



Ballyclare Secondary School

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Rationale

Ballyclare Secondary School supports the belief that every child regardless of intellectual ability or social background should have a rewarding educational experience. Our aims are personal excellence and that every pupil should achieve his or her full potential. This takes place in a context which encourages the involvement of pupils, parents and staff.

Definition

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing and interpreting evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice.

Indicators of Effective Practice

“The teachers’ assessment of the pupils’ work can be considered effective when:

- Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning; the teachers use suitable forms of assessment, based on expectations which are clear, realistic and understood by pupils;
- The pupils’ written work is regularly and consistently marked in ways that highlight the strengths and shortcomings, using approaches that are well understood by pupils and their parents;
- The level and nature of the pupils’ prior attainments influence the selection and use of teaching methods and subject content; the pupils’ strengths are consolidated and their weaknesses addressed;
- The purpose of homework is explained clearly; the work which is set is appropriate to the needs of the pupils, reinforces and extends their knowledge and understanding and provides the teachers with the evidence of progress.”

Evaluating Schools DENI

Characteristics of Good Practice in Assessment

Assessment which

1. Promotes and Supports Learning

- Identifies what pupils know, understand and can do
- Enables consistent monitoring of pupils progress
- Identifies individual learning styles
- Identifies individual learning strengths and weaknesses
- Encourages progression in learning

2. Informs Teaching

- Assists lesson planning
- Informs review of content and skills
- Promotes a variety of teaching strategies
- Enables consistent monitoring of teaching progress
- Encourages self reflection

3. Is both formative and summative

- Promotes a shared learning culture
- Provides clear and regular feedback
- Diagnoses learning difficulties
- Measures pupil performance
- Identifies clear and shared targets for pupil progress
- Promotes differentiation by outcome
- Informs subject choice and career decision making
- Provides effective and progressive pupil records
- Informs regular reporting to parents

4. Uses appropriate and diverse strategies

- Is both formal and informal
- Accommodates a variety of learning styles
- Tests a range of skills
- Encourages effective and standardised marking procedures
- Is both quantitative and qualitative
- Is carried out in a range of contexts

5. Recognises ALL pupil progress and achievement

- Rewards progress, effort and achievement
- Fosters motivation and promotes a commitment to learning
- Creates opportunities for self direction
- Fosters self esteem and social development

6. Develops the capacity for Self Assessment

- Shares learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Gives sensitive and constructive feedback
- Supports pupils in self and peer assessment activities
- Engages pupils in realistic target setting

7. Fosters a shared involvement and responsibility between School and Home

Types of Assessment

- **SUMMATIVE** is Assessment **OF** Learning. It is used mainly to measure performance and clearly identifies a standard of pupil attainment. It is carried out at the end of a period of learning.

Examples

- External Examinations
- End of Topic/Unit Tests
- Internal School Examinations
- Standardised Tests

- **FORMATIVE** is Assessment **FOR** Learning. It is ongoing and provides evidence of and for progression in learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback and diagnosing future learning priorities.

Examples

- Class work
- Questioning
- Presentation
- Practical Project
- Homework
- Oral Discussion
- Short Recall Test
- Research

- **SELF ASSESSMENT** encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by:

- Evaluating their own achievement against shared learning outcomes;
- Identifying their own strengths and areas for improvement;
- Encouraging individual learning goals and action plans for future progression;
- Fostering a self reflective learning culture;
- Encouraging independence in learning.

Examples

- Pupil Personal Statement – Internal Reports
- UCAS/Higher and Further Education Applications
- Record of Achievement
- Progress File

Homework

Homework is an integral part of effective assessment and it is very important learning experience for all pupils. Good practice is promoted through Homework which is set regularly across all departments according to the needs of the pupils and within the context of agreed whole school and departmental policies and timetables.

