



## ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING POLICY

### A Guide to Good Practice

#### Vision

Our goal at Holy Trinity School is to produce independent learners. We encourage our students to be creative and imaginative and develop a lifetime love of learning. Research from Kings College has shown that Assessment for Learning can improve both students' motivation and capacity to learn. Consequently the strategies used within this policy and our policy on Learning and Teaching, can have a considerable impact on raising achievement.

#### What is Assessment for Learning?

Assessment **for** learning is not the same as assessment **of** learning.

Assessment **for** learning is **formative** and takes place all the time in the classroom.

AfL has been defined as 'the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where their learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there' (Assessment Reform Group 2002)

#### AfL gets straight to the heart of good teaching by:

- helping teachers help students to take the next steps in their learning
- helping students to help each other to take the next steps in their learning
- helping students themselves to take the next steps in their learning

#### What is Assessment of Learning?

Assessment **of** learning tends to be **summative** and is carried out periodically eg at the end of a unit or year or key stage. The teacher undertakes this kind of assessment to judge how well a student is performing. Conclusions will probably be reported in terms of grades, marks or levels.

It is not always recognised though, that by sharing expectations and targets with students, assessment **of** learning can contribute to assessment **for** learning. For example students can be given the opportunity to:

- mark, moderate and review test papers
- review their performance against test criteria and set personal targets
- devise test questions

## **Research Findings**

Our policy is based on key pieces of research.

### **Inside the Black Box 1998**

### **Assessment for learning:beyond the black box 1999**

### **Working Inside the Black Box 2002**

It emphasises that good assessment for learning:

- is an essential component of teaching and learning
- involves sharing learning goals with students
- aims to help students to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for
- involves students in self assessment
- provides feedback which leads students recognising their next steps and how to take them
- involves both teacher and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment information
- questioning
- giving feedback to students
- peer and self assessment
- formative use of summative tests

## **Questioning**

- exploratory (not closed) questioning leads to richer learning.
- wait time has to be increased to give students time to think and everyone should be expected to contribute to the discussion.

## **Giving Feedback to Students**

- only giving grades or marks pushes students into “ego-centred” learning. It is depressing for weaker students, and does not inform stronger students about how they can continue to improve.
- give targeted feedback instead, so that the focus of the learning becomes the effort needed to improve, not the ego of the student concerned – evidence shows that this is particularly effective with weaker learners.
- make feedback formative – “Next you need to...”
- build follow-up opportunities to act on feedback into your lesson planning. Feedback is useless unless acted on.

### **Peer Assessment and Self Assessment**

- the aim of each piece of work should be made clear.
- the assessment criteria should be made clear by the teacher.
- peer assessment is an effective way of making assessment less threatening – students may learn as much or more from each other. Students need training to do this.
- “traffic lights” – the coloured cards at the end of the planner – can be used to facilitate peer assessment.

### **The Formative Use of Testing**

- evidence shows that if students are trained to generate questions or titles and then answer them, the quality of their answers is better, because they have a deeper understanding of the aims of the assessment process.
- revision for tests should be planned through a review of the learning ie what were the aims of the learning that were undertaken?
- through using assessments such as mock SATs and mock exams, teachers can get students to reflect on their exam technique and answers.

## Assessment for Learning in Lessons

Key characteristics of AfL Philosophy/principles	Ideas & good practice
<p><b>Sharing learning objectives with students</b></p> <p>All learners need to understand what they are being asked to learn and more importantly, why.</p> <p>Good feedback depends on the above.</p> <p>Peer and self assessment is impossible if students don't know what is expected of them.</p> <p>All students need to understand the big picture.</p> <p>Understanding how a particular activity fits into long term aims is important in connecting learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning objectives</li> <li>• Provide a lesson title in the form of a question.</li> <li>• Make links with previous/future topics.</li> <li>• Link learning objectives to end of unit/progress tests.</li> <li>• Students provide lesson objectives to promote ownership of objectives.</li> <li>• Use past work to demonstrate to students the standard of work expected.</li> <li>• Teacher modelling/ICT modelling/visual modelling to demonstrate objective.</li> <li>• Students identify key words in the learning objective.</li> <li>• Encourage students to use language of learning objectives in their work.</li> <li>• Return to learning objectives in the plenary.</li> <li>• Teacher uses one of the following symbols ☺/☹/☹ to show how far the objective has been met or not. This can help with managing the marking workload.</li> <li>• Reward students who can link what they have done with the learning objective.</li> </ul>

