

Wadebridge School: Assessment Policy -Updated June 2013

Contact person: Di Talling

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning (see Teaching and Learning Policy). It is an open process shared between student, teachers and parents using criteria which make clear what is required for each student to progress. It serves to inform long, medium and short term planning. It is often useful to divide assessment into the two categories of *'formative'* and *'summative'*. Each plays a key role in helping pupils to raise their achievement and in guiding teachers in their lesson planning.

Wadebridge School is committed to the principles of 'Formative Assessment' or 'Assessment for Learning' using the definition from 'Assessment for Learning' - Assessment Reform Group, 2002;

"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 is more than simply marking and feeding back grades. It involves teachers in identifying the next steps for learning as well as responding to the errors students make and the difficulties they experience. Good quality assessment serves many purposes. It supports learning, improves standards, makes a positive impact on students' attitudes, improves motivation, provides diagnostic feedback, assists the teacher in evaluating the teaching programme and identifies subsequent action required to be taken by both the teacher and the student.

Essential to good learning are:

- Good planning: teachers start with what they want students to learn and then decide what strategies and activities will best enable that learning. Planning should be learning led and not activity led
- Lesson plans must help teachers make clear to students what they are trying to learn, the relevance of the learning, the standards they are aiming for and how they can demonstrate achievement
- The sharing of learning objectives with students in lessons – 'what we are learning today'
- The use of differentiated learning outcomes to explain what is expected for each student to achieve, 'what will you be able to do by the end of the lesson that you can't yet do'
- Use of success criteria to show students 'what good looks like'
- Students' self and peer assessment
- Feedback to students to inform the next steps for learning
- Clearly planned dedicated improvement time (DIT)
- Lessons that have a clear structure so that students have opportunities to reflect on their learning and support each other as active learners

On-going formative assessment:

Formative assessment is all about moving the student forward. It is an essential element of everyday teaching and learning. Teachers have the responsibility for setting relevant tasks with clear learning objectives. This will usually involve subject objectives, but will often also involve skills based objectives. The nature of those objectives should be shared with students, as well as details about how the learning will be assessed. It is essential that the learner understands what is required of them, is able to reflect on their learning, and makes decisions about what to do next in order to progress. A wide variety of strategies will be used within the classroom to allow for formative assessment to take place. These will include:

- Providing students with clear learning objectives, outcomes and success criteria
- Providing effective feedback to students both orally and in a written form, which is then used in Dedicated Improvement Time lessons where the feedback is responded to in a meaningful manner by students
- Giving examples of quality pieces of work, with an appropriate level of challenge, to the students
- Involving students in self and peer assessment where appropriate
- Planned assessment opportunities
- Reviewing the results of assessments with students and ensuring students take action

Marking students work:

It is NOT necessary for every piece of work produced by a student to be ‘marked’ by the teacher. This does not imply that work is not routinely assessed. Oral, self and peer assessment play a vital role in the assessment process, however there is a clear need for the teacher to respond to a student’s progress in a written form on a regular basis.

Research shows quite clearly that giving only grades, or a combination of grades and comments, on students work is NOT as effective in raising standards as when **only comments** are given.

Therefore the only grades which will be given to students will be those relevant to the appropriate examinations as explained in the section on summative assessment. Teachers are free to record other types of grades in their own markbooks e.g. effort or understanding grades, but these should **not** routinely be available to students. Whilst it is not possible to mark every piece of work a student produces, it is vital that where marking takes place it should be meaningful.

- Feedback will be directly related to the learning objectives for the lesson/series of lessons
- Comments must reflect what the student has already achieved, what still needs to be improved, and how to make that improvement.
- Comments need not be lengthy but they need to be focused and helpful (e.g. ‘there is not enough detail here’ does not give advice as to HOW to improve) – clear targets for improvement should be given.
- Dedicated improvement time (DIT) needs to be built into lessons in which students are required to act upon the targets set and advice given
- Comments on presentation should be kept to a minimum
- Feedback should be prompt and should be used in future lessons
- Research strongly suggests that telling learners what they have done correctly (as well as what they need to do to improve) is increasingly important in helping build resilience in young people

Departments should develop their own subject specific guidelines in line with the whole school policy.

