good work and sometimes meets this standard.

### 3 Satisfactory

Attitude to learning has been satisfactory. Quality and presentation of classwork and homework are acceptable but sometimes of a standard below expectations. Student is able to listen and follow instructions but occasionally does not carry this out. The student has some idea of what constitutes good work, but may often settle for less.

### 2 Unsatisfactory/Concern

Attitude to learning has been consistently below expectations. Quality and presentation of classwork and homework are mostly of a standard below acceptable expectations and sometimes are not attempted. Student has difficulty with listening and following instructions. The student may be aware of what constitutes satisfactory work, but is rarely motivated to achieve this standard.

### 1 Poor/Concern

Attitude to learning has always been below expectations. Classwork and homework are usually incomplete or not even attempted. Student cannot listen to or follow instructions. The student exhibits no regard for, or interest in reaching a satisfactory standard of performance.

#### **4 Further Development**

The Leadership Team is committed to ensuring

- That the most accurate school-based, local and national data on student performance is promptly turned into accessible management information, for use by teachers, mentors and teaching assistants.
- That a genuinely individualised longitudinal profile for each student be developed which forms the basis for all target-setting.
- That the implementation of our Assessment Policy should figure in the SDP, and be subject to careful scrutiny over the next 3 years.
- That all assessment makes a positive contribution to the student/teacher relationship.