

## Rowhill School

### ASSESSMENT POLICY

#### Introduction

Rowhill School believes that regular and robust AfL (assessments for learning) are essential tools necessary for ensuring successful teaching and learning. Pupils should be at the heart of our assessment policy. Assessment enables pupils to understand where they are in their learning and to understand what they need to do next. Assessment provides pupils with the opportunity to work in partnership with the teacher and pupils should expect a variety of achievement to be recognised and celebrated. Assessment should enable pupils to review their progress with staff on an ongoing basis. Immediate assessments should involve consistent use of plenaries, soliciting feedback from pupils and evaluating every lesson to ascertain the occurrence of learning. Assessment should take into account the special educational need of the pupils.

The results gained from any type of assessment are useful for four main audiences:-

- Government/Ofsted/LA (used to judge the school)
- Parents/Carers
- Teachers/How well are we/I doing?
- Pupils – how well am I doing? What do I need to do to improve? (AfL)

Rowhill School uses both summative and formative assessment

**Summative Assessment** – is where all pupils are assessed to see how much learning has taken place at the end of a unit/ term/year. This can take place by either by a written examination, a verbal test or a tape recording (music).

**Formative Assessment** – is where progress is assessed along the way. For example, pupils are given oral feedback, written work is marked or a practical activity is discussed. Teachers at Rowhill also have a duty to assess the personal social development and behaviour of all pupils, which takes place every term.

**Internal Formal Assessment** – is where exams take place within the school, with a formal setting.

**External Assessment** – is where an outside agency assesses the pupils; for example, GCSEs.

At Rowhill School we recognise that it is easy to lose sight of national norms and we will therefore make use of externally set and moderated examinations whenever appropriate especially at the end of a Key Stage.

All assessment strategies are designed to encourage pupils understand where they are at, both in terms of academic achievement and behaviour and what they need to do to improve. We do not see assessment as a way of failing pupils and further demoralising them.

## **ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (AfL)**

Assessment for learning at Rowhill School is based on the 10 principles of assessment for learning to guide classroom practice provided by QCA which we feel are particularly appropriate for our setting.

### **To foster motivation**

Students with significant educational needs have the greatest anxiety about the value of their achievement. Assessment should emphasise the progress pupils have made in terms that a pupil can both understand and appreciate. It should focus on the individual student and their achievements rather than in comparison with others who may be of a different stage in their own learning. This should include feedback that is face- to- face and immediate. From this basis, a pupil is more likely to listen to constructive advice on how to meet the next challenge and so learn to take risks in a secure environment.

### **To help learners know how to improve**

Pupils need explicit feedback on the steps that they are following and how to move along these steps. They need specific statements about their current strengths, but also the new skills and knowledge they might acquire to move to the next level.

Through this process, students will be able to plan ahead and so develop a longer term view about learners. They will develop from individuals enjoying a single process of learning to one of a continuous progress and achievement.

### **To promote understanding of goals and criteria**

All students need to understand what is it that they are trying to achieve. Teachers need to tell their pupils what the point is in a lesson or module that is being studied and what the expected outcomes will be so that they can judge if the planned goal has been achieved. In this way the pupil can become more autonomous in the learning process. At the same time, students need to exert their own influence on planning so that they can set goals in aspects that they value.

### **To develop a capacity for self-assessment**

Students with additional learning needs have difficulty standing back and forming judgement about what has been done. They have a limited vocabulary to describe their actions and analyse the value of these actions. They also find it problematic to use this information about past performance to influence future actions. All students need to reflect on how well they have done and why. They will be enabled to move towards greater independence as learners if they are more included in the process that judges how successful they have been

### **To be part of effective planning**

There should be formal arrangements across the school and within each class for both the pupil and teacher to come together to gain information about progress being made. In this way it is more likely that future planning would be influenced by what has gone before and both teacher and student will be more prepared for what is to come. These formal arrangements will make it clear how the student is to take part, to receive feedback and to make their own contribution to future plans.

## **To use data to help students know how to improve**

The school has a target setting arrangement for all pupils which is used to determine the overall progress of pupils. Pupils are set a target of 2 sub-levels progress per year across every Key Stage. All pupils should know their Level and what they have to do to reach their target level.

## **To focus on how students learn**

The process of learning has to be in the minds of both teacher and pupil. It is usually accomplished by establishing their learning styles and incorporating it in their learning. Students are assessed and the assessment outcomes are shared with them.

## **To employ modern technology to provide feedback**

Assessment is a means of showing students what they say and do in the classroom. The more information they are given about past performance the more likely they are to have improved performance in the future. Most students with behavioural needs have difficulties recalling what they have learned and how they learned it. Capturing students work using visual means helps them to see what they have done and can refer to it anytime in future.

