The Sandon School

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Last Adoption Date: March 2017

Next Review Date: Spring 2020

Assessment Policy

Principles

This policy is founded on the following principles.

Assessment provides the basis of informed teaching, helping students to improve their learning and ensuring that teaching builds on what has been learned. Assessment is a means by which students understand what they have achieved and what they need to work on.

Assessment is central to the teaching and learning process: for students, assessment provides a means of identifying strengths, targeting areas for improvement, evaluating progress and gathering data for a range of audiences; for teachers, assessment informs planning of the curriculum and schemes of work. Assessment practices must improve standards of learning and achievement - they do not merely measure them. Assessment of students' learning must always be valid and reliable. Assessment practice must support equal opportunities.

Purposes

The purposes of gathering assessment data should be:
- formative, so that students' positive achievements can be recognised and discussed, their learning advanced and information fed back to improve learning and teaching strategies;
- diagnostic, so that learning difficulties can be recognised and appropriate teaching and learning strategies used to support improvement;
- ipsative, so that individual progress can be built upon and individual targets set for improvement;
- summative, so that the overall standard of the student can be recorded in a systematic way;
- evaluative, so that the work of the school can be judged and reported on.

'The phrase 'assessment for learning' has become a common substitute for 'formative assessment', yet there is also possible ambiguity in this label. Information about learning can be gained from any assessment designed to produce such information, but if this is only used for recording purposes or for long-term curriculum improvement it will not help the learning of the students currently involved. It might be formative for the teacher, but not for the students.'

> Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. and Wiliam, D. (2002)
> *Assessment for Learning: Putting it into practice.*

The assessment process should not determine what is taught and learned. It needs to be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels. Since the results of assessment can serve a number of purposes, these purposes have to be kept in mind when assessments are designed.

Practices and responsibilities

This policy distinguishes two major approaches to assessment practice - assessment **for** learning and assessment **of** learning.

Assessment for learning - requires that validity is paramount.

Assessment for learning will:
- provide insight into students' learning for both students and teachers;
- promote success for all;
- support the target-setting process;
- enable continuous reflection on what students know now and what they need to know next;
- measure what is valued;
- promote immediate intervention and link judgements to learning intentions;
- raise standards by taking students to the 'edges of capability'.

Implications for teaching

The teacher will:
- provide regular oral and written feedback which identifies strengths and the next step for improvement;
- promote student involvement in self-assessment;
- act on insights gained to inform curricular targets;
- plan against what students know, can do and understand;
- make standards and objectives explicit to students;
- promote inclusion by attending to all students' learning needs, particularly for students who are at risk of underachievement;
- arrange time for focused observation of teacher-directed and student-initiated activity.

Impact on learning and the learner

The student will:
- know what to do to improve;
- know what standards are required;
- know what has been achieved against known success criteria and what to do next;
- gain confidence, motivation and self-esteem as a learner;
- improve personal self-evaluation skills;
- make progress.

Issues for school leaders

School leaders will:
- define roles and ensure responsibilities are clear in relation to assessment activities;
- make arrangements to monitor the progress of individual students and diverse student groups;
- monitor the quality of teacher assessment;
- keep parents / guardians / carers informed and involved;
- use assessment information to inform the School Improvement Plan and identify learning and training needs.

Assessment of learning - requires that reliability is paramount.

Assessment of learning will:
- provide a summary judgement about what has been learned at a specific point in time;
- establish benchmarks about what students can do and about school performance;
- show what students can do without support;
- inform the target setting process;

- hold the school to public account;
- promote subsequent intervention.

Implications for teaching

The teacher will:
- provide a periodic summary through teacher assessment and tests;
- identify gaps in students' knowledge, understanding and skills;
- identify weaknesses in the taught curriculum and in specific areas of learning through analysis of performance which can guide future planning;
- implement strategies to accelerate progress to meet local and national expectations (narrowing the gap);
- mark and measure against grades and levels.

Impact on learning and the learner

The student will:
- be able to gauge personal performance in comparison to others and against previous performance;
- be able to measure personal performance against externally agreed criteria and standards;
- have a measure of performance at specific points in a school career;
- know what standards and expectations are required.

