



Federation Assessment Policy

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Context

In 2014, the Department for Education removed the National Curriculum assessment levels that had been in use in Key Stages 1-3, and in 2016, Key Stage 2 assessments were awarded scaled scores (80-120) rather than levels. The aim was to free schools from an imposed measure of pupil progress and to focus on raising the achievement of every student.

Reforms to GCSE content and assessment have also been underway since 2015, and as of summer 2019, students' attainment in all GCSEs are awarded as a number (9-1) rather than a letter (A*-G).

Since September 2019, St Mary Magdalene Secondary Phase has assessed students' work throughout Years 7 to 11 using GCSE numbers. As well as this system providing greater clarity to parents and students, we employ a range of other measures to personalise the assessment system and ensure we support all students to achieve their academic potential.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Federation's Teaching and Learning Policy, Marking Policy and Homework Policy.

Rationale

Students are at the heart of our assessment system in order for us to extend and challenge their learning so they can reach their full potential.

For students, the purpose of assessment is to empower them to become better learners by understanding their own attainment and how to progress and achieve beyond it.

For teachers, assessment should develop an understanding of the individual needs of students so that target setting is meaningful and informs planning, teaching and learning for progress.

For other staff and governors, assessment information will inform an understanding of the current and potential student outcomes and allow the governors to rigorously challenge the school's expectations and outcomes.

It is fundamental to our mission that we are open and clear when making judgements about students' progress. Our assessment system provides multi-level analysis including student level, class level, faculty level, year level, key stage level and school level which will be continually quality assured to monitor the accuracy of assessment.

We believe that students and parents have an entitlement to assessment information through a precise, informative and understandable reporting system.

Principles

Using the principles and processes of assessment, we aim to:

- monitor progress and support learning
- recognise the achievements of students and identify any areas of development
- inform students of their progress and next steps
- guide planning, teaching, additional support, curriculum development and resources
- inform parents and the wider community of student achievement
- provide information to ensure continuity when the pupil changes school or year group
- comply with statutory requirements

Responsibilities and Roles

Every member of staff has the responsibility of delivering this policy but for guidance the responsibilities for specific groups can be clustered as follows:

Schools:

We will involve students actively in their own learning by teaching them how to understand and use assessment criteria and how to assess their own and others' work. We will provide students with meaningful feedback so they know how much progress they have made and what should they do in order to improve further. We will inform parents and students of progress in a way that supports their learning.

Staff will also moderate the work of students at all levels to standardise work and ensure consistency within faculties, year groups and across subjects. Work will also be cross-referenced with the National curriculum.

Students:

Students are expected to engage fully in the assessment process, by trying their best in both informal and formal assessments. They will also carry out self-assessment, and by helping their peers through peer-assessment. During formal assessments, including external examinations, pupils will follow the exam regulations as specified by examination boards, including those regarding plagiarism. It is the responsibility of the student to read and respond to teachers' written feedback in their books. This includes spelling corrections, responding to questioning and extending answers. If a student does not understand the feedback question/s they must make sure they ask for support.

Parents & Carers:

The school is expected to encourage parents and carers to support the students by encouraging them to do their best in assessments and to make constructive use of the feedback they get. They will help students prepare for any assessments and teachers will provide additional material/support to help parents/carers support the progress and achievement of their child.

Governors:

Governors will monitor standards across the key stages and subject areas via school visits, listening and reading reports from staff and asking questions. They will also provide constructive feedback and action points to ensure the assessment system is robust and in line with national curriculum targets.

Teaching & Learning Curriculum

Assessment informs both teaching practice and curriculum design with information about each student's abilities, needs, and aspirations and how these change as they progress.

Types of Assessment:

Formative: This is the ongoing assessment carried out by teachers both formally and informally during a unit of work. The results of formative assessments have a direct impact on the teaching materials and strategies employed immediately following the assessment. We use targets within books to ensure that the students have ownership of their next steps and these are directly linked with marking, questioning and feedback.

The Koinonia federation acknowledges that assessment will be undertaken in a range of different ways for different subjects. However all assessment should embrace the principles as outlined in this policy and, therefore, assessment will be evident in every lesson. This may include:

1. oral feedback
2. self-assessment
3. peer-assessment
4. group/whole class assessment
5. written marking of work
6. teacher/student questioning

Primary Phase Summative Assessment:

- Formal summative tests occur end of each term and scores are recorded on the Fischer Family Trust Aspire website.
- These outcomes are communicated to both pupils and parents at parents' evening.
- The leadership team will use the whole school outcomes to identify patterns and gaps and inform whole school or phase training.
- Leadership team will carry out data analysis to ensure that the school is on track to meet the national expectations (or beyond).