Special schools have been in the forefront of good practice that has included students in an active participation in the assessment of their progress. The voice of these students has been heard during consideration of future goals. Precise targets have been set according to their own expectations.

The principles associated with assessment for learning are keys to raising standards. It contributes to the debates on "Every Child Matters" and personalised learning.

## **The role of teacher in assessment:**

In the context of AfL at Rowhill School, all teachers should:

- Recognise that *all* pupils can improve; every child matters.
- Plan opportunities and strategies to help pupils to understand the HOW of learning as well as the WHAT;
- Appreciate that good assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process through reflection, dialogue and action planning;
- Be aware of the emotional impact of comments, grades and marks and give regular oral and written feedback that is positive and constructive, recognising achievements as well as being developmental, and that focuses on the work that has been produced, rather than on the person;
- Understand learner motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure and avoid comparison with others;
- Be clear about a learner's strengths and how to develop these, their areas for improvement and the next steps needed for them to make progress and share these with the learners;

- Encourage independent learning by enabling students to take charge of their learning though developing their skills of reflection, self- assessment and their capacity to identify next steps;
- Praise progress and reward achievement through comments and the school's praise and reward systems;
- Recognise that assessment for learning should be used in all areas of educational activity and that it should enable all learners to achieve their best and have their achievements recognised.
- Make it fit for purpose, varied and use it to inform future planning and teaching.

**To make feedback to pupils effective teachers should ensure that:**

- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and what they can expect from the teacher. Pupils should expect the feedback they receive to explain what they have done well with reasons and where and how they can improve and for it to be as soon after the completed work as possible.
- The learning objectives and learning outcomes are used as the benchmark for the teacher's oral and written feedback. They should be shared and made clear to the pupils in advance of attempting the task.
- They comply with the school's marking policy

**Pupils should receive regular and detailed feedback on their work**, which is constructive, informative and focused, so that they understand how they are progressing and what steps they need to take to improve. Oral feedback will be the most frequent and interactive form of feedback in their lessons.

- Feedback should be given for different purposes such as correcting an error, providing information, organising, challenging, confirming and moving on, crystallising next steps or encouraging reflection.
- Advice on "next steps" is clearly explained in accessible language and where possible, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-specific) and appropriate for the highest attainers as well.
- Feedback also includes comments from peers and from self- assessment as well as from teachers. Pupils need to be shown how to assess and evaluate their own and their peers' work. Feedback also involve teachers receiving feedback from pupils about their learning

**Departments should give a high priority to assessment for learning and ensure that:**

- Schemes of work (medium and long term plans) include regular opportunities for developing assessment for learning and providing quality feedback to pupils;
- Staff and pupils have access to, and discuss, portfolios of work and exemplars of work from the school, exam boards and QCA,
- Teachers monitor and moderate their summative assessments for consistency;
- They review the progress of different year groups annually (with reference to baseline assessment, gender and ethnicity) with tests, assessments and examinations and adjust the curriculum in response to these findings; look at the balance of time for different activities in relation to pupil performance and alter as necessary, for example time for coursework or for aspects of examinations;
- They keep abreast of e-learning developments within assessment;
- They maintain departmental records of assessments.

**Recording and reporting assessments should be consistent and effective. Teachers must:**

- Keep detailed records and regularly review pupils' base line data (termly), their effort, attainment, strengths and areas for development, as well as their completion of classwork and homework, lesson attendance and lesson punctuality. Subject teachers where pupils have two or more lessons each week should complete a minimum of at least one formal assessments against either NC levels or GCSE Level criteria each term and communicate these to the students as portfolio pieces and a minimum of once every two terms, where there is one lesson a week. They should make these records readily available to other staff and the headteacher
- Use their subject knowledge, records and departmental portfolios and take into account all relevant criteria when making summative assessments about pupil.

## **TRACKING AND MONITORING PUPIL PROGRESS**

Subject teachers are responsible for tracking and monitoring pupil progress in their subjects. They will set termly targets for pupils so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers will write reports on a yearly basis (more frequently where reports are required for IEP, statement and other reviews) which will comment on progress and next steps as well as measures to be implemented where progress is inadequate.

Tutors are responsible for tracking and monitoring pupil progress towards behaviour and learning targets and will comment on progress in reports and Annual Reviews.

Pupil progress reviews will take place termly, where pupils who are not achieving at the expected level will be identified. Where necessary an intervention may take place, especially in Literacy or Numeracy.