



Sir John Colfox Language College

Assessment for learning, Target Setting and Marking Policy

Rationale

Assessment is integral to effective teaching and learning and must focus on helping students to learn. Its purpose is to inform students, parents and teachers about progress. Effective assessment must strike at the heart of raising achievement and is a key factor in challenging underachievement. It is important that a range of assessment techniques are applied in lessons

Formative assessment is used to:

- ❑ Identify a base line and potential levels of achievement
- ❑ Identify students' strengths and areas for reinforcement and development
- ❑ Inform regular dialogues between teacher and learner about progress
- ❑ Provide teachers with information on which to base their long and short term lesson planning for individuals and groups of students

Summative assessment is used to inform:

- ❑ Students, teachers and parents about students' current levels of attainment
- ❑ Decisions about progression between Key Stages and into further and higher education
- ❑ Curriculum planning across the school
- ❑ School self-evaluation and performance management

Both formative and summative assessment allow:

- ❑ Comparison between a student's current and previous levels of achievement
- ❑ Comparison between one student and another
- ❑ Comparison between the achievement of the student and groups of students across subjects

Key Elements of the Policy

- ❑ **External Assessment**
- ❑ Internal School Assessments
- ❑ Marking
- ❑ Assessment for learning, including self-assessment.
- ❑ Reporting
- ❑ Target-Setting

Sir John Colfox Marking Policy – Regular Practice

Marking work

1. In KS3 and KS4, work should be marked using the S W and I method – Strengths, Weaknesses and Improvements. Teachers may wish to leave out 'Weaknesses'.
2. Set constructive additional targets for (I) improvement. These should focus on how to improve students' level of attainment (i.e. move from one level/grade to the next (see *current levels of attainment below*)).

3. Books/folders should be marked on at least a fortnightly basis in KS3 and KS4
4. Marks for attainment (set out below) can be used. It is worth noting, however that providing targets for improvement, without grades, is very effective, especially for less able pupils.
5. Advanced Level essays/past papers are marked fortnightly and folders are checked every half-term.

Marking Policy – why a whole school policy?

- As well as having wider aims (see below) it is clear from that a more uniform and consistent approach to marking is needed at the Sir John Colfox School.

Aims: For students,

- To inform them of their progress and motivate them to improve their performance;
- To help them identify the criteria by which their future progress can be measured;
- To develop their ability to accept criticism and praise in order that they can reflect more effectively on what they have learned;
- To equip them with the skills of constructive self-criticism so that they can become effective independent learners.

Aims: For teachers,

- To inform them of the progress that students are making;
- To diagnose individual learning needs;
- To evaluate the impact of the teaching on students' knowledge, understanding and skills;
- To use this evaluation to inform future planning
- To become reflexive practitioners;
- To reinforce expectations and students' sense of purpose.

Principles of effective marking

Effective marking takes a variety of different forms depending upon the demands of the particular pieces of work and schemes of work over a period of time. The principles, which follow, are intended to provide a framework by which staff can plan and evaluate their practice in marking students' work. It:

- Provides constructive feedback which helps students to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do next;
- Encourages student engagement through questions which are followed up;
- Provides opportunities for students to mark their own and others' work;
- Focuses on explicit learning outcomes as the criteria for success;
- Engages with subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills and not just with effort and presentation;
- Supports consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of students' work;
- Is focussed and targeted in order to make it meaningful for the student and manageable for the teacher;

- ❑ Is prompt and regular in all classes and all subjects;
- ❑ May include both written and verbal feedback;
- ❑ Sets specific targets or next steps;
- ❑ Is legible and is expressed in clear language appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual student;
- ❑ Feeds into the planning of future teaching activities.

Assessment of Learning:

Current Levels of Attainment

Please use the following levels of attainment. These are given on the basis of Grades or Levels gleaned from end of module assessment tasks that have been marked against National Curriculum or GCSE criteria.

National Curriculum Levels at Key Stage 3

Attainment should be shown as a National Curriculum Level [1 to 7/8], subdivided where appropriate by the use of A, B, C to denote attainment at the upper or lower range of the level respectively. [e.g. 4, 5A or 3B.] For students whose attainment level lies outside the expected range or dis-applied the appropriate codes should be used. [e.g. D-Disapplied, Working towards level 3.]

GCSE Grades at Key Stage 4

GCSE Grades [A*-G] should be used.