Key characteristics of AfL Philosophy/principles	Ideas & good practice
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Questioning</b></p> <p>Developing students' capacity for thinking and independent learning can be promoted through asking more open ended questions.</p> <p>Wait time has to be increased to allow students to think about the question and make a considered response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOW should be question led.</li> <li>• Involving students at the start of the lesson through open and closed question starters.</li> <li>• Different types of questioning ie open, closed, higher order, Blooms taxonomy 6 levels.</li> <li>• Explicit teaching of how to ask questions.</li> <li>• Ground rules on listening to peers.</li> <li>• One way of encouraging everyone to engage with the question is to use 'no hands up'</li> <li>• Give students short discussion time in pairs/groups before discussing as a whole class.</li> <li>• Questions about new material at the beginning of a course/lesson to encourage a community of enquiry.</li> <li>• A token/object governs who can answer the questions. See Lord of the Flies!</li> <li>• Hot seat questioning</li> <li>• Students asked to extend the answers of their peers.</li> <li>• Promote traffic light system.</li> <li>• Give students an answer, they think what the question was.</li> <li>• Questions on post-it notes.</li> <li>• Aim to include every child through peer questioning.</li> <li>• Students ask questions about each other's work.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Mini quiz/questioning games.</li> <li>• Question chain; each child answers a question until the chain breaks.</li> <li>• Ask students in pm tutor group time what they have learnt during the day.</li> </ul>

<p align="center"><b>Key characteristics of AfL Philosophy/principles</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Ideas and Good Practice</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Involving students in peer and self assessment</b></p> <p>It is now recognised that peer and self assessment is one of the more powerful strategies in AfL.</p> <p>In order for students to engage in self assessment, they have to be trained in peer assessment first. This will involve using appropriate assessment criteria.</p> <p>Peer assessment is valuable, because students may more readily accept constructive criticism from each other.</p> <p>Peer work is also valuable because the interchange will be in language that the students themselves naturally use.</p> <p>Links to the learning objectives will form a significant part of the dialogue.</p> <p>Feedback from a group to a teacher can command more attention than that of an individual and so peer assessment helps strengthen the student voice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The precursor to all productive peer and self assessment is that students have access to and understanding of learning objectives and level descriptors.</li> <li>• Level descriptors are displayed in classrooms in 'pupil speak'</li> <li>• Teachers need to reflect carefully on groupings/pairing for peer assessment activities in the light of ability.</li> <li>• Teacher explains what they want from a piece of work, students then respond with examples of what they have done.</li> <li>• Students using smiley faces or traffic light colours to indicate what they think the student has understood/not understood.</li> <li>• Use of colour coding in students marking each other's work.</li> <li>• Students use mark schemes to mark/level/grade other students work.</li> <li>• Students use exemplars from previous years to mark/grade each other's work.</li> <li>• Peer proof reading of drafts in light of assessment criteria.</li> <li>• Students could identify 2/3 positive areas about another person's work and one target to work on.</li> <li>• Peer observer of group work elected to assess and provide constructive feedback.</li> <li>• Self assessment.</li> <li>• Develop self assessment checklists or proformas with a scale, to illustrate how far student has met learning objectives.</li> <li>• Word bank for self evaluation.</li> <li>• Post-it notes.</li> </ul>

