

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING POLICY

July 2007

Updated September 2009

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AIMS

The aims of this policy are to impact on the quality of teaching and learning provision at St Bede's, to promote the agreed means of ensuring that impact in order to maximise student potential and raise standards of attainment by personalising learning through embedding Assessment for Learning strategies into effective classroom practice.

This policy supersedes all previous Assessment, Recording and Reporting policies.

PRINCIPLES

Assessment for Learning is a process in which the students are involved; it is not something which is done to them. It should enable students to be aware of what they know, understand and can do and should provide a framework for learning which allows future curricular targets to be established.

Engagement with 'Assessment for Learning' is the responsibility of every teacher at the school. Subject and house leaders have responsibility for monitoring policy, practice and individual student performance against agreed targets. This is further supported by the school's Leadership Team. The development of the Assessing Pupils Progress (APP) programme reinforces the use of AfL strategies for day to day assessment allied to the more reflective, holistic periodic assessment where individual weaknesses for intervention are clearly identified and shared

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1. EFFECTIVE WRITTEN FEEDBACK INCLUDING MARKING AND GRADING POLICY

Every department should have a clear marking policy which is made explicit to students, understood by them and is consistently applied by all teachers within the department. Marking should incorporate constructive and diagnostic comments.

Written comments to students should provide information about:

- Whether they are on the right track
- Any limitations of the work and guidance over how subsequent work of a similar type could be improved
- Particular areas for praise or development via marginal comments
- Whether the learning objectives / assessment focus of the work have been met
- How they can achieve the next level or grade where work is levelled or graded
- The individual student's work rather than make comparisons with others
- Progress over time

Key Stage 3

Students should have regular opportunities to know and reflect upon the National Curriculum Level at which they are working based on one or several pieces of work.

Work may also be graded using an A – D scale in which:

A = exceptional performance for the individual student

B = work above expectations for the individual student

C = work level with expectations for the individual student

D = work below expectations for the individual student

N = work not completed

Key Stage 4

During Key Stage 4, work is generally marked against specific GCSE criteria and an A*-G scale, including Unclassified, is the norm. Other grading systems for courses other than GCSE, such as BTEC, should always be made explicit to students.

The grades awarded and comments made should take note of individual students' prior attainment and thus contain some form of reference to our expectations of what individual students are capable. Therefore, via marks and comments, a student should receive a clear insight into what has been achieved, the effort made and how to improve similar types of work which will be encountered in the future.

2. FORMATIVE MARKING

The features of 'effective written feedback' are more associated with 'summative marking' where a piece of work is being assessed on its completion and the student has no opportunity to make any amendments or alteration to the 'marked' work.

Formative marking, however, is based on the following principle:

- The amendment, improvement, correction and redrafting of work is important and encourages an open dialogue with students

Formative marking, therefore, should

- Identify where and how a target or learning outcome / objective has been met – so that the student knows what has been done well
- Identify specific areas for improvement where work would be 'even better if...'
- Indicate how the next required steps in the student's learning can be achieved.

The acronym 'WIN' is a useful aide-memoire for the above:

W What **w**as done **w**ell?

I What **I**mprovements can be made?

N What are the **N**ext steps **n**eeded?

- Comments should be personalised so that assessment is based on the targets and achievements of what is expected of each individual student rather than of a whole class.

3. ORAL FEEDBACK

Students value oral feedback as it again initiates dialogue and allows them to understand what is being done well and what needs improvement. Oral feedback:

- Is most effective on a one to one basis
- Can accompany written feedback to complement it and develop it
- Should consciously focus on progression and how students can improve and develop
- Can offer students ways of thinking through an answer for themselves.
- Can incorporate peer assessment both formatively and summatively
- Can be immediate for both praise and concern
- Should be clearly task and activity related
- Should be closely related to learning outcomes and objectives
- Should be a process of acknowledging progress through a lesson or over a period of time

Students' own oral work needs to be given equal status alongside written work.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes should be made explicit to students at the outset of lessons and throughout schemes of work via a range of means. Thus, students will clearly understand what is expected of them in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Within a lesson or series of lessons, students should be able to explain what they are learning, how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Students should be increasingly confident in discussing their progress against these specified learning outcomes with each other and with their teacher and be clear about the success criteria which allow them to know when they have 'succeeded'.

Objectives which are merely 'things to do' are not focused on student learning. As a common vocabulary students should consistently hear the following with regard to clear learning outcomes.

- Know that...
- Understand how / why...
- Develop / be able to...
- Develop / be aware of...
- Explore...
- Recognise...
- Explain
- We are learning to...

The systematic use of WALT, 'What we are learning today'...

and WILF, 'What I am looking for'... approaches can be also be very effective .

Structures which build in differentiation are beneficial. Thus, pupils can be clear about what they

- Must achieve
- Should achieve
- Could achieve.

5. TARGET SETTING AND SECURING PROGRESSION

A) PERFORMANCE DATA

At the end of Year 6, primary schools provide the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Test results in English, Mathematics and Science and Teacher assessments for the same core subjects. These Levels are disseminated to all staff and ensure that relevant, personalised teaching, learning and targeting are immediately established. The Levels are sub-divided into plusses and minuses to discriminate more closely across wide ability bands.

