



Mark Rutherford School

Assessment Policy

(Reviewed by Governors Curriculum Sub-Committee
September 2017)

The quality of assessment has a significant impact on attitudes to learning and on attainment in schools by stimulating and challenging students to work hard and by encouraging teachers to focus on how to improve the learning of individual students. (Ofsted: Good assessment in secondary schools)

1. Introduction

Assessment is the range of activities through which we come to know about the abilities and achievements of the students and the extent of their knowledge, skills and understanding. Assessment is a means to measure performance, potential and progress. It is an integral part of effective learning and teaching.

We use information gathered on students from their feeder schools and participates in the National Examinations occurring at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5. Effective monitoring of student progress requires frequent and objective checking to enable us to diagnose particular problems and to take appropriate action. More frequent and objective checking will also enable us to monitor the progress of teaching sets, subjects and Year Groups and to report this information to parent/carers and Governors in an authoritative and reassuring way. The LA uses test results to screen students for Special Educational Needs and to deploy appropriate resources. We therefore have baseline information from Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Tests in order to establish the attainment level and potential of a child when he/she enters the school. We aim to:

- Measure school effectiveness and the notion of value added (Progress 8), by comparing a students' later performance with their baseline level;
- Report regularly on student progress to parent/carers and Governors, and;
- Set school performance targets based on student achievement as a powerful lever for raising standards and outcomes.

The information gathered on an individual student aids in the planning of effective teaching programmes and supports teacher assessment. Targets at Key Stage 3 are linked to Key Stage 4 targets in order to monitor progress towards nationally expected outcomes. Fischer Family Trust and Alps are used to set aspirational minimum expected target grades for students in Years 10 and 11, and then the Sixth Form respectively. Students are also encouraged to identify their own levels of achievement through discussions with the subject teachers or Tutor.

Assessment serves three fundamental purposes:

1. To help students learn;
2. To help teachers teach more effectively and to adopt a more personalised approach to the needs of their students, and;
3. To provide relevant and accurate information about attainment for students, parent/carers, teachers, Governors and others.

2. Definition of terms

2.1 Assessment in this policy is based on the Black & William definition:

“Assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.” (Black & William *Inside the Black Box* 1998 Kings College London)

2.2 Assessment **for** Learning (AfL) – Formative Assessment:

AfL is any assessment which **INFORMS** the next steps to learning. The key message is that AfL depends crucially on actually using the information gained.

2.3 Assessment **of** Learning (AoL) – Summative Assessment:

AoL is any assessment which **SUMMARISES** where learners are at a given point in time – it provides a snapshot of what has been learned (both in terms of attainment and achievement).

2.4 Curricular Targets:

A curricular target expresses in words, supported by data, a specific aspect of the curriculum as a focus for improvement. It may be focused by numeric outcomes. It is identified from a range of sources as an area of weakness in student learning. Curricular targets can be for a whole class, a group of students and/or an individual student. It can also be long-term or medium-term.

3. Rationale for Assessment at Mark Rutherford School

- To provide data that can be used to monitor and promote equal opportunities for all students, whatever their backgrounds, gender, race or ability so that all students experience teaching and learning to the highest possible standard and meets their individual learning needs.
- To monitor each student's progress and to support the operation of an effective, summative and formative system of recording assessment and reporting. The reporting should include ways of informing and consulting with students and their parents/carers with regards to achievement.
- To raise students' expectations of themselves and hence their attainment where appropriate.
- To provide data that can be used to monitor and facilitate the most effective allocation of resources to support individual student needs – to include support for those parents/carers whose child is underachieving.
- To advance students' learning.
- To raise students' self-esteem and motivation.
- To involve students in their learning and assessment and to help them to know how their learning is progressing.
- To allow teachers and students to evaluate the current level of attainment (where they are at) and plan next steps for learning, at an individual, group, department and whole school level (this includes assessing students' readiness for future learning and identifying the particular help that individuals and groups of students need).
- To contribute to the evaluation of the curriculum that is delivered.
- To assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of teaching and learning styles and strategies.
- To provide a record of, and track student progress.
- To provide a statement of current attainment for student, teacher, parents/carers, Governors and outside agencies.
- To provide information for individual, group, department and whole school targets.
- To use the DfE guidance document entitled 'Assessment Principles' to ensure we use an effective assessment system to assess every student's progress against their school curriculum.