High expectations are set in school regarding homework and pupils may be asked to redraft and resubmit homework which fails to meet departmental standards. The regular setting and marking of homework encourages:

- Consolidation and extension of learning
- Monitoring of progress
- Independent learning
- Self discipline, personal organisation and responsibility
- Home/school partnership

All departments are encouraged to:

- Identify a range of meaningful tasks which facilitate progression in learning
- Identify a variety of tasks which assess a range of subject skills
- Establish a range of standard homework tasks
- Integrate homework tasks with lesson planning and learning outcomes
- Share learning outcomes with pupils
- Mark all homework against agreed criteria appropriate to task
- Provide timely and constructive feedback which sustains pupil motivation and facilitates progression
- Link departmental policies with whole School Homework/Marking/Presentation of Work policies
- Monitor the effectiveness of Homework re learning outcomes
- Encourage the consistent use of Homework Planners

In Years 8 – 10 a Homework Timetable is drawn up at the beginning of the academic year and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for planning their work at home.

In Years 11 and 12 regular work is set according to the differing demands of each GCSE subject. Controlled Assessment is an important component of many GCSE subjects and planning and drafting are an integral part of homework at this stage.

In Years 13 and 14 pupils are encouraged to take much more responsibility for their own learning and Homework is linked to individual research/ the use of departmental/library resources/ private study preparation and planning. It is expected that pupils will be 12 – 15 hours per week outside of School Time.

Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate ICT skills to research and present their homework.

Marking

The marking of pupils' work is an important assessment tool which is essential for both progression in pupil learning and effective teaching.

Good practice is promoted through regular, accurate and consistent marking by all teachers within a department and a whole school approach.

Positive marking and feedback which recognises pupil achievement, highlights both strengths and weaknesses and provides clear guidance for improvement are to be encouraged.

Effective marking helps to:

- Recognise pupil achievement;
- Monitor pupil progress;
- Diagnose problems in learning;
- Provide feedback with regards to progress;

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- Provide clear guidance for improvement;
 - Motivate and encourage pupils;
 - Record and report pupil attainment;
 - Assist in evaluation and planning.

In summary our aim should be that work is marked:

- Promptly, regularly and consistently;
- According to agreed and shared learning outcomes;
- According to agreed and shared assessment criteria;
- Using both quantitative and qualitative criteria;
- For improvement, using constructive commentary.

Recording And Reporting

RECORDING and **REPORTING** ensures regular and relevant communication and progress to pupils, teachers, parents and other appropriate external audiences. It is linked to both formative and summative methods of assessment and the recording of individual pupil assessment outcomes, measured against agreed and shared assessment criteria, is the responsibility of each teacher, within the context of agreed departmental and whole school assessments policies.

Recording

Consistent record keeping by all teachers allows the effective monitoring of pupil progress and the regular evaluation of teaching content/styles/methods:

Good practice includes:

- Common Assessment marks recorded in Teacher Mark Books/SIMS
- Homework marks recorded in Teacher Mark Books/SIMS
- Internal Exams/Tests recorded in Teacher Mark Books/SIMS

Teacher records can then be used to inform reporting, both formal and informal, to pupils, parents, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team.

Reporting

Reporting can take many different forms including:

- **Formal Reports – Years 8 to 11.** Single page computer generated reports given to parents at the end of the winter term. These reports will have a percentage mark for each subject/year average/descriptors for Homework, Attitude to Work/Personal Organisation and Behaviour. There will be an overview comment by the Principal and Year Teacher and a comment on Attendance and Punctuality

Years 8 to 11. Full computer generated reports given to parents at the end of the summer term. These reports will have a percentage mark for each subject/year average/descriptors for exam performance and progress (Years 12,13and 14 slightly different as these are usually given out after mock examinations)

- **Parents Meetings** – Each year group will have one annual Parents' Meeting. Subject teachers have the opportunity to discuss with parents the pupil's progress/achievement/homework/class work/effort/attitude/targets for improvement
- **Records of Achievement and Progress Files**
- **UCAS - completion of references**
- **Individual References** – for pupils and outside agencies such as employers and further education colleges are reported as requested
- **External Examinations** – reports are available on results

Reporting Criteria - Descriptors

Staff Guidelines

Attitude to Work

1. Concentration and application to work are excellent. There is a valued contribution to class activities.
2. Concentration and application to work are good. There is a consistent contribution to class activities.
3. Concentration and application to work are fair. Sometimes there is contribution to class activities.
4. Improvement is required in concentration and application to work. Contribution to class activities is inconsistent.

