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Birchwood High School Assessment Policy

Assessment

Section A: Principles

Birchwood High School intends that assessment be used to raise achievement. In order to do this, students will be provided with information on their strengths and on areas for improvement so that they can meet challenging targets. **By promoting a positive attitude towards learning and having high expectations, students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress and to strive to improve their performance.**

Assessments, both formal and informal, must provide the accurate information on each student's learning which is necessary to evaluate their current performance and determine future action. The assessment material generated must satisfy a number of audiences and be capable of providing information at any time to those bodies who may reasonably ask for it. These assessments will need to be supported by validating evidence in the form of student work and/or teacher records.

Assessments should:

- Form an integral part of the curriculum
- Reflect the content and methodology used to deliver the topic
- Be made accessible to students and the results shared with them
- Be the subject of regular review.

The range of assessments made should include:

- Formative – which indicates how well individuals have learned a particular skill. It includes diagnostic analysis in order to identify areas of strength and difficulty in order to inform future planning.
- Summative – which summarises students' achievement at a given point in time.

The Purpose of Assessment

For Students:

To provide feedback to aid progress, self-analysis and target setting. To motivate students by highlighting areas of success.

For Subject Teachers and Faculties:

To evaluate the teaching programme, inform lesson planning, monitor student progress and provide information for departmental or faculty development.

For Tutors, Heads of Year and Careers staff:

To monitor the progress of students and provide data for action planning.

For Senior Leaders and Governors:

To assess present performance and plan future developments.

For Parents:

To receive information about their child's progress according to the statutory requirements and to aid their continued support of their child.

For Examination bodies:

To provide coursework assessments, estimated grades and teacher assessments for the end of Key Stages.

For Inspectorate and other outside agencies:

To show student progress and the evidence which supports teacher judgements.

Recording

Teaching staff must keep records of each student's progress. These should show the strengths and weaknesses of each student and contribute towards the school's reporting and target setting programme.

Records should be manageable, concise and accurate. They should arise from the routine process of teaching, learning and assessing.

Graded assessments should be carried out as a minimum in line with Interim reporting/Data Drops and should be carried out as appropriate to the course of study, and should be kept on the School Website. FFT & ALPS will inform target setting for each student's chosen subjects. These should be used by staff to inform planning and discuss progress with students and parents.

Evidence

It is neither necessary nor desirable to record everything a student does, but **Faculties/Departments need to keep evidence to support their judgements about student attainment and progress. It is recommended that these are kept within the Faculty assessment system.**

At all key stages, **Faculties/Departments will keep a central portfolio of exemplar student work** which demonstrates the standard of work expected at each level or grade. This will contain a range of assessments and all members of the department will have contributed. Where no written evidence is appropriate for an assessment, teachers' notes should be included.

The moderation of work should form a regular part of Faculty/Department meetings and should involve all staff teaching in the department. It is vital to ensure that teachers have a shared and consistent understanding of standards.

Evidence of individual student attainment can be:

- classwork
- home learning
- project work
- artefacts

- photographs
- DVD/video/audio recordings
- teachers' notes

At KS4 and KS5, Faculties/Departments need to keep records in line with the requirements of the coursework criteria of their examination board.

Reporting

Teaching staff will be required to provide a “current working grade” and “attitude to learning” grades for students as per the Assessment calendar for reports and data drops.

Students must be assessed in line with the programme of study laid down and with the learning objectives outlined in the scheme of work.

Reports and data drops will be completed using the Birchwood Online Reporting system. This will comprise a:

Target Grade

- The ‘target’ is the grade that the school expects the student to achieve at the end of the **Year**.
- The target is generated for Key Stage 4 from Key Stage 2 levels by using data we receive from the Primary Schools, through the use of a software package called fftaspire (Should you like to see this please visit <https://fft.org.uk/>)
- The Target Grade will remain constant throughout the student’s time from Year 7 - 11; however, the expectations of the grade will be progressive as the student moves through the school i.e. The demands in each year will increase, these will be reflected through each faculty’s assessment policies.

Aspirational target grade

- The Aspirational target grade is adjustable to be the same as or above the Expected Target grade

Current Working Grade

- The Current Working Grade works on the same principle as the Target Grade with incremental demands each year.

The Forecast Expectation

- The Forecast expectation is whether the Student will meet their Target or go above it at the End of the Year. This is identified as Not Yet Meeting, Meeting or Above Expectations

Attitude to learning grade

- All Students will receive an Attitude to Learning Grade, this Grade will reflect how the student is behaving and engaging in the lesson and is a useful identifier of underachievement

Heads of Faculty/Department and classroom teachers should use the ongoing progress data on the Online Reporting system or, within their own assessment areas, or Faculty Transformation Plans, to monitor progress termly towards Faculty/Departmental and

whole school targets. They should discuss this progress with their line manager through frequent data conversations

Students with SEND

It is important that the methods of assessment chosen do not exclude students because of their special needs. The responsibility for assessing all students rests with the class teacher.