In the first half term of each year, a 'target' is established for each student in each subject for the coming academic year. As students progress through school, it becomes crucial that targets reflect a development from their level on entry so that over the two years Key Stage 3 in English, Maths and Science, the target aims to achieve progress of four sub-levels in English and Science and six sub-levels in Maths.

The Levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 are used to establish appropriate and challenging targets for student performance in GCSE or other Key Stage 4 examinations. These should also refer back to Year 6 entry levels in order to ensure 'value added' progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. Students arriving at school with middle Level 4 should target C+ at GCSE or equivalent, students arriving with middle Level 5 should target A/ A*.

The setting of all targets is initially the responsibility of the subject teacher though subject leaders and house leaders require an overview in order to ensure that the established targets are in line with those agreed with the Local Authority and offer sufficient overall challenge to contribute to whole school targets and 'value added' measures which would place the school in the top 25% of schools nationally.

Each subject leader is responsible for ensuring that there are clear and manageable records of each individual student's targets, work and progress for their particular subject which can be referred to in dealings with students, parents, colleagues and other agencies in order to provide clear, unambiguous information on a student's attainment, effort, strengths, weaknesses and needs. Such data is informed by subject teachers' individual knowledge of each individual student they teach and through ever more rigorous identification of the gaps in student knowledge, skills or understanding which need to be addressed in that particular subject.

The Learning Tutor has overall knowledge of each student's targets and progress in their tutor group and leads students through processes of review and evaluation, ensuring that targets are maintained in the Student Planner and identifying with students the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to achieve those targets and ensure progression.

The House Leader has overall knowledge of each student's targets and progress in their house and thus analyses and uses the whole school performance data to ensure effective future target setting and through their individual knowledge of students embeds the principles of personalised learning.

Students should be aware of their targets in all subjects, should increasingly be involved in their setting and through 'learning conversations' increasingly understand and be able to explain independently their targets in terms of what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve their work by accurately identifying their next steps in learning in each of their subjects.

B) TEACHING AND LEARNING IMPLICATIONS

In order to be able to achieve at a particular level or sub-level, a student has to be able to understand what they need to do to achieve that level. Thus teachers in their lessons should ensure that they:

- Have the levels and grades available and make reference to them so that students understand the criteria against which their work is being assessed
- Individualise and personalise targets so that they relate to particular need
- Work with students to identify success criteria which enable them to make independent progress towards their targets
- Provide 'modelling' to give direct guidance on 'what a good one will look like'.
- Show and discuss examples of work to link with the criteria to identify stronger and weaker features
- Encourage peer and self assessment so that in pairs or groups students can explore the criteria more fully.
- Talk about assessment with openness, avoiding generalities and engage students in the process through discussion and collaboration
- Create the means whereby students themselves can establish the success criteria for particular lessons or units of work.

6. PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT

Self assessment and peer assessment are key areas of assessment as they...

- Build students' confidence
- Make students more open in what they say
- Enable students to be aware of the skills they have
- Enable students to become better users of subject specific language
- Ensure that students become more aware of expectations
- Ensure that students have a clearer understanding of the criteria for assessment and how to achieve a particular level or standard
- Reduce embarrassment by building a culture of frankness and openness
- Give credit for skills and abilities other than written assessment
- Build 'practical' skills
- Help students and teachers move towards the 'co-construction' of assessment criteria

As there are clear benefits to peer and self assessment there are also implications for teachers. These are that they...

- take planning, time, patience and commitment – students do not become self-evaluative overnight
- need to be taught as a skill
- need to be modelled by the teacher
- need a specific focus
- need clear criteria against which the students are making assessments – and not too many!
- need demonstrations, modelling, discussion and agreement about the language we want to hear the students using
- need prompt sheets to aid progress through the assessment.

To build self assessment into the students' work, the Parents' Consultation Evening is preceded by a 'review week' during which time students complete a self assessment sheet which is agreed by the subject teacher and then submitted to the Learning Tutor as part of the 'learning conversation' which takes place between parents, student and teacher on the consultation evening.

7. SUMMARY

- Each department should have a marking policy
- Marking should incorporate diagnostic comments and feedback
- Feedback should take account of the student's individual capabilities
- Curricular targets should be agreed with students as periodic assessment takes place
- Formative assessment should be used – using the WIN acronym can support students' progress successfully
- Oral feedback is to be valued equally with written feedback by teachers and students
- Explicit learning outcomes, success criteria and differentiation are key components of effective teaching and learning
- Ensure accuracy in target setting so that all targets relate back to entry in Year 7
- Ensure knowledge of students' work, progress and development at each of the following:
 - As a subject teacher
 - As a learning tutor
 - As a subject leader
 - As a house leader
 - As a team leader
- In the light of the above, work in a co-ordinated way to implement the necessary monitoring and intervention procedures to ensure progress
- Develop skills in peer and self assessment so that students demonstrate more collaborative, reflective and independent means of learning.
- Maintain day to day assessment, allow opportunities for reflection and 'periodic assessment' to implement appropriate intervention and agree curricular targets, have a clear vision for the standard of achievement expected at 'transition' so that every student is making specific individual progress from Year 7 to Year 11.