AFL: Teacher should be using a variety of strategies that help to inform them of their pupils' current level of understanding and progress at the outset of, within and at the end of a lesson/unit.

Such techniques include:

- Mini whiteboard work
- Use of "lolly sticks" for random selection
- Targeted questioning
- Progress Steps (success criteria) shared at the beginning, during and end of the lesson
- Marking that links to the LI/success criteria
- Children's comments both written and oral about their progress and next steps

Primary Summative examinations

There will be summative testing with national comparisons at the beginning and end of Reception year, phonics testing in year one, and the Multiplication Tables Check in Year 4. Statutory tests are also carried out at the end of Year 2 (until 2023, after which they will be scrapped) and Year 6.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Within six weeks of starting in Reception, pupils complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The reception teacher's observations during these tests are used to inform planning and aid early identification of special needs. A 'narrative statement' outlining what each pupil can do is then sent to parents.

Children will be assessed regularly to ensure that the next steps in learning are appropriately planned in order to help them make progress. Pupils will be assessed using Tapestry.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is based on the teacher's on-going observations and assessments in the following areas:

The prime areas of learning:

Communication and language
Physical development
Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas of learning:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding of the world
Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and exploring
Active learning
Creating and thinking critically

Each child's developments and achievements are recorded in the Profile. There are 17 ELG (early learning goals) descriptors, together with a short narrative describing the child's three characteristics of effective learning.

For each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of Reception year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding) or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

Year 1 Phonics

Children are taught to read by breaking down words into separate sounds or 'phonemes'. They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to read the whole word. At the Koinonia federation we follow the Little Wandle programme.

At the end of Year 1, all children will take the phonics screening check – this is a statutory assessment.

Key Stage 1

Teacher assessment (TA) is the main focus for end of key stage 1 assessment and reporting. It is carried out as part of teaching and learning.

The statutory national curriculum tasks and tests will be administered to all eligible pupils who are working above P-levels in reading, writing and mathematics. These inform the final TA judgements reported for each pupil at the end of KS1. Pupils will have either met the expected standard, working at a greater depth than the expected or will be working towards the standard in maths, reading, writing and EGPS.

Key Stage 2

Externally marked Formal summative tests and Teacher assessment (TA) is the main focus for end of key stage 2 assessment and reporting. It is carried out as part of teaching and learning.

The statutory national curriculum tests will be administered to all eligible pupils in reading, writing and mathematics (and science if selected as a sample school). These inform the final end of Key Stage judgments reported for each pupil at the end of KS2. Pupils will have either met, exceeded or not met the expected standard in maths, reading and EGPS (English grammar, punctuation & spelling). For writing, pupils will be working towards the expected standard, will have reached the expected standard, or working at a greater depth than the expected standard.

NFER tests

Years 1, 3, 4 & 5 complete NFER tests in reading and maths each term. teachers assess writing at the same time, using the writing check lists for their year group. All these results are recorded on the FFT website and on the tracking grids which are kept on SharePoint.

KS3, 4 and 5 Assessment

From Year 7 to Year 11, all students are assessed using GCSE numbered grades (9-1) for reporting purposes. Therefore, if a teacher awards a student a grade 6, the teacher has assessed that the student is producing work at the standard of a GCSE grade 6. These grades will not routinely be awarded for classwork or homework, but will be used as part of the termly reporting cycle and on assessments as appropriate.

Some, and particularly the youngest students, will not work at a GCSE grade standard. Students working below a grade 1 will be graded at:

- 1a (equivalent to working at a comfortable Year 6 expected level)

- 1b (equivalent to the threshold of the Year 6 expected level)
- 1c (below the Year 6 expected level)

Our status as an all through school means that our teachers are uniquely able to work with members of staff in the primary phase to accurately assess work not yet at a GCSE standard, and to provide students working at this level with appropriate feedback to ensure they progress.

Students working towards A-Levels are assessed using A-Level grades (A-E), and students in Years 10-13 studying BTECs are assessed using these grades.

When reporting current working grades, teachers will use 'fine' grades within the 9-1 grading system, where each grade is divided into three bands. This indicates how securely the student is working within this current grade.