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304602/Assessment_Principles.pdf).

4. Assessment at Mark Rutherford School

4.1 Teaching

Lesson planning should be led by learning objectives rather than activities. Medium-term planning and day-to-day-planning should be guided by the key questions:

‘What do I want students to learn by the end of the unit/lesson?’

‘How do I (and the students) know that they’ve learned it?’

In addition, lesson planning should ensure there is suitable progression and challenge taking into account levels of attainment in relation to target grades and/or exam board specifications.

Involving students with their learning

Teachers will:

- Explain the reasons for the lesson or activity, i.e. the big picture, linking the current lesson to previous lessons and subsequent lessons.
- Share learning objectives at the start of each lesson.
They should be written using a common stem and displayed to students. They may be written down by students to provide a learning log or may be used as the title for written work.
- Share levels of attainment and actively use progression ladders.
- Share the learning outcome, success criteria and assessment criteria.
- Use effective questioning techniques to encourage discussion which give feedback on the current level of understanding.
- Help students to understand what they have done well and what they need to develop.
- Use plenary sessions (and mini-plenaries during lessons) to enable students to know what they have learnt and what they need to do next.

Modelling quality

Teachers will:

- Share exemplar material with students to highlight the standards for which they are aiming.
- Use examples of work to highlight ways that assessment criteria are met.
- Include in their teaching, activities designed to model the necessary skills.

Giving feedback to students on their work

Teachers will:

- Focus on the task and learning objective.
- Make comment on presentation and care of work if needed.
- Impact mark to indicate what is good, what needs correction and which aspects need further improvement and/or development in a student’s work.
- Give oral feedback whenever possible and in a timely manner.
- Use the whole school proforma to develop effective written feedback ensuring there is impact when marking. Students therefore must respond to the feedback given.

Self-assessment and peer assessment

Students will be given opportunities on a routine basis to learn by assessing their own work and that of their peers.

Students will be encouraged to:

- Reflect on their own work and assess the progress they have made.
- Identify strengths and improve their work where there are weaknesses.
- Admit problems without the risk of losing self-esteem.
- Consider a number of possible solutions before deciding on a course of action.
- 'I know, I am, I must' – students will be able to articulate:
 - their target grade;
 - their working at grade, and;
 - what they need to do to improve.

Students will be provided with training in how to self and peer assess as required.

4.2 Effective Written Feedback

The purpose of written feedback/marking can be formative, summative or both, but it will be used primarily as part of assessment for learning.

- Written feedback should always refer back to learning objectives and to the related key assessment criteria/learning outcomes.
- Reference should be made to comments/targets made/set in previous feedback to check progress has been made in these areas.
- Feedback to any student should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with developmental advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should not include comparisons with other students.
- Written feedback should always promote positive self-esteem. Sensitivity should always be shown towards a student's work and their feelings about it. Comments should be positive. Use of a student's name is encouraged in order to personalise the feedback.
- Feedback should give each student specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses.
- Students should understand that they will receive detailed written feedback on their work periodically and selectively.
- Each department has a 'Statement of Intent' which clearly highlights frequency of marking.
- Written feedback should require interactivity/action by the student, with one or two action points (short term targets) for next time. Actions should be completed by the student at a given time in a lesson as instructed by the teacher.
- Students **will** be given time to **read and act** upon the written feedback.
- Feedback should be prompt and within two weeks of submission.
- Each department should agree and publish a comprehensive assessment schedule for each year group which identifies key assessment tasks. These tasks should cover a wide range of assessment styles and should include other forms of assessment than written assessments so that all students are able to demonstrate what they know, can do and understand.
- When marking our 'Language for Learning' codes will be used regardless of the subject.

- Students sometimes choose how they are assessed – this encourages student responsibility for managing their own learning and makes assessment visible to them as an integral part of the learning process.

