

# RATHMORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

### **Definition**

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing and interpreting evidence about the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils. It can be used by teachers and pupils to show them where the pupils are in their learning and where they need to go next. Its purpose is to measure achievement, celebrate learning, diagnose problems, evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and lead to their improvement.

Assessment can be said to be summative or formative. Summative assessment is used mainly to measure performance and is usually carried out at the end of a period of learning such as the end of year exams or an assessment task at the end of a unit of work. It normally happens after the learning has taken place, assists in measuring the learning and focuses on the outcome. Formative assessment, on the other hand, has more to do with assessment for learning. It is ongoing and part of the daily process of learning and teaching. It supports learning through providing regular feedback relating to agreed success criteria, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and suggesting future learning priorities. It helps pupils gain an overview of their learning and encourages independence. The assessment process which we are encouraging in Rathmore embraces both types of assessment and indeed frequently involves overlap between the two.

### **Rationale**

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and, in keeping with Rathmore's mission statement, its purpose is to help each pupil achieve his/her full potential as a learner. Assessment must be approached in a positive light, giving pupils the opportunity to shine, challenging them to stretch their knowledge, skills and understanding and promoting their self-esteem. The purpose of this policy is to create a shared understanding among staff, pupils and parents of the principles of effective assessment and to encourage the implementation of a process of agreed standardised assessment in each department. Therefore each department's assessment arrangements should reflect the spirit and principles expressed in this policy.

## **Aims**

Our mission is to enrich through education the lives of the pupils in our care and to encourage them, in turn, to bring life to others. One of the ways we seek to fulfil our mission is by creating a caring and vibrant learning atmosphere where each pupil is cherished and the development of the whole person is fostered. By focusing on the achievements and needs of each individual pupil the formative assessment process, enshrined in the principles of Assessment for Learning, is an effective means of encouraging each pupil to reach his / her full potential. Therefore, one of the main aims of this policy is to encourage the implementation of Assessment for Learning strategies into the daily practice of all our teachers and through this to bring out the best in each pupil by making them more effective learners. The policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Curriculum Policy, Learning and Teaching Policy, Controlled Assessment Policy, Target-setting Policy, Pastoral Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy.

## **Objectives**

- To ensure that assessment is an essential and integral part of the learning and teaching process, clearly referenced in the schemes of work of all departments;
- to ensure that the outcomes of assessment inform future planning, leading to an improvement in learning and teaching;
- to identify the progress of each pupil through a range of assessment methods involving both formative and summative assessment;
- to celebrate the success of individual pupils in subject areas;
- to identify pupil weaknesses and to take remedial action through agreed learning and teaching strategies in each department;
- to track the progress of each pupil through the central recording of the results of regular standardised assessment tasks in each subject;

- to provide parents with information about the performance of pupils on a regular basis and to enlist their support for their child's progress;
- to identify pupils underperforming across a range of subjects at an early stage and to take appropriate remedial action including pastoral and academic support;
- to encourage pupils to become independent learners through the practice of Assessment for Learning strategies.

### **Nature of Assessment**

#### Assessment for Learning

Teachers are encouraged to integrate the following Assessment for Learning strategies into their learning and teaching:

- Learning Intentions - clearly communicated at start of lesson/topic;
- Success Criteria - set of criteria, agreed with pupils, determining exactly what is required for a particular task or assignment;
- Effective Questioning - more thinking time for students: eg: think/pair/share;
- Formative Assessment - set against success criteria;
- Opportunities for self-assessment/peer assessment/teacher assessment;
- Feedback given to pupils should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve.

#### Continuous Assessment (formative)

In keeping with the principles of Assessment for Learning, it is the school's policy that pupils are assessed on a regular basis, both through homework and through class-based continuous assessment tasks. Each department's homework policy should reflect the whole school

Homework Policy, which states that homework should be set and marked regularly. With regard to continuous assessment in Years 9 to 11, two standardised assessment tasks are normally set in each subject in term one and one assessment task in term two. Year 8 sit a CAT4 and one Continuous assessment in terms one and two. In Year 12, Lower 6 and Upper 6 one standardised assessment task is set in term one and term 2. These assessment tasks are carried out in class under exam conditions. The results of all the assessment tasks are recorded centrally in Assessment Manager and in all cases pupils are provided with formative feedback enabling them to identify areas for improvement. Pupils complete a summary sheet which enables them to comment on their performance and to highlight areas which require improvement. Parents are provided with feedback after each assessment and must sign a cover sheet containing details of their child's performance.

The process of standardised continuous assessment and centralised recording enables us to track the performance of each pupil and more easily identify those pupils who are high achievers as well as those in need of support at an early stage. Departmental strategies have been developed in each subject to support the less able and to stretch the more able. Those pupils who are a cause for concern across a range of subjects are interviewed by the Year Head and in some cases parents are invited for interview to discuss their child's progress.

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessment for pupils in years 8 to 11 takes the form of end-of-year house examinations in June. Year 12, Lower 6 and Upper 6 sit mock examinations in December as well as sitting GCSEs and GCEs in May and June. Year Eleven pupils sit GCSE unitised assessments in Mathematics and Religious Studies in May and June. Lower Sixth and Upper 6 pupils sit AS and A2 Level examinations in May and June and Upper 6 pupils may repeat AS units at this time as well.

### Controlled Assessment

Controlled Assessment has replaced coursework and forms an important part of assessment at GCSE in all subjects except Religious Studies and Mathematics. For more detail on Controlled Assessment please refer to the school's Controlled Assessment Policy.

## **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

In both continuous assessment and summative assessment tasks pupils with special needs are catered for appropriately depending on the individual child's needs (eg. provision of extra time, specially designed question paper etc.).

## **Reporting To Parents**

A full report is sent to parents of Year 12, Lower 6 and Upper Sixth pupils in January. Parents of pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive a short report in December and a full report in June. In addition, parents receive regular feedback through cover sheets attached to the continuous assessment tasks referred to above. Where pupils are perceived to be underperforming across a range of subjects parents are invited to the school for an interview with the Year Head. A parent-teacher evening is organised for each year group at which parents are invited to discuss their child's academic and pastoral progress with each of the child's teachers and tutor. The Principal, Vice-Principals and Year-Head are also available for consultation at these meetings.

The Cross Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT will be reported to parents of KS3 pupils and in the case of Year 10 pupils this will include the new Levels of Progression.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Governors and amended when required.