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<p align="center"><b>Formative use of summative tests</b></p> <p>Summative tests and assessments should be a positive part of the learning process and used as a snapshot of student progress, not to dominate the assessment picture.</p> <p>Summative tests can be marked using AfL principles.</p> <p>Active involvement of students in the test process can help students see that they can be the beneficiaries rather than the victims of testing.</p> <p>Students should be engaged in a reflective review of the work they have done to enable them to plan their next steps effectively.</p> <p>Students should be trained to ask appropriate questions and mark answers.</p> <p>Students should be encouraged through peer and self assessment to apply criteria to help them understand how their work might be improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students 'traffic light' a topic for revision. Areas marked red are the focus for more in depth revision.</li> <li>• Students set and mark own exam questions or practical activities.</li> <li>• Students 'unpick' model answer.</li> <li>• Rewrite a particular section to improve a specific criteria.</li> <li>• Pull out phonic weaknesses from summative testing.</li> <li>• Recap past assessments allowing students to fully realise how many skills they have learned.</li> <li>• Blank piece of paper write down/design a poster of all you know about a topic.</li> <li>• Short snappy tests to assess shortfalls in learning and identify areas for revision.</li> <li>• Examine/discuss public examination criteria.</li> <li>• Use pre mocks, mocks and coursework drafts as key work for the formative use of summative assessment.</li> <li>• Students mark each others work using exam mark criteria.</li> <li>• Coursework grade boundaries used to inform students of their current level/grade in order to move them on.</li> <li>• Use games/fun/more relaxed forms of assessment rather than 'silent' exams.</li> <li>• Use WWW ie 'What Works Well' and EBI 'Even Better If'</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Providing feedback which leads students to recognise their next steps and how to take them:</b></p> <p>Good feedback involves good planning. Unless activities are designed to enable good feedback, it is highly unlikely that good feedback can take place.</p> <p>The research from Kings College showed that the greatest gains were made by students who received comment only marking.</p> <p>Where comments and grades are given, students in the main ignore the comments.</p> <p>Students need to be informed of what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.</p> <p>Feedback that focuses on what needs to be done can encourage all to believe that they can improve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish between day to day marking which may be a quick tick, small correction, sticker, stamp or smiley face and more in depth marking which merits a written comment with a target.</li> <li>• 'Two stars and a wish' ie two points of praise for a piece of work and then a clear target for improvement.</li> <li>• Written comments include 'next steps' related to learning objectives.</li> <li>• Frequent oral feedback during the lesson.</li> <li>• Give oral feedback on next steps and targets.</li> <li>• Give oral feedback and then keep a record this has been done in mark book.</li> <li>• Show examples of previous work and what contributes to a good piece of work.</li> <li>• Focussing marking on a single feature which has been made explicit to the students in advance.</li> <li>• Collating common issues that arise from a set of marking and sharing these with the class via a sheet or OHP or whiteboard etc, rather than writing detailed comments on all work individually.</li> <li>• Feedback lessons, recapping work the whole class needs help with.</li> <li>• Using colour to highlight what student has done well/needs to improve on.</li> <li>• Videoing presentations/drama work &amp; review with students.</li> <li>• Checklists/tick boxes.</li> <li>• Use school rewards system eg merits/commendations as incentives for students to produce good work.</li> <li>• Write praise notes in planners.</li> </ul>

## School Policy on Giving Feedback to Students

**For effective feedback to take place the students need to know what the learning objective was in the first place.**

### Form of feedback

- the type of feedback students get on their work will vary according to the subject. In drama, PE, art and music for example, much of the feedback will be oral. In fact much of the best feedback in **all** subjects is oral **whilst** the students are working.
- **written/oral comments** need to highlight what has been done well and a brief indication/target of how the student can improve.
- students work more productively on targets and corrections if **no grades** are given.
- give learners time to **absorb and act** on teacher feedback.
- periodic use of levels/grades can be helpful if a **summative** judgement is required eg on a specific piece of work once or twice a term.
- the use of grades **will vary** according to the key stage, for example:
  - at **KS3 levelling** is likely to be done at the end of a year.
  - at **KS4/KS5** marking will become more grade specific especially in exam practice work as well as feedback on how to improve coursework. Use of the exam board grade criteria is crucial here. This is a valuable part of the learning process.

### Frequency of marking

- **frequency** of feedback is crucial because it increases student motivation and reflection of their work.
- the **frequency** of marking students work will vary from subject to subject, but for most subjects it should be done once every 5/6 lessons as far as this is reasonably practical. In art, music, drama and PE most of the feedback is not written, but oral.
- every homework needs to be **checked** it has been done on the date it is due.

### Record Keeping

- teachers will need to **keep a record** of students grades to inform parents at parents evenings and for reports although these may not be written on students work.
- teachers will need to keep a **record of homework** done/not done.

**The outcomes of written and verbal feedback must be used by teachers to plan the next steps of learning and pitch the work appropriately for the class.**

### **Marking Code at Holy Trinity School**

These codes should be used selectively, depending on the focus of the marking.

<b>✓</b>	this is correct
<b>✓✓</b>	what you have written is very good
<b>x</b>	this is incorrect
<b>?</b>	means that what has been written does not make sense
<b>∫</b>	means this section does not make sense
<b>^</b>	means something has been left out
<b>*</b>	means that comments are written at the end of the work
<b>//</b>	start a new paragraph here
<b>C</b>	capital letter mistake
<b>P</b>	punctuation

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Monitoring**

To ensure that we implement Equal Opportunities at Holy Trinity School, it is crucial we monitor the quality of feedback and marking.

Our strategies will include;

- Leadership Group sampling of work.
  - performance management classroom observations and sampling of work.
  - shadowing students.
  - audits carried out internally eg through working parties and school council.
  - visits to faculties/subject areas by trustees
- audits carried out through external agencies eg ISI.