- 6+ indicates that the student is working at a high grade 6, and is close to getting a grade 7
- 6 indicates that the student is working at a secure grade 6
- 6- indicates that the student is just above the threshold of a Grade 6

Given that some students may remain on one grade over much of the course of a year and still make expected progress, fine grades allow a student, parent/carer and teacher to effectively track progress.

Targets

Students are given target grades for the end of the year in each subject. By comparing this with their 'on entry' grades and current working grades, each student's progress can be measured. This enables us to swiftly identify students who are underachieving, and then to detect any barriers to learning, put in place additional support and contact parents/carers.

The target grade is created using several pieces of data. A charity, the Fischer Family Trust, use the scores from Key Stage 2 assessments along with other contextual data to provide a GCSE baseline target grade for every Year 7-11 student in each of their subjects. Similarly, for Years 12 and 13, the Fischer Family Trust provide benchmark grades based on the progress made by similar pupils nationally using Key Stage 4 results and other contextual data. We triangulate this data with our own 'on entry' tests and regular assessments to provide each student with end of year target grades, set at the start of the year but subject to change if, for instance, the student makes greater than expected progress.

The end of year target grade is set at a level so that each student is expected to make at least as much progress as students in schools in the top 20th percentile for progress (FFT20). In practice, this level

of progress typically means making one GCSE grade of progress each year.

FFT20 projection	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7	Typical avg KS2 result range
9	9	9	9	9	9	
8	8	8	8	8	8	
7	7	7	7	7	7	
6	6	6	6	6	6	
5	5	5	5	5	5	
4	4	4	4	4	4	
3	3	3	3	3	3	≥113
2	2	2	2	2	2	107-113
1	1	1	1	1	1	103-109
			1a	1a	1a	101-106
				1b	1b	95-103
					1c	≤99
						B

Fig 1: End of year target setting in Years 7-11

As shown in Figure 1 above, these target grades can also be used to provide a projection of GCSE outcomes based on Key Stage 2 results.

For example, Olivia scored 105 in both reading and Maths at the end of KS2. Using other contextual data, FFT20 projects that she will achieve a 6- in her GCSE Maths examination. She therefore enters school in Year 7 working at a GCSE grade 1- in Maths and – through effective teaching and learning and lots of hard work – she can be expected to make one grade progress per year to obtain 2- at the end of Year 7, eventually reaching an outcome of 6 by Year 11.

End of GCSE target grades are provided to students only in Year 10; A-Level target grades are provided in Spring term of Year 12. Target grades are not set in stone: target grades may be changed if, for instance, a student makes rapid progress. Qualitative targets (i.e. concrete subject-specific steps for improvement) are always prioritised in lessons over quantifiable targets (i.e. a grade to aim for).

GCSE and BTEC Level 1/2 predicted grades are produced in Spring of Year 11 on the basis of prior attainment for the purpose of Sixth Form applications. A-Level and BTEC Level 3 predicted grades are generated for Year 13s for the purposes of UCAS references on the basis of prior attainment in the subject.

Progress

Although the target setting table (Fig 1) is useful in showing where students should be at the end of each academic year, we know that progress is not always linear and that students develop at

different paces. Every student is different and will make more or less progress at different times during their academic journey.

Within school, we use a range of measures to understand the acceptable range of attainment for students based on their prior attainment and to judge the extent to which each individual is or isn't fulfilling their potential. Key tools for this purpose include the [DfE's Key Stage 2 to 4 transition matrices](#), [the DfE's Key Stage 5 transition matrices](#), [progress measures from Go4Schools](#), and [FFT's benchmark indicators](#).

For the student, however, the use of a simple target grade provides an aspirational but realistic target to work towards, and – along with the regular reporting of current working grades – allows the school, parents/carers and students to monitor academic achievement and progress across and between years.

If a student doesn't make expected progress in any of his or her subjects, he or she is put on the classroom teacher's underachievement tracker. This is a supportive rather than a punitive measure, leading to steps being put in place to help the student make the necessary progress to fulfil their potential. Communication and cooperation between the school and the student's home is vital, so at this point, parents/carers are informed. In the Sixth Form, Parents and Carer Conferences may be held for students falling behind, those in danger of not being able to carry subjects through to Year 13, or those in danger of missing their UCAS offer grades.