GNVQ Grades at Key Stage 4

Attainment on these courses should be shown as a Fail [F], Pass [P], Merit [M] or a Distinction [D] with an entry level [e.g. Foundation [F] or Intermediate [I]

A Level Grades at Key Stage 5

A levels and AS grades [A-E] should be used

Target Setting - Minimum Expected Levels/Grades

Baseline data is used to generate target GCSE Grades or National Curriculum Levels based on student's prior attainment. This data is available for all students on Scholaris and on the Admin Network (CB). These are use to inform:

- planning
- target-setting in lessons and on Scholaris
- termly benchmarking of progress via progress reports, parents evening etc

They are generated from prior attainment data using the following:

Years 7 - 9:

- Key Stage 2 SAT's and use of primary school levels*.
- Year 7 FFT data gives minimum expected levels for Key Stage 3 SAT's*
- Prior attainment at SJC

Years 10 and 11:

- Key Stage 3 SAT's.
- FFT (D) gives minimum expected grades for GCSE*.
- Prior Attainment at the SJC

Years 12 and 13

- LAT performance indicators*.
- GCSE grades and point scores
- Prior Attainment at the SJC

*Teachers may wish to set target grades above NC/FFT/LAT predictions

The above data is shared with parents and students at parents' evenings and in reports. In addition students in all houses should be made aware, by their tutors and teachers, of their progress and how it relates to outcomes at the end of each Key Stage.

Indicating levels of Attainment

- Assessment criteria for key assessments should be written/published in parent and pupil-friendly formats. Students know exactly what they need to do in order to achieve their target levels or grades.
- NC levels/GCSE/A level grades are awarded and recorded for key assessment pieces and for substantial pieces of work where appropriate – at least once per half term.
- Learning targets (or progress targets) are regularly set - at least once every six weeks in core subjects and at least every nine weeks in non-core subjects. Targets should be linked to NC/GCSE/A Level criteria.

Guidelines for good practice in marking

- Individual or pair marking or editing for special features of content or presentation, is useful, for example prior to the work being handed into the teacher;
 - editing or correcting of particular features in part of the work before asking students to self-mark the remainder for the same errors;
 - focussing marking on a single feature, which had been made explicit to the students in advance;
 - sharing exemplar material with the whole class to model the expected outcomes;
 - collating common issues that arise from a set of marking and sharing these with the class or groups of students via teacher-prepared sheet, notes on the whiteboard or OHP rather than writing detailed comments on all work individually;

- oral feedback, providing immediate acknowledgment of work done, quick targeted intervention and an opportunity to share strategies for improvement at the relevant time.

Marking written work without the student present may involve more detailed teacher comment.

It is important that time is given in the following lessons for students to read and assimilate feedback.

How work is annotated

- Teachers should indicate to students what a task is going to be marked for – related to Learning Objectives of unit or lesson and assessment criteria of task.
- Marking is not about correcting. Teachers highlight errors: students correct them.
- Correction time needs to be built in to class and homework routines.
- Teachers should not feel that they have to mark every spelling and punctuation error. For students with SEN for example, a minimum of five key words should be highlighted for correction.
- Teachers should also mark subject-specific spelling errors (key words or target vocabulary).
- Common mistakes, for example the incorrect use of capitals or paragraphing and misconceptions (e.g. homophones like their, there and they're) should be highlighted.
- When literacy targets are set, teachers should mark in support of those.

Spelling

- Spelling can be improved by advising pupils to follow the method shown below

Correcting spellings

Use the **Look, Cover, Write, Say, Check** method:

***Look** at the word;

***Cover** the word;

***Write** it out;

***Say** the word;

***Check** that it is right.

Assessment for Learning

The most important function of assessment is to assist student's learning. Assessment which does this is commonly referred to as 'Assessment for Learning'. A review of research by Paul Black and Dylan Williams has shown that assessment, carried out in certain ways, "**can raise the achievement of all students and particularly lower-achieving students.**"

Moreover, the raising of standards is achieved by students developing the skills and attitudes which enable them to take responsibility for their own learning and enable them to become lifelong learners”.

Research suggests some particular strategies, and provides references to other sources of information, as well as including checklists for reviewing practice.

Research shows improving learning through assessment depends on five key features:

- ❑ Effective feedback to students;
- ❑ 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; and
- ❑ The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

Assessment can be used to raise standards when teachers:

- ❑ Decide how and when to assess students’ attainment at the same time as they plan the work
- ❑ Are proficient in using a range of assessment techniques in the classroom; and
- ❑ Prepare and make use of manageable systems for recording the progress of individual students.

Potential problems that need to be recognised are;

- ❑ A tendency for teachers to assess quantity of work and presentation rather than the quality of learning;
- ❑ Greater attention given to marking and grading, much of it tending to lower the self-esteem of students, rather than to provide advice for improvement;
- ❑ A strong emphasis on comparing students with each other which demoralises the less successful learners;
- ❑ Teachers’ feedback to students often serves social and managerial purposes rather than helping them to learn more effectively; and
- ❑ Teachers not knowing enough about their students’ learning needs.
- ❑ Over-marking

The characteristics of assessment that promote learning are that it;

- ❑ Is embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part;
- ❑ Involves sharing learning objectives with students;
- ❑ Aims to help students to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming at;
- ❑ Involves students in self-assessment
- ❑ Provides feedback which leads to students recognising their next steps and how to take them;
- ❑ Is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve; and
- ❑ Involves both teacher and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment data.