The Head of Faculty/Department must ensure that information about students with special needs is being used by their team.

It is important to distinguish between:

- special arrangements (action taken before an assessment) and
- special considerations (action taken after an assessment).

Special arrangements for students could include recorded material, material of appropriate reading ages, illustration, provision of a reader or amanuensis, or extra time.

Information on students' assessment needs should be given to the SENCO so that appropriate action may be taken.

The SENCO will work with the Exams Officer to ensure all appropriate permissions for concessions are claimed and made available at all Key Stages.

The Senior Leadership Team will periodically review the influence that tiered entry may produce on teaching groups.

Heads of Faculty/Department need to communicate special arrangements for assessing students in their areas so that the SENCO can assess the impact across the curriculum.

Responsibilities

Subject teachers will:

- Ensure they are familiar with the statements of attainment in their subject
- Identify clear learning objectives for each lesson
- Assess student progress towards learning objectives using a range of "Assessment for Learning" techniques
- Ensure that students are familiar with the assessment criteria, and, where possible, provided with the criteria in language which is accessible to them
- Record information on the strengths, areas for improvement and progress of individual students
- Use prior attainment data to monitor that students are making acceptable progress, including Gifted and Talented students
- Provide an instructive comment and target in student books as per Faculty Policy
- Use assessment results to inform lesson planning
- Assess in line with Interim Reporting
- Provide examples of work for review at Faculty/Department moderation meetings.

Heads of Faculty/Department will:

- Ensure that all staff within their faculty/department are familiar with statements of attainment, schemes of work and associated assessments.
- Identify clear learning objectives and assessment opportunities in units of work.
- Where possible, ensure that assessment criteria is available in language accessible to students.
- Ensure that a variety of assessment techniques are used over a period of time.
- Undertake a regular review of assessments.
- Retain examples of work which demonstrate the standard of work expected at each grade.
- Monitor the progress of students within the department against prior attainment and benchmarking information.
- Ensure that the regular moderation of work takes place, involving all members of the department.

The Senior Leader with responsibility for Assessment will:

- Regularly update the policy and the guidelines
- Monitor the implementation of the policy
- Promote good practice by supporting departments in assessment activities
- Provide all target data
- Provide an analysis of progress data
- Keep departments informed of national trends and benchmarking information
- Set whole school targets
- Oversee the maintenance of the Online reporting system and its accessibility to staff
- Create strategies in conjunction with Heads of Year, Heads of Faculties and Key Staff to maximise student potential
- Inform the Senior Leadership Team and the Curriculum Committee of progress towards whole school targets
- Produce 'residual performance indicators' for use in Exam Analysis
- Attend Exam Review meetings and Faculty Review meetings to discuss the data
- Attend Improvement Partner meetings to inform on whole school targets

Senior Leadership Team will:

- Discuss assessment issues with Heads of Faculties/Heads of Departments/Heads of Years/SENCO at line management meetings
- Monitor student progress by cohort, through assessment data provided

SENCO will:

- Support Heads of Faculties/Heads of Departments/Heads of Years in the identification of students with special needs and the selection of appropriate assessment strategies
- Initiate and carry through any disapplication
- Work with the Examinations Officer in cases of special arrangements and special consideration and provide a focus for the dissemination of information to students, parents and awarding bodies.

Examinations Officer will:

- Make the SENCO/SLT and HoFs aware of developments and changes in awarding body practice and give assistance where necessary.

Heads of Year and Tutors will:

- Use prior attainment data to monitor that students are making acceptable progress
- Monitor individuals' forecasts against target
- Liaise with parents, subject staff and Heads of Faculties/Heads of Departments as required.

Target Setting

The Senior Leader with responsibility for assessment will set attainment targets for each Key Stage. Targets are based on prior attainment data and national benchmarking data with reference to FFT and ALPS assessment packages

Writing Reports and Entering Data Drops

What targets are set?

Target Grade

The 'target' is the grade that the school expects the student to achieve at the end of the Year. It is generated for Key Stage 4 from Key Stage 2 levels by using the system as described above. The Target Grade will remain constant throughout the student's time from Year 7 -11, however the expectations of the grade will be progressive as the student moves through the school

Current Working Grade

A 'Current working' grade is generated by the subject teacher at each formal reporting stage, using defined attainment criteria, evidence and the teacher's professional judgement, to identify current achievement.

Current Working Grades are based on evidence collected from the following:

- Mock Examinations
- Interim Tests
- Informal assessments throughout the course
- Coursework or controlled assessments completed
- Current standard of class work and home learning

- Work ethic and attitude to learning

The current working grade is inputted into the schools Assessment system.

