Secondary Section

Assessment Principles and Practices

The following statement of principles and practices should be read in conjunction with the whole school assessment policy which gives the overall rationale, objectives and framework in relation to the school's mission statement.

Overall

1. Assessment should be valid, reliable and improve learning.
2. Assessment is not an end in itself, but part of the learning process and should be used at all stages in the learning cycle.
3. Assessment should contribute to teacher effectiveness, planning and preparation of lessons.
4. Assessment should include a variety of techniques and methods to reflect the variety of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding in a subject. A blend of summative, formative, peer and self-assessment must be used by each department.
5. Assessment practices and procedures must be clear and open to the students from the start of each assessment period.
6. Formative assessment techniques which include quality feedback are crucial to students making progress.
7. Assessment for Learning techniques must actively involve the students. Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment are particularly effective in helping students understand what they need to do to improve.
8. Assessments should match the aims and objectives of the teaching and learning. Students should not be assessed on what they have not been taught.
9. Each department should have assessment procedures and an 'assessment plan' for each term and year group in the department handbook that are consistent with this policy. For example, the plan must clearly indicate how the term grade will be calculated.

Day to Day Assessments (with an emphasis on formative assessment):

1. Day to day assessment is crucial in shaping next steps in teaching and learning.
2. Day to day assessment may be informal and may be unrecorded, but is still important.

3. Activities to assess prior knowledge/skills/understanding when starting a new topic are important to help a teacher to establish the appropriate level to start at and the differentiation that will be required.

4. Formative assessment activities during a unit are important for checking for understanding and establishing what needs further work, further differentiation, and when and how to move forward.

5. Assessment for Learning Techniques such as Self-assessment and group assessment activities, using criteria, can be particularly effective in helping students understand what they need to do to improve and are encouraged.

6. Student work should be collected in regularly in all subjects. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that this happens.

7. Not all work needs to be given a formal grade. However, enough work needs to be graded to ensure that the attainment grade given at the end of the Term is based on sufficient data to be reliable. It is impossible to indicate how many assessments make up a 'reliable' attainment grade and therefore it will be expected that HOD's will be able to justify the number and types of assessments undertaken.

8. Grading should normally be on the 7 to 1 scale or as a 'mark out of a total'. The exception is work in Y10 and Y11 where the exam board's A* to G scale must be used where appropriate.

9. Work where the emphasis is on drafting, practising and improving may benefit from just receiving formative comments on ways to improve, as students are more likely to read comments if they are not accompanied by a grade.

10. Assessment information should be used to inform review and revision of the teaching and learning programme to better meet student needs.

Periodic Assessments:

1. Common Assessment(s) (CAs) will be set periodically each Term. These will normally have some commonality across different classes in the year group. These CAs will normally be the major components in the calculation of attainment grades (see below) at the end of the Term and their relative importance should be made clear to the students. Sufficient CAs need to be set to ensure that the attainment grades are reliable. HOD's need to ensure that CA's provide comparability.

2. The nature of the CAs will vary, depending upon the nature of the subject, but could include examinations, tests, oral presentations, projects, practical assessments, research projects, performances, exhibitions and portfolios. A variety of different types of assessment is normally appropriate to reflect the variety of skills, understanding and knowledge expected in each subject and unit of work.

3. The CA should match the aims and objectives of the unit and be assessing what the students have learnt. Assessment criteria are expected for each CA and must be shared with the students.

4. Standardisation could take place after the assessments / CA's are undertaken to standardise the marking criteria.

5. Wherever possible standardization and moderation of IB Internal Assessments should take place.
6. When assessments are returned to students, they must have an opportunity to reflect on their performance and receive individual feedback including suggestions and targets on how to improve.
7. Students who miss a CA for an authorised absence, such as sickness or a school trip, will be offered the opportunity to make up the missing CA upon their return. Where the nature of the task means that doing it after other students makes the result unreliable, a slightly different, but comparable task must be set.
8. All CAs should be checked to verify that they are free of gender, ethnic or other bias, appropriately accommodate students with special needs and ensure consistency within and between classes, past, present and future.

Students will be informed of:

1. The planned programme of CAs at the start of a course
2. The nature, date and timing of the assessment activities in advance
3. The criteria and conditions involved in an assessment activity
4. Their results and the criteria and calculations applied
5. Summative Assessments:
6. Examinations
7. End of Year examinations are set for Y10 and IB1, usually in June. Mock Examinations are set for Y11 and IB2, usually in January and February respectively. External examinations in IGCSE and IB are taken in May/June of Y11 and IB2. No end of year examinations are set for Y7, 8 and 9. The school also facilitates other examinations.

Reports and Term Grades

1. For the purposes of reports and summative assessment, the school year is divided into three Terms. Students receive a report with Attainment and Learning descriptors grades per subject three times each year. Two of the reports in the year are a 'grades only' report and the other is a 'long report' which includes written comments by the subject teacher in addition.
2. Long reports have a strong formative dimension. The teacher comments should be positive and include clear targets for what a student can do to improve and how they can do it. They also include a student self-evaluation, giving the student the opportunity to reflect on their learning.
3. The Secondary Section criteria for attainment and for the Learning descriptors should be used when calculating/deciding grades in Key Stage 3. These criteria are made freely available to all staff, students and parents through the school website, the curriculum booklets, the student planner and the parent/student handbook and other media.
4. Attainment and Learning Descriptor grades are discrete and independent of each other. A very able student who doesn't try very hard can achieve a very high attainment grade and a very low Learning descriptors grade. A less able student could achieve a low attainment grade but a high Learning descriptors grade if they are giving their very best Learning descriptors to their work.