Questioning:

- Questions need to be planned in a sequence that guides students towards and reinforces the main objectives of the lesson
- Certain types of questions have in-built challenge and require students to think deeply;
 - open-ended questions that have no obvious answer
 - questions that demand and develop higher-order thinking skills e.g. evaluation
 - questions that encourage students to take risks
- Teachers should build in ‘wait time’ so that students can reflect on a question before answering it

- Questions can be used to promote active listening and engagement, especially when the 'no hands' rule is used.
- Teachers should encourage students to generate their own questions
- Teachers can encourage students to give extended answers using strategies such as inviting students to elaborate on a topic

Target Setting

The aim of target setting is to focus the efforts of teachers and students on the steps to be taken to achieve progress and improvement. Personalized Learning requires all students to be considered individually in order to set appropriately challenging, but achievable targets for all subjects. Target setting is only effective when definite actions are taken to achieve the targets and when regular monitoring of progress towards the targets occurs. For all three Key Stages national benchmarks are used. However alongside this 'hard' data the professional judgement of teachers also plays a vital role. Once set the targets are added to flight path record sheets which are used in all subjects in all Key Stages. The flight paths are a pictorial way of showing the student's progress and are added to regularly with the results of assessments completed in each subject. These are shared with the students on a regular basis.

End of KS3 course targets are set in Year 7 for all subjects. At the start of Year 9 English, Maths, Science and EPR move on to set targets for the end of KS4, whilst other subjects set these at the start of Year 10. Targets are set at the start of Year 12 in the Sixth Form and at the start of Year 13. In Year 7 the targets set are Wadebridge School Levels – see Appendix 1 Transitional Key Stage Curriculum. In KS4 they are GCSE or BTEC grades and at KS5 AS and A'Level grades, or BTEC grades.

Teachers are expected to set the targets for their own classes, with an overview from the CAL and SLT line manager for the subject. The primary data used as a basis for setting KS3 targets is KS2 results, combined with baseline assessments given at the start of Year 7. The targets are set in order to allow a student to make at least 'expected progress' or even 'better than expected' progress (3 or 4 levels from KS2) by the end of KS4.

When end of Year 11 course targets are set Fischer Family Trust predictions are also used. These give the 'chances' of a student, with a particular past academic performance, of reaching each GCSE grade in a particular subject. Targets are set from the orange 'expected performance' FFT target and the green 'better than expected progress' target.

At KS5 targets the GCSE results along with the ALPS, LV3A and FFT predictions are all combined to give a challenging target which will allow a positive Value Added result for that student if achieved. Students' achievement of targets is NOT used to judge a teachers' performance. Progress and Value Added calculations are used for this, and so it is vital that targets are appropriately challenging for ALL students. Therefore teachers must not err on the side of caution, but must be prepared to encourage students to 'aim high'. Every student should be working towards a positive 'value added' result, and 'better than expected' progress as explained in the paragraphs above.

Targets are shared with students and parents via Progress Checks and Reports (Years 7 - 11) and Progress Reviews (Y12,13). Progress towards them is recorded on the flight paths kept by classroom teachers, which are shared with students on a regular basis. Monitoring takes place as explained in the following section.

Summative Assessment / Progress Towards Targets:

This can be informed by a whole variety of mechanisms including testing, questioning, class based or homework tasks etc. Teachers should employ a variety of summative assessments during the course of the

year. Each term (as detailed in the school calendar) there is a requirement for a summative judgement to be recorded centrally as to how the student is progressing towards targets that have previously been set.

Teachers can use summative assessment to inform learning by using the information gleaned to:

- Draw students into the assessment process
- Improve motivation and self-esteem
- Contribute to raising standards
- Increase students understanding of the standards they are aiming for
- Set up appropriate interventions where a student is not making the progress that would be expected from them at any particular time throughout Key Stage 3, 4 or 5

Recording and Reporting Progress

Flight paths are used in all departments and at all Key Stages to record and share progress with students. RAG analysis of assessments compared to targets is used throughout on the flight paths. The colours of Red, Orange and Green should be consistent and in-line with with the colours given in FFT and placed on the flight path in KS3 and 4, and from the target grade selected at KS5.