The quality and consistency of marking should be monitored within departments and by Senior Leadership Team.

- Heads of Department or other designated Middle Leaders should conduct a scrutiny of work across all year groups in line with the focus agreed by the Teaching and Learning group.
- Heads of House and the Leadership Team should conduct a cross-curricular scrutiny of work across all year groups at least once a year. Findings and points for action should be discussed with all teachers.
- At least one main assessment task should be moderated by all members of the department.

4.3 Summative Assessment

A calendar of Tracking and Assessment Points, Pre-Public Examinations and End of Year Examinations is produced each year indicating when the required attainment data should be entered on to subject marksheets. The attainment data is used to monitor student progress towards their target grades and the identification of underachievement, which leads to the implementation of intervention strategies.

5. Target Grades and Progress Tracking

The setting of Target Grades is of fundamental importance as it provides:

- Every student with a realistic but challenging goal in order to maintain at least minimum expected academic progress during the year or across a Key Stage.
- Teachers with the minimum potential achievement for each student.
- A benchmark against which teachers can measure work produced by the student during the year.
- A target against which teachers can track progress for each student and identify underachievement with subsequent intervention strategies.

5.1 Target Grades

- At the beginning of the academic year a generic target is set for all students using prior attainment from Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 4, CAT scores and FFT 20 estimates for students in Years 7-11, and the Alps minimum grades at the 75th percentile for subjects in the Sixth Form.
- Teachers discuss subject target grades with their students who issue the subject target grade on the whole school sticker (which is fastened to the inside of their exercise book or folder).
- The subject target grade is recorded in SIMs marksheets by the Data and SIMS Manager.
- Subject target grades are discussed at the Tracking and Intervention Conversation (TIC) meetings following key tracking points in the academic year.
- Target grades and their significance are explained to students at assemblies taken by the Deputy Headteacher at the start of the academic year.

5.2 School Targets

- By the end of November the Key Stage 4 whole school and department targets for the academic year are discussed by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and a recommendation is made.
- The recommendation is presented to the Governors Standards and Curriculum sub-committee and agreed targets are set before being issued to the Leadership Team and Standards Committee.

5.3 Tracking of progress towards target grades

- Progress towards target grades is measured through a number of tracking points for each group.
- Teachers give grades for current attainment, attitude to learning (lesson and homework) and end of course predictions, which are recorded on the SIMS subject marksheets by the dates given on the Tracking and Assessment Points calendar.
- All data is analysed and then shared at Leadership Team, Heads of House, Standards Committee and Department Meetings to support dialogues about students of concern at a whole school, pastoral, middle leadership and classroom level.
- Teachers take appropriate action to implement intervention strategies where underachievement is identified.
- Heads of Department monitor the entry of assessment data, collate the individual intervention strategies and engage in professional discussions to support members of their department.

- Line Managers discuss with Heads of Department, at the timetabled TIC meetings, progress towards target grades, the identified underachievement and the intervention strategies.
- Line Managers discuss with Heads of House, at frequent meetings, progress of students in their House across all their subjects identifying underachievement and the implementation of intervention strategies.
- Students and parents/carers are kept regularly informed of progress being made with all Tracking and Assessment Point data being sent home.
- All students have a minimum of one Academic Mentoring meeting each academic year, which provides an opportunity for Tutor, student and parents/carers to discuss progress towards target grades.

6. Reporting to Parents

An annual written report to parents/carers is a statutory requirement outlined by the DfE. The report should comment on a student's progress, highlight strengths and identify development needs, which often take the form of SMART targets for improvement. All comments should be supported by evidence and should not be a surprise to students. When issued, details are always given as to how a parent/carer can contact a suitable person in the school to discuss the report.

In Years 7 and 8 student's attainment is reported on using our internally developed 'Rutherford Scale' from R9-R1. For English and Maths each cohort's Key Stage 2 scaled scores are analysed and compared to the Key Stage 4 targets generated by Fischer Family Trust. Both are used to identify each Rutherford Scale's scaled score boundaries. For all other subjects, a direct correlation from Fischer Family Trust is used to set a Rutherford Scale target.

