Mark Rutherford School
Assessment Policy

(Reviewed by Governors Curriculum sub committee
January 2014)

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.

The school uses information gathered on students from its feeder schools and participates in the National Tests 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 parents and governors in an authoritative and reassuring way. The LA uses test results to screen students for special needs and to deploy resources. We therefore have baseline information, 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, by comparing students' later performance with their baseline level
- Report regularly on student progress to parents and governors
- Set school performance targets based on student achievement as a powerful lever for raising standards.

The information gathered on an individual student aids in the planning of effective teaching programmes, and supports teacher assessment. National Curriculum Levels of Assessment are arrived at using a departmental team approach with moderated scripts, portfolios and individual evidence. Students are encouraged to identify their own levels of achievement.

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
3. To provide relevant and accurate information about attainment for students, parents, teachers, governors and others.

2. Definition of terms

2.1 Assessment in this policy is based on the Black & Wiliam 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 focussed 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.

- To monitor each child'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 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 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.

- To provide a record and track student progress.

- To provide a statement of current attainment for student, teacher, parent, governors and outside agencies.

- To provide information for individual, group, department and whole school targets.

- To fulfil statutory requirements.

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 National Curriculum levels of attainment/exam 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, care of work if needed.
- Indicate what is good, what needs correction and which aspects need further improvement.
- Give oral feedback whenever possible, since it is generally more effective than written feedback.
- Use the school pro forma to develop effective written feedback

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
  - what they need to do to improve.

Students need training in how to self and peer assess.

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 avoid 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 personalises the feedback.
- Feedback should give each student specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses, preferably without any overall marks.
- 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.
- Students will be given time to read and act on 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 generally the Language for Learning codes should 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 managers.

- Heads of department should conduct a scrutiny of work across all year groups at least twice an Year.
- Heads of House and Leadership Group 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 staff.
- At least one main assessment task should be moderated by all members of the department.

4.3 Summative Assessment

A calendar of Assessment Points, Mock Examinations and End of Year Examinations is produced each year indicating when summative assessments are to be completed and the required attainment data entered on to subject mark sheets. 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 Tracking Progress

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.
- 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 by the assessment manager in conjunction with the AHT (Assessment & Reporting) using prior attainment at KS2, CAT scores and FFT D estimates for students in years 7-11, and the ALPS minimum grades at the 75th percentile for subjects in the sixth form.
- In line with the school calendar teachers decide upon a subject specific target for each student which can be no lower than the generic target grade but can be higher.
- Teachers discuss subject target grades with their students who record the subject target grade on the department pro-forma (which is fastened in their exercise book or folder) and also recorded in their planner.
- Teachers record the subject target grade on the SIMS mark sheets.
- Heads of Department monitor the setting of subject target grades and discuss with their line manager at the Tracking and Intervention Conversation (TIC) meetings in November.
- Target Grades and their significance are explained to students at assemblies taken by the AHT

5.2 School Targets

- By the end of November the KS4 targets for the following academic year are discussed by the Headteacher, AHT and a recommendation is made.
- The recommendation is presented to the Governors Standards and Curriculum sub –committee and agreed targets are set.

5.3 Tracking of progress towards Target Grades

- Progress against Target Grades is measured through half-termly assessments.
- Teachers give grades for current attainment, effort and end of course predictions, which are recorded on the SIMS subject mark sheets by dates given on the assessment calendar.
- 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 termly TIC meetings, progress towards target grades, the identified underachievement and the intervention strategies.
- Line Managers discuss with Heads of House, at the termly TIC meetings, progress of students in their House across all their subjects identifying underachievement and the implementation of intervention strategies.
- Students and parents are kept regularly informed of progress being made.
- All students have a minimum of two Academic Mentoring meetings each academic year, which provides an opportunity for tutor, student and parent/carer to discuss progress against Target Grades.

6. Reporting to Parents

An annual written report to parents is a statutory requirement. The report should comment on a student's progress, highlight strengths and 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, 8 and 9 attainment is reported as a National Curriculum level, where appropriate, with sub-levels a, b and c used for more detail.

The parents/carers of students completing Year 9 receive, towards the end of the summer term, details of their child's teacher assessments at Key Stage 3, with details of the percentage of students at the school at each level of attainment as well as comparative national figures from the previous year.

In Years 10 and 11attainment is reported using either GCSE grades or grades of the relevant awarding bodies.

In the Sixth Form attainment is reported using BTEC, AS or A-Level grades as appropriate.

The writing, checking and issuing of reports is detailed on the Assessment and Reporting Calendar, which is made available to parents via the website.

Parents also receive, at least once per term, Data Sheets detailing current attainment, effort grades and where appropriate end of course predictions.

A programme of Parents' Evenings provides the opportunity for parents/carers to discuss progress in individual subjects.

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 the annual link governor visit 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. To take stock and 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 regular in-service training and support for their 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-critical reflection 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.

4. To encourage individual teachers to take responsibility for setting and achieving targets.

5. To compare themselves with similar schools.

6. To work, supported by the LA, to achieve the LA targets in the education plan.

7. To set targets in the context of the national targets.

8. To develop the partnership with parents and to encourage their participation in their child's learning, and secure their agreement on individual learning plans and targets for their child.

9. To provide parents with sufficient information to enable them to have a clear understanding of how they can support their child's learning at home.

10. To raise, if necessary, parental expectations of what their children 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.

The role of the Assistant Head Teacher (Assessment and Reporting):

1. To ensure that all relevant data is available to staff and administrative support should be provided to help collect and produce this data.

2. To provide guidance and support for Heads of Department and teachers with setting target grades.

3. To analyse data and report back to Leadership Group, whole-staff, governors, parents and individual members of staff.

4. To produce a calendar of assessments, recording and reporting, to include programme for Academic Mentoring.

5. To provide relevant training on assessments, assessment for learning, target grades and writing of reports.

6. 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
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 in that schedule. 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 assessment data by the given deadlines.

5. To analyse and interpret data regularly to monitor standards and student progress.

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 Raising Achievement Plan.

8. To implement intervention strategies that improve upon the quality of teaching and learning that occur in the Department – Improvement Plan.

9. 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.

10. To ensure targets are explicit enough to help a student understand the learning he or she must do to meet the target.

11. To teach students how to set precise targets and how to evaluate their success.

12. To develop effective patterns of communication with parents about the targets set and the progress towards meeting them.

13. 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.

14. To prepare for the termly TIC meetings, identifying underachievement and intervention strategies to raise standards.

15. To ensure that students are actively engaged in the subject area and that appropriate differentiation is a major feature in the scheme of work.

16. All staff set Homework in line with the home work timetable.

17. 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 under-achieving.

2. To develop and coordinate 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 ensure completion of CWEST assessments at Key Stage 3.

6. To prepare for the termly TIC meetings, identifying underachievement and intervention strategies to raise standards.

The role of the Form Tutor:

1. To act as a focal point in the identification and monitoring of individuals who may be under-achieving and liaise with Head of House/subject teachers.

2. To meet with each student and their parents/carers for at least two Academic Mentoring meetings with during the academic year.

3. To monitor the progress of each of their tutees towards the SMART targets set at the Academic mentoring meeting.

4. To liaise with parents/carers.

5. To ensure students at key Stage 3 self assess CWEST using the half-termly CWEST evaluation booklets.

The role of the Class 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

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 students 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 clear 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 events 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 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.