The Valley School

For Exceptional Learners

Review Date

Sept 2027

Assessment Policy

David Pearce	Liz Ellis
Headteacher	Chair of Governors
Signature	Signature
	Liz Ellis

ASSESSMENT

Aims

• To make significant gains in raising learner attainment
• For learners to take responsibility for their own learning
• To work towards all learners being independent learners
• To facilitate personalised learning
• For learners to be involved in the setting of their own learning goals
• For learners to be involved in their own assessment

A useful definition:

“Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for the use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.” (Assessment Reform Group 2002)

Background

- Assessment is at the centre of The Valley School’s whole school developments and should be firmly embedded in all teaching areas. It allows for improvement in educational standards by ensuring that learners know what they are aiming for and are involved in their own learning and assessment. When Assessment is clear in classroom practice, learners develop the skills necessary to take charge of their own learning. They will be able to assess the quality of their own work and assess the work of others. Learners will recognise aspects of their own work that need improvement and therefore set their own targets. Consequently, this leads to a happier, better-behaved student.
- We must distance ourselves from seeing that learners are empty vessels waiting to be filled and instead recognise that they are active learners of many things. They learn in a variety of ways, through play and movement, through language and symbols, through emotions and through thinking. This is important as it emphasises the multi-sensory nature of good learning which leads to the use of varied styles and media in assessment. The person ‘assessing’ becomes student, peer, teaching assistant, real audience as well as teacher.

Why develop Assessment?

Research presented by Paul Black, Dylan William and their colleagues at King’s College, London (1998, 2002) found that learners’ learning is dramatically enhanced when:

- Learners know what it is that they are aiming for and
- When they play some part in deciding how to set about achieving their aims.

What is fundamental for Assessment to have any significant impact on learning and raising attainment is that Assessment needs to be actively pursued as a whole-school approach.

10 key principles of Assessment

• Is part of effective planning

• Focuses on how students learn
• Is central to classroom practice
• Is a key professional skill
• Is sensitive and constructive
• Fosters motivation
• Promotes understanding of goals and criteria
• Helps learners know how to improve
• Develops the capacity for self (and peer) assessment
• Recognises all educational achievement

POLICY CRITERIA TO BE ACCEPTED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ALL CLASSROOM PRACTICE:

Subject Area Schemes of Work

Schemes of Work should show how assessment is addressed in each subject area.
Each department should ensure at least an annual subject review for development in relation to Assessment. Department self-evaluation questions should include such questions as: How well do our assessment practices enable learners to understand their own learning goals and success criteria? How well do our assessment practices enable learners to set about their activities and evaluate their decision-making?
Schemes of work should therefore make it clear how learners will receive feedback, how they will take part in assessing their learning and how they will be helped to make further progress.
Learners need to be made aware of the 'how' of their learning as well as the 'what.' This must be planned for.

Lesson objectives and learning outcomes

- Whenever possible, lessons should be objective led.
- Share lesson objectives and learning outcomes with the class at some stage of each lesson.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the difference between objectives and outcomes.
- A learning objective is what the teacher intends students to learn.
- A learning outcome is how achievement will be demonstrated by the learners, i.e. putting what they have learned into practice.
- All learning outcomes should be measurable.
- In good practice, lesson objectives could evolve from starters or better still from the learners themselves!
- Learning objectives are derived directly from teaching objectives and may be relevant for a given lesson or series of lessons.

Peer assessment/self-assessment

- Learners should be given the opportunity and actively encouraged to look at each other's work and to suggest improvements. This skill needs to be taught to learners.
- Peer assessment can be effective because learners can clarify their own ideas and understanding of both the learning intention and the assessment criteria while looking at other learners' work.

- Self-assessment is an important tool for teachers. Once learners understand how to assess their current knowledge and gaps in it, they will have a clearer idea of how they can help themselves progress. Teachers should ensure that time is available in lessons for:
    - peer/self-assessment
    - reflection on their own work
    - time to work problems out

Reflection

Time needs to be built in to lesson design for reflection in order to allow learners to consolidate learning, consider what went well or could be improved on and what new targets need to be set. The term “ponder moments” sums up the reflection concept.

Sampling learners’ work

Year Heads should regularly sample learners’ work. This activity promotes sharing good practice, standardises marking and provides evidence of self-evaluation.
When work is displayed on boards, subject leads should be mindful of exhibiting a range of Levels.

Poppins - sharing good practice

Year Heads should provide regular opportunities to observe/team teach/plan together on Assessment activities.

This part of the policy refers to the ‘Assessment of Learning (Marking policy)

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Different types of assessment

There are three key types of assessment:

- **Formative assessment** records development in progress, rather than completed development. It is an ongoing part of classroom activity; it is cumulative and provides information which informs teachers’ future planning. This forms part of ongoing teacher assessment in the class.
- **Summative assessment** summarises completed learning. This type of assessment usually takes place at the end of a period of teaching, such as at the end of a topic, the end of a year or the end of a key stage. Summative assessment statements may be compiled using information from formative assessments in addition to tests taken at given points within students’ school careers.
- **Assessment for learning**, an extension of formative assessment, is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It should be ongoing and part of effective learning and teaching. Assessment for learning uses assessment in the classroom to raise students’ achievement. It is based on the principle that

students will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim.

Overarching Guiding Principles - Educating students on their learning journey

A good teacher establishes where the students are in their learning; identifies the learning destination; carefully plans the route; begins the learning journey; makes regular checks on progress on the way and adjusts the course as conditions dictate.

Feedback and Marking

The following marking codes should be used across all areas of the curriculum as appropriate to the stage of the student.

Literacy focus	**General**
CL Capital letter	√ 'tick work that is correct.
S Spelling	· dot incorrect answers
P Punctuation	A Adult assisted
^ Missing word	GW Group or paired work
// New paragraph	VF Verbal feedback given

We have high aspirations for all students, and this should be reflected in the presentation of their work. Staff should encourage students to always take pride in their work. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of a ruler to draw straight lines, mistakes crossed out with a single line and not drawing or doodling on the pages or covers of the book.