

Assessment and Recording

Aims of the policy

- by its implementation to facilitate progress in pupils' learning;
- to provide a guide for each academic department to develop its own assessment policy;
- to promote a consistent approach to assessment;
- to offer guidance on Assessment, Marking and Recording procedures and practices;
- to underline the importance of assessment and moderation procedures;
- to detail specific staff responsibilities.

The principles of assessment, recording and reporting

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main aim of the assessment process must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative and summative tool. Effective assessment provides:
 - a statement of current attainment;
 - a record of progress;
 - an acknowledgement of achievement and underachievement;
 - information on the pupils' readiness for future learning;
 - information on the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed and the current scheme of work.
3. To be at its most effective assessment should primarily be a continual process and not an infrequent, purely summative exercise.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the College curriculum and examination courses as well as indicate pupil progress. On entering the School a pupil will be given a base-line assessment. This will give staff a guideline for setting initial targets.
5. We recognise the potential for assessment in developing a positive self image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback, and the feeling of success which encourages further study.
6. Teachers in the School use a common policy for marking and moderating work within departments.
7. Summative tests show what a pupil can do, i.e. they are criterion referenced.
8. Assessment has a common procedure:
 - a) directs teacher judgements that are as valid and reliable as possible, consistent both within the College and Examination Board standards.
 - b) gives teachers confidence in their professional judgement and skill.
 - c) is fair to pupils.
9. Assessment records:
 - a) are based on an agreed set of principles and purposes;
 - b) assess pupil progress against College and Examination Board criteria;
 - c) must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and not administratively burdensome.
10. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
11. Assessment gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his or her school career.
12. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the evidence and assessment techniques being used and to review their own progress. Part of this awareness will come from discussions with tutors as part of tracking progress against targets.

Information/advice for staff

The regular assessment of pupils' progress is an integral part of good and effective teaching/learning in the classroom. Such assessments may range from simply looking over pupils' shoulders while they are writing during a period of normal classwork, to the use of formally administered tests and examinations.

Departments need to:

- plan a variety of learning experiences for pupils in their Schemes of Work so that there is a good balance throughout the course and within individual lessons. This will allow for different forms of assessment to be employed so that weaknesses/strengths in pupils' learning can be identified and improvements achieved;
- consider carefully the nature of the tasks set. To have a positive effect on the standards of pupils' achievement, an appropriate level of work needs to be provided with more demanding challenges for more able pupils, and opportunities for reinforcement for the less able;
- provide questions and tasks which probe pupils' grasp of the material being studied;
- explore pupils' grasp of background concepts and principles. Instead of confining assessments to 'safe' and unchallenging tasks, tasks should also be devised which create and consolidate understanding and which require application of knowledge and understanding within new contexts;
- utilise a range of *informal* assessment techniques so that pupils are challenged to show the extent of their understanding. These may include oral questioning by the teacher on a whole-class, group, or individual basis, the discussion of individual responses to practical and creative tasks, and helping pupils over specific difficulties as exercises proceed;
- increase the range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment by good classroom organisation which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group;
- have clear and high expectations of pupils' performances and provide them with understandable assessment criteria so that they are clear about what they need to learn;
- ensure that procedures and practices adopted for assessing pupils' progress are not too time-consuming and bureaucratic for teachers and/or pupils.

Monitoring and follow-up procedures

Several different systems are employed to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and the degree to which it is being implemented:

1. Staff regularly monitor pupils' progress towards targets set using baseline data. Tutors check the individual progress of their tutees towards targets and implement action plans for individuals in cases of underachievement. Tutors will also inform parents of cases of underachievement.
2. Tutors regularly monitor their pupil's homework diaries.
3. Spot checks are undertaken by Heads of Department and / or Heads of Faculty to ascertain how well the various policies concerned with assessment/recording and reporting are being implemented.
4. There are meetings (usually every three weeks) between tutors and House staff where significant issues related to the progress of pupils are discussed. The Director of Studies and the Director of Teaching and Learning are kept informed of matters discussed at these meetings.

Recording assessments

Methods of Recording:

One single, prescriptive system for recording cannot be imposed on all departments.

The departmental records should include evidence of curriculum-based achievements. To this end, assessments of these skills should be undertaken at least once a term and recorded in mark books.

Section 5 - Setting standards:

Departments need to:

- ensure that assessments are consistent so that when judgements are made against standards there is fairness for pupils both within a teaching group and between teaching groups;
- compare the performance of pupils from different classes on common activities;

- ensure that Controlled Assessments are moderated to meet GCSE and A level requirements.

Staff responsibilities:

Members of Senior Management Team should:

- facilitate training and discussion opportunities for departments or teams of teachers to discuss assessment/recording/reporting;
- look at early predictions of final GCSE/AS/A2 grades and, in conjunction with teaching staff, encourage individual pupils to improve their performance;
- analyse and evaluate test/examination results and discuss implications of findings with departments with respect to future developments in teaching and assessment.

The Examinations Officer should:

- oversee the arrangements for public examinations and internal mock exams and construct the timetables for mock and public examinations.
- keep up-to-date with local and national developments relating to assessment, disseminate relevant documentation to Heads of Department and / or Heads of Faculty and advise other colleagues when necessary;

Heads of Department should:

- monitor and evaluate all marking and other assessment/recording/reporting practices within their department, e.g. they should ensure that the common grading policy is applied consistently across the department;
- promote consistency in assessment/recording/reporting within their department;
- provide guidance on judgmental issues when assessment standards are being set;
- use the results of assessment to inform and direct future teaching and curriculum planning;
- undertake periodic examination of pupils' written work. Follow-up needs to take place where standards are poor or excellent;
- periodically meet with their line managers in the Director of Studies and the Director of Teaching and Learning to discuss, amongst other issues, matters relating to assessment/recording/reporting.

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