

Assessment Policy

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Assessment Policy

Assessment is of great importance to students of all ages in understanding what they have achieved and how they could do even better, and to staff in helping them to monitor the progress of their students and inform future planning. This could range from instant feedback from class activities, including activities using technology, to formal written work completed over a period of time. Whilst there will always be a place for summative assessment through tests or examinations, much ongoing assessment will be formative: for example, verbal feedback during whole class or one-to-one discussions; peer- or self-assessment; or written feedback from the teacher.

Any form of assessment has a profound influence on student motivation and self-esteem. It must therefore show consideration and be both constructive and sensitive. It is important to communicate clearly the value and purpose of any assessment, encouraging students to focus on the process and retain positivity despite short-term disappointments. Information from assessment should be useful in helping to improve:

Teaching - helping teachers to get to know the students and to plan work with appropriate pace and challenge; and

Learning - helping students to understand how they learn best, how well they have learned and how they could improve.

There is an expectation that Heads of Departments will ensure a common approach to assessment by all members of their department. The use of comment only marking is expected in Year 7 and encouraged in Years 8 and 9; it is understood that grades alongside comments may become more appropriate as students move towards GCSE. For all courses which are externally examined, e.g. GCSE, A Level and the IB, we expect that approaches to assessment will be in line with the specific specification requirements. Teacher marking is an important part of assessment, but we recognise that the quality of marking is more important than the frequency, and that it is not necessary for every piece of work to be formally marked. It is important that teachers also follow the principles of effective feedback and assessment when providing written or verbal reports for parents.

High quality assessment will have the following characteristics:

- ensures that feedback – orally and in writing – is effective and constructive, enabling students to understand how to progress and improve; as far as is possible and relevant, comments should emphasise the positive and include suggestions for improvement or extension;
- shares learning objectives with the students so that they are aware of what they are trying to achieve;
- shares success criteria with students in a way which is easy for them to understand and transparent to all;
- recognises the standards to aim for by showing students examples of good practice;
- enables students to become active partners in their own learning by encouraging self and peer assessment;
- provides reflection time and opportunities to discuss and learn from mistakes;
- develops more effective questioning strategies in order to understand the thought processes leading to an incorrect response;
- promotes confidence among learners; in particular encouraging them to realise that making mistakes is part of the learning process and that they should not be afraid to try new approaches;
- gives students opportunities to show what they can do in a variety of formats.