



'Every Child Matters'

St Mary's High School Downpatrick

Principal: Ms R McLaughlin



Celebrating 60 Years of
Education

Assessment Policy

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RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and recommendations for assessment in St Mary's High School. All staff will have been consulted in the drawing up of this policy and will be expected to adhere to guidelines regarding the assessment of pupil work once the policy has been approved. Individual departmental policies that relate to assessment should reflect the guidelines contained in this document.

DEFINITION

'Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning; the teachers use suitable forms of assessment, based on expectations which are clear, realistic and understood by the pupils.'

Evaluating Schools DENI

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing and interpreting evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice. The school's Assessment Policy *'reflects statutory requirements and provides clear guidance about the purposes of assessment, the methods to be used, the range and types of evidence to be retained, and the uses to be made of assessment information.'*

Together Towards Improvement 2.3.1

In St Mary's High School we use assessment to support each pupil in the achievement of her full learning potential in order to develop self-esteem and encourage the learner to take personal responsibility for their learning. Assessment takes place in a self-reflective environment where there is a strong culture of support involving pupils, staff and parents.

AIMS

- To help all pupils become more effective learners
- To develop fully pupils' academic abilities and self confidence
- To develop skills which they need for reflective and independent study

OBJECTIVES

- To develop suitable forms of assessment based on expectations which are clear, realistic and understood by pupils
- To ensure that all pupils experience challenge and a measure of success
- To give constructive feedback to pupils to enable them to improve

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment, both formal and informal, should complement and reinforce the delivery of the curriculum.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

This is assessment OF learning. It is used mainly to measure performance and clearly identifies a standard of pupil attainment. It is carried out at the end of a period of learning, is focused on the outcome and assists in measuring learning eg:

- End of topic/unit tests
- Pupil Tracking/Continuous Assessments
- Controlled Assessments
- Internal school examinations
- External examinations

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

This is assessment FOR learning. It is ongoing and provides evidence of and for progression in learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback, is focused on the process and diagnosing future learning priorities.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by:

- Evaluating their own achievement against shared learning outcomes
- Identifying their own strengths and areas for improvement in target setting
- Fostering a self reflective learning culture
- Encouraging independence in learning

Self-assessment is a critical tool for pupils evaluating their end of term reports, completing Progress Files and UCAS & Further Education applications. In St Mary's, after tests or any assessment is completed, pupils are expected to evaluate their performance and use it as a tool to improve. In an attempt to strengthen partnerships with parents/guardians they are requested to sign tests/assessments and to comment on pupil performance. At **3 key points** in the year ie September, January and after Easter during their form period, all pupils are required to reflect on results and set targets for improvement for the new term. Pupils who have been identified as underperforming are invited to attend a meeting with their parents/guardians to meet with the SLT, Heads of Year, Heads of Department, Form teachers or subject teachers in January to discuss areas of concern and support mechanisms that need to be put in place to improve performance. Other meetings re under performance will take place as the need is identified throughout the course of the school year.

(See Identification and Monitoring of Performance & Underperformance across Key Stages Appendix 5)

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING/NI CURRICULUM

Assessment for Learning and its various components reflect the ethos of the NI Curriculum with an emphasis on using assessment as a tool to help pupils become more effective learners.

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

- Learning Intentions - clearly communicated at the start of the lesson/task on the board. There should be evidence in pupils' work books.
- Success Criteria - set of criteria, agreed with pupils, determining exactly what is required for a particular task or assignment and linked to Learning Objectives There should be evidence in pupils' work books
- Marking for Improvement – Teachers' comments should be focused on how pupil's work can improve (*see Appendix 2*)
- Effective Questioning - more thinking time for pupils eg think/pair/share
asking questions better and asking better questions
- Formative assessment - set against Success Criteria
self-assessment/peer assessment/teacher assessment

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The school endorses a wide range of assessment methods that include formal and informal and include the following:

- End of topic/unit tests
- Verbal feedback
- Homework (*See Appendix 1*)
- Pupil Tracking/6 Continuous Assessments throughout course of the year
- Internal examinations
- Pupil self-assessment
- Controlled Assessments (*See Appendix 4*)
- Public examinations
- Midyis (Year 8), YELLIS (Year 11) & Alis (Year 13) tests.

It is recognised and accepted that departments will have individual requirements to assess pupil attainment specific to their subject. It is the responsibility of each HoD to ensure that his/her department has a written assessment policy in which this is outlined.

ASSESSMENT OF CROSS CURRICULAR SKILLS

The Education (NI) Order 2006 requires that the curriculum for every grant aided school require each pupil at the end of Key Stage 3 will be assessed in the cross curricular skills of:

- Communication (2012/13)
- Using Mathematics (2012/13)
- Using ICT (2013/14)

Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) are required to fulfil all the requirements of the statutory arrangements for Cross Curricular Skills.