For Year 7 the Target and Current Working are not seen in the first reporting period. The rationale behind this is that we want the start of Year 7 to be about learning and development, we want to develop a Growth Mind-set and we as a school feel that a target at this early stage can lead students to either be demotivated or complacent. It can also lead them to simply focussing in on the grade to the detriment of an engagement and enjoyment of the process in learning. 'Shadow data', data that is seen by the school but not at home, does exist in the system and the students will see "Above, Meeting or Not Yet Meeting 'Expectations'" *

A 'Forecast expectation' is used on occasion and this again is generated by the subject teacher at each formal reporting stage, using defined attainment criteria, evidence and the teachers professional judgement, to forecast what they expect the student to achieve *at the end of the Year*. It will be entered and **then further defined** as 'Above Expectation', 'Meeting Expectation' or 'Not Yet Meeting Expectation'

For all Years where a student is not yet meeting expectation, a "next step" must be added to show what is being done to support the student further to make progress.

Next Steps must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time related) and should include a strategy as to how to meet them. The member of staff should keep a record of the next step set on the report and the degree to which they are achieved. Next Steps should relate to improving knowledge, skills and understanding, but may also refer to effort, behaviour or attitude. Next Steps such as "keep working hard" are not acceptable. All students, even the very successful, can improve from their current standards.

All Students will receive an Attitude to Learning Grade, this Grade will reflect how the student is behaving and engaging in the lesson and is a useful identifier of underachievement

The Attitude to Learning Grades are used by teachers to identify the way in which the students are; working in the subject, what effort is being put in, how well are they engaged and what their organisation and application to the subject is like.

The data is used to reward students but also to highlight areas where potentially an issue may exist which could lead to poor progress.

Attitudes to Learning

Outstanding

Students are motivated, work independently and show responsibility for their own learning. Students participate in class and are constantly engaged in the lesson. They always meet home-learning deadlines and often do more work than is asked. They use feedback given by the teacher to make higher than expected progress. They show respect to all those around them. Students go above and beyond the expectations of a student of their age/ability. Work in class is of an excellent standard

Good

Students work well in lessons and are engaged and involved in activities. They participate in class discussions and always meet home-learning deadlines. They try hard in every lesson, meet expectations and use feedback given by the teacher to improve their learning. They show respect to all those around them. Work in class is of a good standard

Satisfactory

Students on the whole display good attitudes, yet they sometimes need reminding of acceptable behaviour standards. They usually meet deadlines and usually complete class work and home-learning to an acceptable standard showing some care and attention. When directed, they reflect on the feedback given by teachers. They show respect to all those around them. Work in class is of a satisfactory standard

Unacceptable

Engagement is inconsistent and students are regularly off task due to their inappropriate attitude and/or behaviour. Their standard of work is poor and many activities are incomplete. Home-learning is usually handed in but not always by the deadline. Feedback from the teacher is rarely used or acted upon. They show respect to most members of the school community. Work in class is of an unsatisfactory standard.

When writing reports

The student's formal name should be used in the heading of the report, although abbreviated names (but not nicknames) may be used in the text. The target audience for the comment on the report is the parent or carer, so the text should refer to the student in the third person.

Reports should be written in good English, including accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Comments should be as succinct as possible and use wording which is precise and appropriate. Jargon should be avoided if this is unlikely to be understood.

Statement banks must not be used for examination subjects ie GCSE.

It is important that all departments stick to the **deadlines** set. When people miss deadlines it creates pressure on others. All missed deadlines should be reported to the Senior Leader in charge of Assessment who can investigate the reasons and inform the appropriate people. Senior Line Managers will also work with departments to ensure that deadlines are met.

Interim comments should aim to be positive order to aid motivation and progress.

Reporting systems:

Parents are informed of progress at Interim points in the year. These times have been thought about carefully and are designed to be at key points in which teachers are enabled to adequately assess and give a clear picture about progress. They have also been designed to make sure workload is appropriate and that enough time is built in between reports to allow for progress to be made.

*See Appendix Assessment Calendar

Writing Tutor Reports

Heads of Year should be consulted before writing these, as each year group has a particular and specific focus. The following is a general guide:

As part of your tutor report it is necessary to:

- Comment on the student's achievement in PSHE
- Highlight any student involvement in sports teams, clubs, school council, events etc.
- Comment generally on a student's:
 - punctuality
 - helpfulness
 - courtesy and politeness
 - responsibility
 - behaviour
 - school uniform.

You should make a personal comment/give your perceptions of how the student is doing at Birchwood and how they have responded to their personal targets.

Remember that the tutor report is very much an individual one. It is important to be positive and reflect on the student's qualities and personal strengths.

Assessment Packages used at Birchwood

What is FFT?

FFT, Fischer Family Trust, is a company that processes national data for the Government, including school census, national assessment, test and exam information. FFT use this information to produce data for schools to support high quality target-setting and self-evaluation. They create estimates based on the English and Maths Key Stage 2 SATS.

What is ALPS?

ALPS stands for **Advanced Level Performance System**. It is a simple, student focused system designed to support schools and colleges at KS4 and KS5 in ensuring their students make the best possible progress. They create estimates based on GCSE performance.