In Years 9, 10 and 11 attainment is reported on using either GCSE grades or grades of the relevant awarding bodies generated using Fischer Family Trust.

Students are following a flight path as they progress towards the end of Key Stage 4. This is outlined in the diagram below:

Rutherford Scale	KS2 Scaled Score	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	BTEC Grade
R9	≥119	5	6	7	8	9	Distinction*
R8	117.0 – 118.9	4	5	6	7	8	Distinction*
R7	114.0 – 116.9	3	4	5	6	7	Distinction
R6	107.0 – 113.9	2	3	4	5	6	Merit
R5	100.0 – 106.9	1	2	3	4	5	Pass
R4	87.0 – 99.9	WVWT	WVWT	WVWT	WVWT	WVWT	
R3	85.0 – 86.9	WWT	WWT	WWT			Level 1 Pass
R2	80.0 – 84.9	DGPT	DGPT				
R1	N	DSPT					
							Entry Level

Code	Definition
WVWT	Working Very Well Towards
WWT	Working Well Towards
DGPT	Demonstrating Good Progress Towards
DSPT	Demonstrating Some Progress Towards

In the Sixth Form attainment is reported on using BTEC, AS or A Level grades, as appropriate. These are generated by Alps whereby each student's average prior attainment from Key Stage 4 is used to generate an aspirational minimum expected target grade.

The writing, checking and issuing of reports is detailed on the Tracking and Assessment Point calendar, which is made available to parents/carers via the website. A link to its location is given below:

http://www.markrutherford.beds.sch.uk/information_assessment_for_learning.asp

A programme of Parents' Evenings provides the opportunity for parents/carers to discuss progress in individual subjects; most of these are linked to the issuing of the full written report.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Governors:

1. To shape the process of target setting and fulfil their strategic role.
2. To ensure the School meets its statutory duties by agreeing the School Targets and publishing them.
3. To monitor progress towards the School Targets.
4. To discuss and report on attainment, target setting and progress towards targets as part of link governor visits to departments.

The role of the Headteacher:

1. Overall management responsibility for the School's target setting policy.
2. To give strong leadership and encourage a constructive climate.
3. Be aware of what needs to be done to raise standards and devise a means of doing so.
4. To work with the Leadership Group to identify those departments where under-achievement is most extensive and develop appropriate targets to reduce and eliminate it.
5. To work with the Leadership Group to monitor departments' progress towards targets.
6. To ensure all staff have the required CPD training and support for their own professional development and that of their subject's needs.
7. To enable staff to have sufficient planning time, and time for student target setting interviews.

The role of the School:

1. To monitor performance regularly through self-evaluation and analysis of performance.
2. To use past and current data to predict potential performance.
3. To set clear targets, appropriate to their own circumstances, and build them into the School Development Plan and Department Development Plans.
4. To encourage individual teachers to take responsibility for setting and achieving targets.
5. To compare themselves with similar schools.
6. To set targets in the context of the national targets.
7. To develop the partnership with parents/carers and to encourage their participation in their child's learning, and secure their agreement on individual learning plans and targets for their child.
8. To provide parents/carers with sufficient information to enable them to have a clear understanding of how they can support their child's learning at home.
9. To raise, if necessary, parental expectations of what their child can and should achieve.

The role of the Leadership Group:

1. To monitor assessment practices and the use of data across the School.
2. To establish an annual planning and review cycle which ensures that Heads of Department/Heads of House regularly reflect on the progress students make in their subject/house, and that they reflect annually on the performance of their department/house following the publication of external examination results.

The role of the Deputy Headteacher responsible for assessment:

1. To ensure that all relevant data is available to staff; administrative support should be provided to help collect and produce this data.
2. To provide guidance for Heads of Department and teachers with setting target grades.
3. To use consistent target setting strategies for each Key Stage, in line with the national target and data available.
4. To analyse data and report back to Leadership Group, whole-staff, Governors, parents/carers and individual members of staff following every Tracking and Assessment Point.
5. To produce a calendar of tracking, recording and reporting, to include schedule the for Academic Mentoring meetings.
6. To provide relevant information, advice and guidance on assessments, assessment for learning, target grades and writing of reports.
7. To use assemblies to explain to students the importance and role of target grades.