Issues for school leaders

School leaders will:
- ensure responsibilities are clear in relation to assessment so that there is compliance with curriculum requirements and with statutory assessment arrangements;
- monitor the delivered curriculum;
- provide, use and analyse data to promote public scrutiny, enable external accountability and raise attainment;
- involve governors in their accountability role;
- keep parents / guardians / carers informed and involved;
- use assessment information to inform the School Improvement Plan and identify learning and training needs;
- monitor the impact of the planned curriculum and compare performance across different subjects;
- analyse data to identify groups at risk and to focus intervention on underachieving groups.

Context of assessment

Assessment should take place in a variety of contexts and grouping, including: self-assessment; peer assessment; individual assessment; group assessment. Assessments will be carried out to meet the requirements of the school's Table of Assessment Activities[1]

Each assessment implemented must be fit for purpose and specify the format in which it is to be undertaken. It must make clear to the student the method by which a judgement about individual learning progress is to be made and it must be carried out under specified conditions which are clearly explained to the student.

Types of assessment
Individual students have a range of preferred learning styles. Assessment practice should reflect this range by including an appropriate variety of methods and approaches. Assessment tasks set should have a positive effect on the standards of students' work, with more demanding challenges for able students.

Schemes of work
The work of teachers is directed by schemes of work. These documents should identify appropriate statutory requirements, the knowledge, understanding and skills to be assessed, the methods of assessment to be used and the criteria by which judgements are made.

Modelling
Teachers should model active learning and taking responsibility for learning to support students maintaining positive approaches to the assessment of their own learning.

Marking
Marking of students' work is to be carried out in accordance with the school's current Marking Policy.

Feedback to students
Feedback should be positive and can be provided through:
- marking, to encourage students to develop and show understanding of the key features of what they have learned;
- face-to-face discussion, to praise what has been done well, to encourage what still needs improvement and to give guidance on how to make that improvement;
- electronic interactive processes such as on-line marking and text commentary.

Feedback should cause thinking to take place to support effective review of learning.

Standardisation
Standardisation should be a part of each curriculum area's practice to ensure that appropriate credit is given to work of similar quality and to promote professional discussion and analysis of students' work and their learning. Standardisation should involve development and review of a portfolio of student work samples covering the knowledge, understanding and skills required for a particular course of study. A wide range of formats can be included in this portfolio, including written and graphical work, audio and video sequences, or ICT-based work. Where appropriate, samples should be linked to national curriculum levels, examination grades or levels. Examination coursework should be standardised in accordance with guidance issued by the appropriate examination board.

Monitoring
A range of monitoring activities should be undertaken within each curriculum team, appropriate to the nature of the work undertaken by students. Student achievement levels and the current schemes of work should be regularly reviewed to assess their impact on future teaching and learning strategies.

Contextualised target-setting
Target setting is an essential part of the assessment and improvement cycle and should be based on:
- use of Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data;
- use of learning strategies linked to reflective teaching;

- links to course learning structures and learning progression pathways in scheme of work, including an understanding of students' misconceptions and the kinds of difficulties that they might encounter;
- regular review of approaches to learning and teaching, the outcomes of which are incorporated into relevant schemes of work.

Requirements

This policy will be easily accessible and well publicised. The Governing Body approved this Policy on 20 March 2017 and it will be reviewed every three years.

APPENDIX TO THE ASSESSMENT POLICY

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

1   It is up to the individual subject area to decide, in liaison with the Leadership Team, which specific examination specifications are followed.

2   Students would normally be entered for examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 or 5 but may be entered early in exceptional circumstances if it considered appropriate in order to meet the best interests of the students.

3   Morning examinations usually start at 9 am and afternoon examinations usually start at 1.30 pm. Students arriving late to any examination may be admitted and given the full allocation of time at the discretion of the Head of Centre or his nominated representative.

4   Students arriving an hour or more after the start time of an examination may be admitted only at the discretion of the Head of Centre or his nominated representative with due consideration for the security of the examination. If admitted a student would get the full allocation of time.

INTERNALLY ASSESSED WORK - APPEAL PROCESS

5   Where a candidate has concerns about the conduct of internally assessed components, this should be communicated in writing to the Deputy Headteacher (Student Progress). The Deputy Headteacher will then seek to establish the facts relating to the concerns and will make recommendations as may be appropriate.

6   The concerns can only relate to the **conduct** of the assessment and not to the final grade awarded as this would have been arrived at by a process of internal moderation and is subject to further change by the exam board itself.

7   Where a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the Deputy Headteacher's recommendations then the candidate's parents (or candidate if over 18) can refer the matter to the School's complaints procedure.