## Appendix A

# ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING POLICY

## A Guide to Good Practice

### 1 Vision and Importance of Assessment of Learning

We have high expectations of all our students at Holy Trinity School. Staff use baseline data and their professional judgement to set **aspirational targets** for **all** students to achieve. As students progress through the school, we use data to **monitor** both individuals and different cohorts of students to ensure that they perform to their **full potential**. Where underachievement is identified, we put into place appropriate strategies to ensure the student gets back on track.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the policy on Assessment **for** Learning. Assessment **for** learning is mostly concerned with **formative** assessment whilst assessment **of** learning is mostly concerned with **summative** assessment and is carried out periodically eg at the end of a unit or year or at the end of a key stage for a nationally recognised qualification.

#### **Summative assessment is important for;**

- providing different pathways and qualifications for different students so that all can succeed.
- providing students with the necessary expertise to maximise their success in national examinations and therefore enhance their life choices.
- providing students with a snapshot of the level/grade they are currently working at and what they need to do to improve.
- providing feedback to subject teachers of how their students are progressing.
- providing opportunities for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning strategies.
- providing parents with information on the progress of their child.
- providing departmental and whole school data in order to identify which students are working/not working to their potential. Strategies are then put in place to support/monitor students who are underachieving.
- providing data to evaluate whole school progress.
- providing accountability to external groups eg ISI.

### 2 Whole School System for Assessment of Learning

#### a) Tracking and monitoring

Data only becomes effective when it raises questions about the **individual learning needs** of each student and how these can be met as every child matters.

At Holy Trinity School we are working towards a whole school system which tracks and monitors students with regard to their prior attainment, what they are currently achieving and where we expect students to have reached by the end of each key stage.

## **b) Written Reports**

**i) Parents** and students receive one academic report per year. This style of report is made up of individual subject reports, a list of internal examination grades, a tutor review and comments by the Headteacher. Each written report is a combination of attainment/effort grades and comments. In addition parents and students in years 11 and 13 receive 1 End of year letter at the end of the academic year which contains an overview of progress, both pastoral and academic.

**ii) Subject reports** should include a brief subject-specific comment. This should be expressed in clear, straightforward language, which is accessible and meaningful to parents. It should be direct and honest. It should contain a target which is subject specific. It should be based on the principle that targets should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Related. It should be focused on helping the student to achieve the next National Curriculum Level or GCSE/A Level grade.

**iii) Half Term Grade Form** is received at the end of each half term when an academic or grade comment report are not used (see full plan). These consist of an effort grade (1-5) and an attainment grade (A-E) which are used by staff to track progress throughout the year.

**iv) The Grade Comment Report** has scope for a slightly fuller comment than the standard half term grade report. Subject Staff may wish to comment on specific areas, particularly when these indicate patterns of achievement or concern.

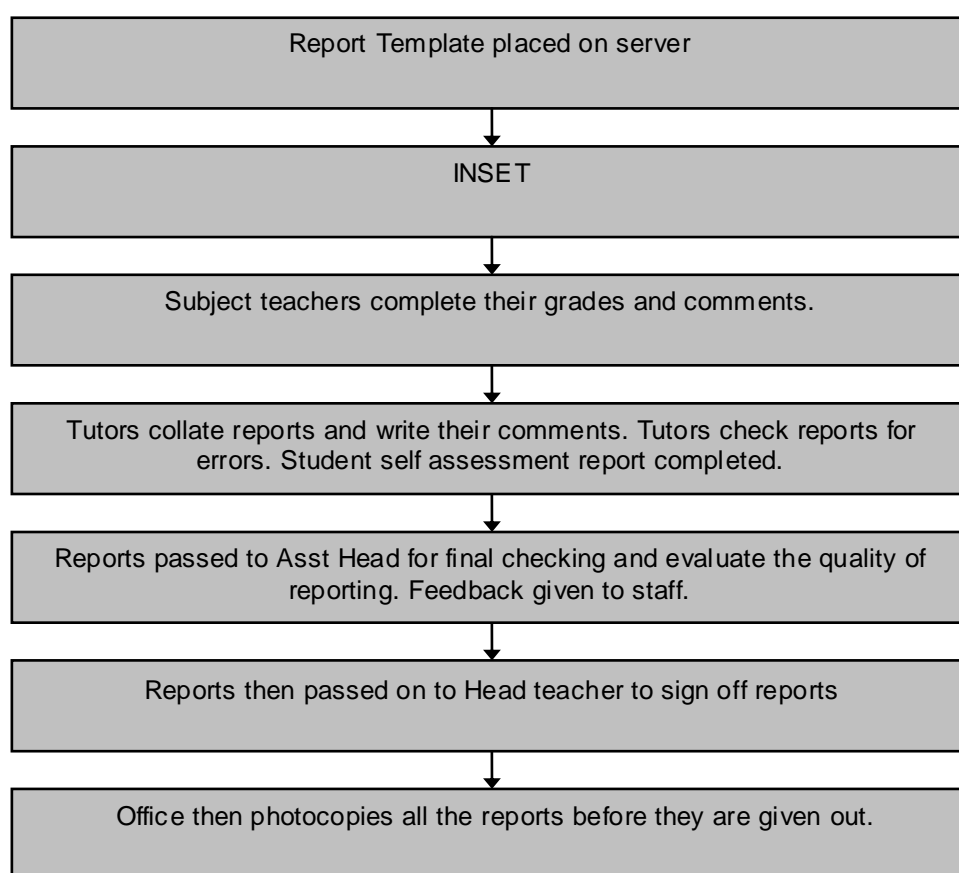
**v) Staff are expected to word-process** their reports to aid presentation. A template is available on the company server. At KS4 and KS5 where there is more than one teacher teaching a double award vocational course, each individual teacher needs to write a report for their students.