(Guide to Assessment: Supporting School in Meeting Statutory Requirements for Assessment & Reporting P 23)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assessment Policy and its implementation within and across departments is monitored, evaluated and reviewed by:

- Vice Principal
- SLT
- HoDs
- SENCO

VP/SLT

It is the role of the VP/ SLT to:

- use information from assessments to make informed judgements re school development planning, timetabling and resource management
- facilitate INSET and opportunities to discuss assessment, pupil tracking, recording and reporting
- use results of assessments to track pupil progress for under performance and high achievement across the school
- to co-ordinate meetings between pupils/parents/subject teachers/HoDs/HoYS/VP/SLT in January to discuss underperformance and agree strategies for improvement
- use results of assessments for movement across bands
- ensure standardisation and consistency across departments
- encourage, facilitate and support links across departments to share good practice
- analyse and evaluate data across the school with regard to future developments in teaching and assessment
- disseminate relevant documentation to HoDs and advise other colleagues when necessary.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

It is the responsibility of HoDs to:

- apply and embed the principles of the school Assessment Policy within their own departmental practice
- formulate and maintain a departmental policy on assessment which should reflect the values and ethos of the whole school Assessment Policy
- monitor and evaluate assessment, recording, reporting and marking practices within the department to ensure that a common policy is applied consistently across the department
- provide guidance to members of their department when assessment standards are being set
- develop assessment strategies to accommodate all learning styles
- use the results of assessments to inform and direct future planning, teaching and learning
- undertake regular monitoring of pupils' work
- decide on common departmental assessments for pupil tracking
- oversee assessments
- identify under performers and agree strategies with subject teacher to improve performance
- support members of department and facilitate professional development

SENCO

It is the responsibility of the SENCO to work with teachers to:

- identify accurately the suitability of the learning provision for learners with SEN
- ensure there is systematic observation and monitoring of what the learners can do, and what they find difficult
- ensure that IEPs are well focused on realistic targets to guide work in the classroom, are used regularly, and effectively monitored and updated
- involve the learners with SEN in tracking and recording their progress, and in reflecting on what they have been able to do, what has been problematic, and how they might do even better
- evaluate the efficacy of the intervention processes, and the subsequent improvement in the learners' achievements

(Together Towards Improvement – Quality Indicators for the Work of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators)

SUBJECT TEACHERS

It is the responsibility of subject teachers to:

- implement departmental/whole school policies on assessment
- motivate pupils through praise and encouragement
- mark in accordance with departmental policy in a positive, accurate meaningful and formative manner
- compile and maintain individual pupil records including entering pupil tracking
- provide regular feedback to pupils and assist them in target setting
- use assessments to predict future performance
- track under performance and implement strategies for improvement
- regularly check Student Planners and use it as a means of communication with parents/guardians
- report to pupils, parents and staff on pupil progress (December/June)
- attend meetings in January with pupils/parents/guardians re under performance
- liaise with relevant Heads of Department/Heads of Year/SENCO re individual pupil support as required

HEADS OF YEAR

It is the responsibility of Heads of Year to:

- liaise with Heads of Department/Senior staff/Subject teachers/SENCO concerning individual pupil progress
- report to parents as required re individual pupil progress
- follow up concerns about pupils and mentoring those who are under performing
- work closely with SLT re January meetings on under performance
- get an overview of their year groups' performances by analysing the pupil tracking spreadsheet and taking appropriate action
- keep SLT apprised of any other meetings that need to take place throughout the course of the year

EXAMINATIONS OFFICER

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to liaise with appropriate staff/pupils/parents/exam boards regarding all aspects of external assessment.

(See Examinations Policy Appendix 6)

PUPILS

Pupils are expected to:

- participate in a process of self-assessment in an attempt to reflect upon their own learning with the objective of improving
- take responsibility for the organisation of their work
- keep records of their activities and in achievements in their Progress File
- set achievable targets and implement strategies to meet these targets

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians should:

- support their daughters as much as possible
- sign Student Planners and use them as a means of communication with teachers
- ensure that appropriate time is dedicated to study at home, to complete homework or to prepare for examinations (*See Appendix 1*)
- encourage their daughters to use the after school supervised Homework Club
- encourage their daughters to use the library facilities which are available from 8.00am daily
- liaise with staff on any issues of concern
- encourage full attendance to maximise potential

This policy should not be read in isolation but should be considered in conjunction with the following:

- Homework Policy (Appendix 1)
- Marking Policy (Appendix 2)
- Reporting & Recording Policy (Appendix 3)
- Controlled Assessment Policy (Appendix 4)
- Identification and Monitoring of Performance & Underperformance across Key Stages (Appendix 5)
- See Examinations Policy (Appendix 6)
- Inclusion & Special Needs Policy (Appendix 7)
- Evaluating Schools DENI
- Together Towards Improvement