At KS3 the teacher is required to state whether the student is 'on, above or below target' to reach their end of KS level. This should be entered onto the school's SIMS system termly. In addition, at the time of the main school report the WS level (see further details in Appendix 1) will be recorded in all subjects.

At KS4 and 5 the idea of Current Performance is less helpful. The important question is whether a student is likely to achieve their target by the end of the course if their learning continues in the same way. Teachers are therefore required to enter a *most likely grade* to indicate their grade the student is likely to achieve given how they are currently learning and taking any likely progress into account.

At the same time teachers are required to enter an **EFFORT** code for each student in KS3, 4 and 5. Effort codes should reflect a student's attitude to learning rather than behaviour.

E EXCELLENT	an enthusiastic and engaged learner
G GOOD	an active learner who wants to improve their learning
S SOME CONCERNS	a passive learner where there are minor concerns regarding aspects of their learning
C CONCERN	major concerns regarding their learning; often little learning taking place

KS3 and 4 students are also given a **BEHAVIOUR** code

G GOOD	Good behaviour!
S SOME CONCERNS	Minor concerns, low level disruption (e.g. chatting), student rarely reaches step 3
C CONCERN	Major concerns, student reaches step 3 or 4 and disrupts the learning of others regularly

At KS3 and 4 progress towards targets, along with effort and behaviour, are shared with parents in the form of Progress Checks twice yearly, as well as being used by teachers, Curriculum Area Leaders, form tutors, mentors, and Key Stage Teams, in monitoring student performance and improvement. The grades are accessible to all staff via SIMS. Where a student is not on target, or where effort or behaviour cause any concern then a short comment is added to the progress check to give further information to parents.

The progress of each student, as well as groups of identified students, is tracked closely by the Key Stage Teams and additional support and mentoring is given where appropriate.

In KS3 and KS4 parents receive a full school report yearly. The timing of the school report forms a part of a reporting cycle in which Progress Checks complement the full school report in providing parents with information about their son's/daughter's progress. A Progress Check is sent in two of the school terms and a report in the other term.

The report contains information from each of the student's subject teachers, plus a general summative comment from the student's form tutor and a senior member of staff, which summarises progress and areas for improvement.

Subject statements should be personal and specific to each student. Comments should be succinct and limited to 1000 characters. Comments should include some of the following:

- Progress towards targets
- Particular achievements
- Subject specific comments
- Areas of strength
- Areas for development
- Work habits (including homework)
- Contribution to lessons
- Behaviour, motivation
- Organisation
- Strategies for Improvement: These must include clear, subject-specific targets for improvement and what action should be taken to achieve them.

The report forms a key part of the school's efforts to communicate effectively with parents; the opportunity to investigate any parental concerns/questions will always be provided. Reports are discussed with students during tutor time to ensure that targets and comments are understood, and to discuss positives and areas for improvement. Reports use the recording of achievement to encourage and motivate students. They also help decision-making about future careers, education or training.

In KS3, 4 and 5 sessions in the tutorial programme are put aside for mentoring following the assessment points. In KS3 in addition to the tutor providing this support, trained STAR mentors from Year 10 and 11 are involved in regular mentoring sessions with selected students. At KS4 each tutor group is linked with a member of the SLT or Key Stage Team, which allows for regular 1 to 1 and small group discussions about learning, progress and plans for the future.

At KS5 Progress Review statements are used. These combine information about progress towards targets and effort with strategies for improvement. A few sentences are written to explain the student's current position. The aim of this is give regular and timely feedback to these learners in order that they can take any required actions swiftly.

Further references:

Teaching and Learning Policy

Monitoring:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to produce appropriate and accurate report comments. CALs are responsible for checking the quality of comments to ensure consistency across their subject area. Members of the SLT and the Key Stage teams are responsible for checking for 'errors' so that a good quality report goes home to parents. They are quality assessed as a whole report during this proof reading stage and any concerns acted upon.

Members of the SLT monitor the delivery of this policy through their line management system and by discussions with staff. During each year the views of students are obtained by discussion, and of parents via questionnaires.

Policy Reviewed: June 2004 [amended Mar. 2009, amended June 2011, amended June 2013, amended June 2014]

Appendix 1

Wadebridge School – Transitional Key Stage 3 Curriculum