How to find out if assessment is really helping learning:

- ❑ By observing students – this includes listening to how they describe their work and their reasoning;

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

Ideas which could be included:

Focus – adjusting teaching to take account of student’s learning

- Regard plans as a guide – not a strait jacket;
- Adapt teaching to respond to students’ learning needs, whilst keeping in mind medium term plans and objectives;
- Before beginning a unit of work, find out what the students know, understand and can do, by referring to records and updating that information by assessing the students now, for example through questions, discussion, quiz; brainstorming; concept mapping;
- Annotate plans to show particular needs and changes, so they also become records.

Focus – sharing the learning objective(s)

- Make it an expectation for every lesson;
- Phrase the objective in terms of what students will have achieved (know, understand, be able to do) or a question they will be able to answer, by the end of the lesson;
- If necessary use the WALT (What are our learning intentions?) to set objectives and WILT (What I learned today) to refer to the objectives during the plenary
- Write it up on the board or other agreed place;
- Fluent writers can write it in their books as a title;
- Separate the objective from the activity
- Clarify the success criteria (What I’m looking for”);
- Exemplify and model quality, for example by showing anonymous work previously produced;
- Ask students to repeat the objective.

Focus – questioning to support learning

- Use a variety of questions for specific purposes;
- Prepare and plan questions which will illustrate and probe students’ understanding, and require thinking not just remembering;
- Devise classroom strategies which mean all students are thinking all the time (for example asking named students what they can add to a response given by another);
- In the classrooms use questions which may be considered ‘trick’ questions in a test, to provide insights into students’ thinking;
- Shared planned questions with other teachers, to build up a band of rich questions;
- Ensure students have sufficient thinking time before being expected to provide an answer;
- Take time to consider students’ answers, and the learning they reveal;
- Encourage students to critique questions;
- Use “hands up” sparingly as a mechanism for eliciting responses;

- Offer students the opportunity to take 'time out' to discuss their ideas in pairs or threes, in response to challenging questions before bringing the class together again; and
- Ask students to produce questions for a topic as a different way of assessing their knowledge and understanding.

Focus – self-assessment

- Ensure everyone views self-assessment as a thinking and talking activity, rather than a writing one;
- Train students in self-assessment, for example by modelling personal responses;
- Relate self-assessment back to the shared learning objective; success criteria and exemplification;
- Use a variety of approaches to self assessment; and
- Ask specific questions which relate to the task, not the learner (e.g. “*what* did you find hard, and why?” rather than “*who* found it hard?”).

Focus – marking and feedback

- Focus on the current task and provide feedback promptly
- Provide information about strengths and successes (S) and steps for improvement (I);
- Match the feedback to the shared learning objective and success criteria;
- Avoid comparisons with other students;
- Focus feedback on what the students were asked to pay attention to;
- Provide specific ways to improve or 'close the gap';
- Use oral feedback wherever possible as it is the most immediate and powerful; and
- When marking has been done 'at a distance', ensure students can read and understand it;
- Agree codes which relate to the learning objective, for accessibility and manageability;
- Use comments and codes, not grades, (or symbols, or external awards which act as grades;)
- Provide students with time to read and respond to marking; and
- Inform parents of the school's marking and feedback policy.

Focus: individual target setting

- For reference, identify targets which relate to appropriate levels or sub-levels of the national curriculum;
- Use language which is meaningful to students;
- Concentrate on a limited number of areas within your subject;
- On the basis of student's work, decide with the student upon an appropriate target;
- Check that target is SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (achievable in 6 weeks for example)
- Discuss with the student whether the target has been met, needs to be revised, or another target set;
- Establish a rolling programme of individual target setting so that the process is manageable with a whole class;
- Consider grouping together students with similar target needs; and
- Consider group targets adjusted for individuals where appropriate.

Reporting

Rationale

Schools communicate with parents in many ways about the curriculum and the achievements of their children. At the Sir John Colfox these can take the following forms:

- Written reports and target setting rounds on Scholaris.
- Mentoring sessions.
- Informal discussion.
- Telephone calls home and interviews.
- Written comments on pieces of work which are taken home
- Wall displays around the school
- House Points and departmental letters sent home for good work
- The Student Planner – a key resource

All of these forms of communication share the same function and they are intended to inform, involve and motivate students and their parents.