Homework

1. S/he always completes homework on time. Standard of written work is excellent.
2. S/he completes homework on time. Standard of written work is good.
3. S/he usually completes homework on time. Standard of written work is fair.
4. Homework is often handed in late and is not always completed to the required standard.

Personal Organisation

1. S/he always brings the appropriate books/equipment to class.
2. S/he usually brings the appropriate books/equipment to class.
3. S/he does not always bring the appropriate books/equipment to class.
4. S/he rarely brings the appropriate books/equipment to class.

Behaviour

1. Consistently of a high standard.
2. Generally of a high standard.
3. Normally of an acceptable standard.
4. Giving serious cause for concern.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Assessment Policy and its implementation within and across departments is monitored and evaluated by:

1. Principal
2. Vice Principal (School Improvement and Organisation)
3. Heads of Department
4. Assessment and Reporting Committee

Vice Principal (School Improvement and Organisation) and Assessment and Reporting Committee

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal School Improvement and Organisation and the members of the Assessment and Reporting Committee to review, monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Assessment Policy within the context of the School Development Planning and Self Evaluation.

Heads of Department

It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to apply and embed the principles of the School Assessment Policy within their own departmental practice. They should formulate and maintain a departmental policy on Assessment – which may be the whole school policy or one tailored to a particular subject.

In all departmental policies good practice will be clearly identified through:

1. Consistent departmental planning;
2. Assessment tasks fully integrated with the Schemes of Work;
3. Shared learning outcomes;
4. Standardised marking;
5. Constructive feedback;
6. Assessment data used to inform teaching and learning;

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7. Assessment data regularly and consistently recorded;
 8. Assessment data used regularly for reporting;
 9. Regular self assessment by pupils and staff;
 10. Liaison with Head of Year/Subject teacher re individual pupil performance as required;
 11. Liaison with Examinations Officers re entries for all examinations;
 12. Effective organisation re setting/ marking internal examinations;
 13. Monitoring and evaluation of all departmental assessment practice and outcomes.

Subject Teachers

It is the responsibility of Subject Teachers to:

1. Implement departmental/whole policies on Assessment, evaluating their implementation;
2. Mark in accordance with departmental policy in a positive, accurate, meaningful and diagnostic way;
3. Compile and maintain individual pupil records;
4. Report to pupils, parents and staff on individual and group progress;
5. Liaise with the Head of Department/Year re individual pupil support as required.

Year Teachers

It is the responsibility of Year Teachers to:

1. Liaise with Heads of Department/Senior Staff/Subject Teachers concerning individual pupil progress;
2. Report to parents as required re individual pupil progress;
3. Produce Overview statements for Reports in December and June;
4. Conduct with Senior Staff a formal review of pupil performance in year group.

Examinations Officers

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officers to liaise with appropriate staff/pupils/parents/exam boards regarding all aspects of all Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 Examinations.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in their learning and to:

1. Participate and contribute to discussions involving learning intentions and success criteria
2. Participate in the techniques of self/peer assessment and evaluation
3. Act on feedback provided by teachers and peers
4. Help foster a positive learning environment through positive behaviour
5. Set personal goals and targets through self management
6. Value their learning
7. Accept responsibility for their learning
8. Understand that everyone has the potential to learn and succeed.

Parents and Carers

Parents/Carers will be asked to contribute to the evaluation of assessment in Ballyclare Secondary School.

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Ballyclare Secondary School

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