**vi) Subject leaders are responsible for the quality control of subject reports (where appropriate).** Particular attention should be paid the spelling of students names: at the top of the report the full name should be used, but a shortened form, if this is how the student is usually known, may be used within the comment section. Lists from the Office should be used if there is any doubt about spellings: these are checked and corrected at the start of each year.

Reports will be collated by form tutors who will then complete their form report. It is expected that tutors will read the reports and then return reports with errors before passing the reports on the Asst Head (Pupil Development)

**vi)** It is important that all published reporting deadlines are adhered to since failure to complete each stage of the process on time has a direct effect on the workload of colleagues who are responsible for the next stage.

The cycle for completion of full written reports is as follows:



### c) Target Setting and Review Days

Student assessment data is used in a formative and creative way on Target Setting and Review Days. We promote personalised learning through our Target Setting and Review Days. From our self evaluation we know that students enjoy and value the opportunity having a one to one conversation with their teachers about their learning & progress.

There is 1 Target Setting and Review day per year.

The outcome of the Target Setting and Review interview is a set of targets, including general and subject-specific learning goals. These are recorded in the **Planner** so that they remain accessible to students, parents and staff. The aim is for targets, as far as possible, to be initiated by the student with teacher support, and to be pitched at a level which is both realistic and challenging. The targets negotiated on Target Setting and Review days are then subject to ongoing review by students and their tutors as part of the **tutorial programme** and **formally reviewed** at the next Target Setting and Review Day.

#### **d) Subject Leaders**

Subject leaders will have clear methods and processes for assessing and recording student progress in their area. Each department should have a summary of Assessment for Learning strategies that link into the whole school framework.

Subject leaders are expected to use both whole school data and their own data to track and monitor students and make interventions where necessary. The data should also be used to inform a dialogue with students and parents on the progress the student is making and how they can improve further.

#### **e) External Assessment of Learning**

The following externally accredited forms of assessment are used across the school:

##### **KS3**

- KS2 results.
- MIDYIS tests undertaken in the Autumn Term for Year 7.

##### **KS4**

- GCSEs, GCSE Short Courses and Vocational courses at KS4
- Yellis test undertaken in the Autumn term for Year 10

##### **KS5**

- BTEC, AS and A Levels at KS5. ALIS/Alps

#### **f) Celebration**

At Holy Trinity School we aim for every child to 'enjoy and achieve'. We celebrate the fact that all our students can learn. We regularly reinforce this message through for example our frequent marking of students work, assemblies, celebration letters home and parents evenings. We also celebrate the fact that our students gain a wide range of national qualifications to enable them to fully participate in and contribute to the wider community.

#### **g) Monitoring**

Subject Leaders are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Assessment of Learning policy by means of the regular review of students' work and teachers' assessments to ensure consistency and high standards across the faculty/department.

#### **h) Evaluation**

This policy will be evaluated as part of the school self evaluation and self improvement process. Our strategies will include;

- assessment working party and leadership group and trustees keeping the policy under review.
- consulting with middle managers.
- consulting with students and parents.

**Related Policies:**

Every Child Matters  
Teaching and Learning  
Marking

Policy reviewed in 2010