The role of the Head of Department:

1. To make sure all members of the department provide effective written feedback in line with their marking policy.
2. To ensure schemes of work include clear learning objectives and a range of strategies for assessment within the subject.
3. To devise an assessment policy and an assessment schedule pertinent to their own curriculum area based on this document. The assessment schedule should ensure that assessment activities covering different learning styles and abilities are included. The schedule should also ensure that appropriate levels of challenge are planned in for all students.
4. To ensure staff within their department enter the required Tracking and Assessment Point data by the given deadlines.
5. To analyse and interpret data regularly to monitor standards and student progress, and employ timely interventions.
6. To monitor the implementation and review of the assessment policy and schedule within their own curriculum area.
7. To identify and target specific areas for improvement in the Department Improvement Plan.
8. To set precise targets so that reaching them can be clearly assessed and students can understand what they must do in order to meet them.
9. To ensure targets are explicit enough to help a student understand the learning he or she must do to meet the target.
10. To teach students how to set precise targets and how to evaluate their success.
11. To develop effective patterns of communication with parents/carers about the targets set and the progress towards meeting them.
12. To have overall responsibility for the Department's examination results and produce a Department Analysis and Self Evaluation in the September following the publication of results.
13. To prepare for the scheduled TIC meetings, identifying underachievement and intervention strategies with the aim of raising standards.
14. To ensure that students are actively engaged in the subject area and that appropriate differentiation is a major feature in the scheme of work.
15. All staff set homework in line with the homework timetable.

16. To analyse the data provided to them and set curricular targets for all students in their subject area.

The role of the Head of House:

1. To act as a focal point in the identification and monitoring of individuals who may be underachieving.
2. To develop and co-ordinate intervention strategies for targeted students and groups of students.
3. To support a formal and effective system that reviews progress and to set new targets for the future.
4. To assess individual students' attainment at the beginning and end of the period over which progress is being monitored.
5. To prepare for the meetings whereby Tracking and Assessment Point information is being discussed, identifying underachievement and intervention strategies to raise standards.

The role of the Tutor:

1. To act as a focal point in the identification and monitoring of individuals who may be underachieving and liaise with Head of House/subject teachers.
2. To meet with each student and their parents/carers for the calendared Academic Mentoring meetings during the academic year.
3. To monitor the progress of each of their tutees towards the SMART targets set at each Academic Mentoring meeting.
4. To liaise with parents/carers, as required.

The role of the Teacher:

1. To create a classroom ethos of high expectations and strong emphasis on achievement.
2. To ensure all lessons deliver the agreed schemes of work and that all assessments identified in that scheme of work are completed.
3. Provide effective written feedback following the clear department statement of intent.
4. To ensure assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning experience.
5. To provide teaching which is explicit and selective about the areas of knowledge required.
6. To ensure a range of effective assessment and teaching methods are in place.
7. To enable students to develop assessment skills (e.g. self-assessment, peer assessment).
8. To communicate and share with student's assessment practices, including examples of graded work, checklists, curriculum progression ladders, etc. so students become competent at assessing their own and others' level of attainment.
9. To be able to identify individual students' strengths and weaknesses and plan work accordingly.
10. To set their own targets and form an individual yearly action plan based on clear objectives.
11. To provide useful guides and regular coursework/controlled assessment bulletins for all students.
12. To access, use, monitor and update assessment data for their teaching groups.
13. To provide more practice in applying knowledge to solving problems.

14. To ensure homework has a clearly defined educational purpose and that it focuses on appropriate tasks and especially the application of knowledge.

The role of Parents/Carers:

1. To work in partnership with the staff and Governors of the school to improve the learning environment.
2. To attend calendared events to include Parents Evening(s) and Academic Mentoring meetings to discuss current attainment and to agree future targets with the staff.
3. To be aware of the work of the school and the ways in which parents/carers can actively support their children.
4. To take an active interest in the academic progress and emotional development of their child.
5. To provide a quiet working area in the home for the completion of homework.