Assessing work

When students begin their GCSEs, they are assessed against the mark schemes of exam boards. Before students begin their GCSEs (typically Years 7, 8 and 9), each subject area at St Mary Magdalene has assessment frameworks which assess students' work in meeting the National Curriculum's Key Stage 3 aims and subject content, whilst adhering to GCSE grade descriptors. Most individual pieces of work will not be graded using a GCSE grade but rather, following the guidance in the marking policy.

Teachers work together, and with colleagues at other RBG and SDBE schools, to standardise and moderate work, in order to ensure the accuracy of grades given.

Evidence suggests that where teachers know the identity of the student, this can lead to inaccurate marking; further research shows that this is more likely to negatively impact students from black and minority ethnic groups, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. To reduce the impact of this 'unconscious bias' and ensure the highest level of accuracy of assessment, all students are given 'candidate numbers' when they begin at St Mary Magdalene and students use these on all formal assessments; this is known as 'blind marking'. In subjects where practical skills are assessed, other teachers are used to assess or moderate wherever possible.

Secondary Phase Assessment for Learning (AfL)

If students are to take responsibility for their own learning, they need to know what they are expected to learn and how they can achieve it. Providing or contexting objectives allows students to engage with the process of learning.

It is often appropriate to share the learning intentions (steps to success) pupils need to understand to reach the learning objectives. This provides them with small goals to keep them focused, challenged and motivated and helps them to decide if their learning is progressing through the lesson and the further steps they need to take in order to help them reach their objectives. Again, it may be appropriate, occasionally, to ask pupils to suggest the steps to success thereby giving them responsibility for the learning process and the teacher an opportunity to assess their ability to apply prior knowledge.

AfL is the process for identifying what the learner has achieved in order to plan the next steps in teaching and learning. Feedback is provided to the learner in such a way that either the teacher adjusts the teaching to help the learner learn more effectively, or the learner changes her/his approach to the task, or both.

AfL is not only part of our everyday classroom practice, but also an area of continuing development. AfL strategies are planned for daily use within all lessons, where they are directly linked to the learning objectives. Examples of AfL include:

- Verbal feedback to individuals
- Written comments
- Effective questioning: Cold calling and no opt out
- Mini whiteboards
- Self-assessment using various methods in line with the learning intentions/assessment criteria
- Peer assessment where a peer measures the students learning against the intention

Assessment dates

At Key Stages 3 and 4, students are assessed regularly at the end of each unit, half-termly, and through end of year assessments. GCSE students also sit mock examinations at the end of Year 10 and in autumn of Year 11.

In the Sixth Form, students sit formal assessments in each subject at the end of each unit; in practice, this means at least once per half term. The following internal and external assessment dates should be noted:

A-Levels:

Term	Assessment	Week/Month
Year 12, Autumn 1	Settling in assessment	Week 3 (September)
Year 12, Spring 2	Mock exam	Week 4 (March)
Year 12, Summer 2	End of Year 12 Exams	Week 4 (June)
Year 13, Autumn 1	Settling in Assessment	Week 3 (September)
Year 13, Autumn 2	Mock exam	Week 5 (December)
Year 13, Spring 2	Mock exam	Week 3 (March)

Year 13, Summer 1-2	A-Level Summer Exam Series	Week 3 (May-June)
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BTECs:

Term	Assessment	Week/Month
Year 12, Autumn 1	Settling in assessment	Week 3 (September)
Year 12, Spring 1	BTEC January Exam Series	Week 2 (January)
Year 12, Summer 2	BTEC Summer Exam Series	Week 3 (May-June)
Year 13, Spring 1	BTEC January Exam Series	Week 2 (January)
Year 13, Summer 2	BTEC Summer Exam Series	Week 3 (May-June)

Reporting

Reports promote and provide:

- Good home/school relationships
- Information for students about what they need to do to improve
- Information for parents/carers about their son/daughter's progress
- An opportunity for discussions with parents/carers
- Targets for students to work towards

The reporting date for Autumn term is the first Wednesday after the Christmas holiday; for Spring term it is the first Wednesday after the Easter holidays, and for Summer term it is Monday 17 July 2023 (and the corresponding date each following year).

Attitude to learning is essential for academic success so in addition to the above, students' reports also contain grades for effort, behaviour and quality of homework. In these attributes, students are graded from 1 to 4:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Expected
- 3: Below expected
- 4: Cause for concern

Reports also display a percentage attendance, and a tally of achievement and behaviour points. Parents/carers are invited to attend formal consultation evenings with the class teachers throughout the year. The timetable will be published at the start of each academic year. For the most up to date information please see www.koinoniafederation.com