5. The term 1 grade for IB1 and for Y10 is full range despite the fact students may not have covered work up to the top academic grade. It must also be noted that departments should be wary of awarding significant numbers of the top grades if that is not replicated in the IB and IGCSE final results each year.
6. The post Mock Examination grade in IB2 and Y11 should be made up of the exam grade with an IA component in the same proportion as the final exam. For many IGCSE subjects which do not have IA/ Coursework components the post mock grade can include other valid assessment data as agreed by the DH at the start of the year up to a maximum of 30% or as agree with the DH.
7. The Term 3 grade in IB1 is used as the basis for the Uni PG and therefore needs to be an accurate representation of the student's abilities. The grade should be made up of the end of year exam and any IA or IA work undertaken in the IB1 year in the same proportions as the final IB exam %.

Learning Descriptors:

1. "Learning descriptors" has been replaced with three Learning descriptors. 'Preparation for Learning (Pr), Approach to Learning (Ap) and Attitude to learning (At).
2. The scale is W for Working towards expectations, M for Meeting expectations and E, Exceeding expectations. See below.

Learning Descriptors			
Descriptor	Working towards Expectations **W**	Meeting Expectations **M**	Exceeding Expectations **E**
Preparation for Learning (**Pr**) (*How organised the student is both before, during and after the lesson*)		**Almost always** prepares to work on arrival. **Almost always** comes with all necessary materials ie notebooks, textbooks, files, pens, rulers. **Almost always** makes a note of their homework and **almost always** hands in assignments on time. **Almost always** reflects on their preparation for learning.	
Approach to Learning (**Ap**) (*Learning focus*		**Almost always** listens carefully to instructions and focuses attention on assigned tasks. **Almost always** is	

and involvement in class)		involved in class discussion and group work. **Almost always** is willing to contribute. **Almost always** is fully engaged with the lesson activities and catches up on any missed work. **Almost always** is able to reflect upon their learning approach.	
Attitude to Learning (**At**) *(class behaviour)*		**Almost always** respects other students and is not a distraction. **Almost always** focusses their communication on the lesson and is respectful for the class. **Almost always** is able to reflect on their learning attitude.	

Guide

- For a student to be awarded a **Meeting Expectations** (**M**) – he/she must meet all of the criteria in this category approximately 80% of the time
- For a student to be awarded an **Exceeding Expectations** (E) – he/she must be exceeding approximately 80% of the Meeting Expectations criteria
- For a student to be awarded a **Working towards Expectations (W) –** he/she must be missing approximately 80% of the Meeting Expectations criteria

Academic Descriptors

1. For KS3: Each department will produce descriptors to match the overall whole school criteria for what students know, understand and can do in their subject for each grade at the end of Y7, Y8 and Y9. This should be in the form of what a student typically knows, understands and can do.
2. For all year groups: Each department will produce statements of what is included in each attainment grade and in what proportion in each Term – e.g. Common Assessment Test 1 – 40%; Common Assessment Project 1 – 20%; Practical skills – 20%; Classwork and homework – 20%. The components and their relative proportions will vary between subjects, reflecting the differences between the subjects. However, it is expected that a significant proportion will be from Common Assessments. It is important that sufficient common assessments are set during the Term to make the attainment grade reliable.
3. It is expected that Y11 and IB2 second Term components and proportions will mirror the components and proportions of the final examination.
4. The descriptors, the statements of the components and the way any calculations are made to produce the attainment grades in each subject must be understandable to all students and this information made readily available at the start of each assessment period.

5. Attainment grades should not be a surprise to a student, as students should be aware of their performance as they progress through the assessments in a term and should be able to see how these affect their attainment grade. The more open and transparent the attainment grades are, the more students feel ownership of their own academic performance and the more they can understand what they need to do to improve and take appropriate action to achieve a higher grade.
6. The attainment grades for Term 1 and Term 3 Y10 to IB2, along with the external IGCSE and IB results, are used in the high school transcript. In Y11 and IB2 the Term 1 and Term 2 grades are used.

Analysis of Data to promote learning

1. A large amount of previous data on previous student performance is available and should be consulted in order to build on current knowledge, identify underachievement and to reveal change and growth.
2. Base line grades are available via Midyis, Yelis and CEM IB assessments. This data should be used individually and departmentally to track students against their predicted performance.
3. On ENGAGE, all previous term grades and comments are under the link 'Assessment' down the right hand side of the student details.
4. All previous reports are also stored on ENGAGE as 'Linked Documents'.
5. Grades from previous reports can be found on Engage via "performance Tracker". These grades allow Individual student performance tracking and identification of underachievement. HOD's must follow up with action plans for underachieving students.
6. Grades achieved in the previous Term are shown as 'read only' columns in the mark sheets for term grades for reference.
7. IGCSE and IB external examination results are shared with all staff and an analysis is carried out. The analysis will feed into the Departmental Improvement plan(DIP) for the year.
8. Summaries of external examination results are shared with the wider community.
9. External examination performance is discussed within departments and in a meeting between the Head of Department and the Leadership team, with an emphasis on learning and changing for future cohorts. This will also feed into the DIP.
10. Analysis of assessment data should be used to reflect on units and the teaching of them and to modify and improve future units and teaching.
11. Curriculum planning and revisions should be informed by analysis of the results of assessments.
12. Assessment data (Learning descriptors and attainment grades) is periodically reviewed by the learning support team to screen for students with possible learning difficulties, and to adjust in-class learning support offered to students, as appropriate (and where resources permit.)

Recording of Assessment data

1. All staff are required to record assessment data in an electronic format. For IB students the default electronic recording system is Managebac.

2. All electronic assessment data must be made available to HOD's and SLT on request or collected centrally by HOD's.
3. Recorded data should be understandable to a third party and include dates, attendance, type of assessment along with any specific explanatory notes.

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